



PRESS STATEMENT - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9TH NOVEMBER, 2018

WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES AT COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Copperbelt University- CBU, Copperbelt Province has been ordered to immediately discontinue offering two (2) programmes at its School of Medicine for failure to meet set standards in accordance with the Health Professions Act No. 24 of 2009 of the Laws of Zambia.

The Health Professions Council of Zambia- HPCZ has withdrawn recognition and approval of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) and the Bachelor of Dental Surgery after a recent compliance monitoring inspection revealed gross over-enrollment of students, an inadequate number of lecturers, engaging unregistered and unlicensed lecturers that are health practitioners and failure to index students.

In the **Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery programme**, the University over-enrolled by 494 students bringing the total number pursuing this programme to 794. The lecturer-student ratios therefore, exceed the recommended 1 to 50 for theory for students in Clinical years 3 to 5 and the practical ratios of 1 to 10 for students in both the foundation and Clinical years. Additionally, all the 794 students are not indexed with HPCZ. Another major finding is the lack of lecturers in several courses including Psychology, Histology, Pathology and Body Dysfunction.

The above situation is indicative of the fact that HPCZ cannot be assured of the safety of the public once exposed to the services of graduates in the Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery and it is clear that CBU currently has no capacity to offer this programme, thus the decision to withdraw the certificate of approval and subsequent closure of the programme.

With regard to the **Bachelor of Dental Surgery programme**, it is a requirement that the course coordinator and all lecturers that are health practitioners are duly registered with HPCZ or General Nursing Council- GNC, as well as have valid practicing licenses before a training programme may be approved by the Council. It is also a requirement that all lecturers with a background in health-related fields be registered with HPCZ or GNC as per their qualification. HPCZ inspectors however, discovered the following major anomalies in the Bachelor of Dental Surgery programme:

- The Copperbelt University School of Medicine engaged an unregistered course coordinator who has been practicing without a valid license since January 2017
- Two other lecturers are not registered with HPCZ
- All 198 students under the programme are not indexed

The programme cannot be allowed to continue with the above mentioned irregularities, consequently, the certificate of approval stands withdrawn and the programme closed.

Students and other stakeholders must note that prior to the closure of programmes at the CBU School of Medicine, the HPCZ through its Training Department conducted an initial inspection in April this year, which exposed various shortcomings among them failure to meet some requirements under Institutional setting, Faculty, Educational Resources and Quality Improvement. The University was instructed to put in place remedial measures by 30th August 2018 and when inspectors recently went back to assess the situation, they recognised that while efforts were made to ensure smooth running of programmes, the Institution still did not meet set standards in various areas identified in this statement.

Equally important to stress is that, out of a total number of 51 lecturers teaching the MBChB programme, only one has evidence of being registered with HPCZ and on that account the Council cannot ascertain the qualifications and competences of the entire teaching faculty at the School of Medicine.

The Health Professions Council of Zambia has since advised Copperbelt University that the two programmes withdrawn will only be reinstated after all recommendations have been addressed, at which point the University can put in a fresh application to the Council for a reassessment. Meanwhile, no academic activities shall be conducted in the cited programmes until CBU demonstrates capacity to produce safe Health Practitioners. HPCZ will not tolerate Schools that are familiar with the rules, to deliberately continue inconveniencing students and parents.

Signed & issued by:

Dr. Aaron Mujajati
Chief Executive Officer/Registrar