

KUCCPS receives recognition as Eswatini delegation benchmarks on student placement system

A delegation from Eswatini toured the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) to benchmark on best practice for student placement.



Members of KUCCPS and Eswatini's Pre-Service Tertiary Education and Training Loans Board during a meeting at KUCCPS's office in Nairobi on November 22, 2023

KUCCPS held discussions with the Pre-Service Tertiary Education and Training Loans Board team on the role of automation in the delivery of quality services.

During the November 22 meeting, KUCCPS Chief Executive Officer Mercy Wahome highlighted the organisation's mandate and the plan to place international students to local universities and

colleges. Dr Wahome acknowledged the lessons learnt from the Eswatini team on career assessment.

Ms. Sifisoethu Bhembe, the head of the Eswatini delegation, underscored the importance of technology and applauded KUCCPS for embracing it saying, "Our main take-home is leveraging technology to improve how we award scholarships". The visitors toured KUCCPS' facilities, among them the state-of-the-art data centre that supports student placement services.

The Eswatini delegation also visited the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) and Universities Fund (UF). The visit follows a similar one by a delegation from Malawi's Higher Education Students, Loans, and Grants Board (HESLGB) on August 24.

During the meeting, the team reflected on the need to enhance higher education systems through collaborative learning.

Report shows significant increase in uptake of technical programmes as enrolment rises

The number of students opting to pursue technical training has increased steadily over the past three years, a report by the Placement authority indicates.

The marked improvement signals the success of the national government's call for increased number of students pursuing technical courses to support implementation of the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).

According to the 2023/2024 Placement Cycle Report dated November 2023, more students prefer technical

programmes compared to degree. The data shows that enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) institutions surpassed that of universities in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

"The overall trend in placement of students to universities and TVET institutions indicates a steady rise from 2014 when KUCCPS placed the initial cohort,"



KUCCPS CEO Dr Mercy Wahome takes members of the National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Education on a tour of the organisation's offices on November 14, 2023

the report says.

In the just concluded cycle, 141,250 students were placed to degree programmes in universities – including the Open University of Kenya – while 181,860 were placed to pursue diploma, craft and artisan courses in TVET institutions.

The report adds that 323,110 of the 870,561 candidates that received the 2022 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results were placed to higher

**universities
–including the
Open University
of Kenya**

141,250
students placed in
degree programmes

**TVET
institutions**

181,860
students placed to
pursue diploma, craft
and artisan courses

learning institutions.

The report highlights that male students are dominating degree programmes, with 77,722 out of the 141,250 students who qualified for university education in the 2023/2024 placement cycle being male and 63,528 female. On the other hand, female students dominated TVETs, with 102,539 out of the total 181,860 students placed to the institutions being female and 79,321 male.

While the report highlights that male students are dominating degree programmes, female students were the majority of those placed in TVET, from the 2020/2021 placement period to the current one.

Universities urged to expand capacities, review courses that attracted few applicants

Universities and colleges that recorded low interest in some of their academic programmes in the recent placement cycle have been urged to review them to boost their marketability.

Data from the 2023/2024 Placement Cycle Report indicated that some courses either had few applicants or were left with unfilled slots while others were overwhelmed by demand. The report by Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) dated November 20, 2023 also pointed out that institutions should enhance the capacities of popular courses.

An analysis of the placement results shows health sciences and engineering programmes in both universities and colleges are the most popular. Bachelor of Science in Nursing, for instance, was the most popular programme attracting 163,476 applicants against 1,582 available slots.

A similar trend was witnessed when 47,443 secondary

school graduates applied for Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery against a capacity of 623. Other popular programmes were degree courses in pharmacy, science in electrical and electronic engineering, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, architecture, dental surgery and quantity surveying.

The document said: "Institutions offering highly demanded programmes, both degree and TVET should be supported to expand their capacities to accommodate more students."

For the first time, KUCCPS took over the placement of pre-service trainees to medical courses offered at the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC), where a total of 12,265 students were placed.

The report mentioned that the number of qualified applicants for KMTC programmes was higher than the available capacities resulting in competition for the limited slots, leaving many qualified applicants unplaced.

“The inclusion of KMTC in the KUCCPS placement process ensured a fair and equitable allocation of KMTC courses to applicants,” the report highlighted, proposing enhancement of KMTC’s capacity to absorb more qualified students, especially in nursing programmes.

The report showed that of the 870,561 candidates who received the 2022 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results, 323,110 were placed to higher learning institutions in the 2023/2024 placement cycle.

“Of the total number placed, universities got 141,250 students for degree programmes, while Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, teacher training colleges and KMTC got 181,860 cumulatively,” the document indicated.

The placement exercise was done in line with the implementation of the New Funding Model for Higher Education in Kenya where government funding is student-centred as opposed to block-funding of institutions. The new model seeks to increase access to quality education for all students and help universities be financially sustainable by funding students based of their levels of need.

The new model further led to the scrapping of school applications as students will now apply for courses after release of KCSE examination results. The exercise was carried out before the national examination, whereby candidates were required to fill in their choices, which



Students visit the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service’s stand during the Nairobi ASK Show on September 26, 2023

were then shared with KUCCPS.

With the new model, institutions will be required to disclose the list of accredited programmes, their costs and capacities to KUCCPS for publishing to enable students, parents and guardians to make informed decisions during course selection.

In the recent cycle – the data revealed – a total of 792,247 capacities were declared by various institutions, with public universities recording the highest at 200,621 followed by TVETs (478,308) and private universities (52,312). Applicants were accorded three opportunities for revision and selection of courses before they were placed.

Placement agency poised to enhance performance through effective productivity measures

The Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) will adopt productivity measurement in its operations as it endeavours to promote efficiency and delivery of quality services.

This follows a sensitisation workshop on implementation of comprehensive productivity measures that took place at Machakos University from October 30 to November 3, 2023.

The capacity-building exercise – which was led by KUCCPS Chief Executive Officer Dr Mercy Wahome – was spearheaded by the Department of National

Productivity and Competitiveness Centre under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Dr Wahome underscored that productivity management will catalyse achievement of the agency’s mandate by bolstering effectiveness, efficiency and customer satisfaction.



KUCCPS staff undergo training on productivity management at Machakos University Conference Centre in Machakos on October 30, 2023

During the exercise, KUCCPS identified the appropriate metrics and indicators for measuring the achievement of its strategic objectives.

The productivity mainstreaming programme is one of the targets set for all ministries, departments and agencies

(MDAs) in the 20th cycle of Public Sector Performance Contracting 2023/24 financial year.

Dr. Nahashon Moitaleel, Secretary for Productivity in the State Department for Labour and Skills Development, said the government is committed to strengthening performance across all MDAs in the country.

Dr. Moitaleel added that the initiative is aimed at actualising the national government's Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (Beta).

So far, 122 MDAs have gone through the programme and offered technical support in data collection, developing performance metrics and computation of performance index.

The Placement body will now develop a standardised scoring scale, determine scores and calculate a productivity index. It will further conduct an analysis and present the data.

KUCCPS directs varsities, colleges to disclose cost of courses and available capacities

Universities and colleges have up to end of January 2024 to disclose the cost of their academic programmes and available capacities ahead of next year's placement cycle.

In a letter to vice-chancellors and principals, KUCCPS Chief Executive Officer Mercy Wahome said the agency is gearing up to open the application portal to allow students to select courses for the 2024/2025 placement cycle.

Dr Wahome said the exercise will target secondary school leavers who sat their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination in 2023.

"To facilitate preparations and placement processing, institutions are required to declare approved programmes that they wish to offer, programme cost and the capacities indicating the number available in each programme," Dr Wahome said.

Students will have an opportunity to select and review their courses before they are placed to the higher learning institutions. About 903,260 candidates sat

their examination from October 23 to November 24, 2023.

As per the placement criteria, applicants who score a grade of C+ and above will qualify for admission to degree programmes in public universities while the rest will earn slots at technical, vocational, education and training colleges to study diploma, certificate and artisan courses.

On the other hand, the TVET placement cycle will target secondary school leavers who sat their KCSE examination in 2023 to as far back as the year 2000.

Dr Wahome said Form Four leavers will apply for course after the examination results re released. There will be three phases of course selection and revision to ensure all eligible applicants secure places in higher learning institutions.