



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

MEDIA BRIEFING ON

STATUS OF AUTHENTICATION OF ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Dr. David Oginde, Chairperson of the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC);

Mr Twalib Mbarak, Secretary/CEO of Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC);

Mr. Mohamed Amin, Director, Directorate of Criminal Investigations;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning

1. I am delighted to welcome you this morning at Commission House for a briefing on the Status of Authentication of Academic and Professional Certificates in the Public Service.
2. **In October 2022**, the Public Service Commission, pursuant to provisions of Article 234(2) (b), (c) (d) and (g) of the Constitution embarked on the exercise of verifying academic and professional certificates of employees in the public service.
3. The exercise involved the participation of:
 - (i) All public institutions (except those exempted under Article 234(3) of the Constitution);
 - (ii) All public and private institutions of learning (including Universities and Tertiary institutions)
 - (iii) The Kenya National Examinations Council.

Which were required to:

- (i) submit to the Commission lists of graduands in their respective institutions in last 10 years,
 - (ii) submit to the Commission lists of graduands in subsequent graduations in their respective institutions at the end of every calendar year and
 - (iii) provide the Commission with access and verification credentials for online verification of prospective job-seeking candidates' academic and professional certificates.
4. The Commission further directed all Authorized officers in public institutions (*These are officers appointed by the Commission to perform its delegated functions*) to:
- (i) Undertake an audit of academic and professional certificates of all officers employed in the last 10 years;
 - (ii) Dismiss from service, in accordance with the provisions of Public Service Commission Act, 2017, the Public Officer Ethics Act, 2003 and Leadership and Integrity Act, 2012, any officer found in possession of forged certificates; and,
 - (iii) Continuously validate academic and professional certificates prior to any appointment and promotion, and thereafter file quarterly returns to the Commission.
5. Reports so far received reveal that:
- (i) Substantial cases of forged academic and professional certificates have been used for the award of appointments, promotions or re-designation in the Public Service;
 - (ii) Most MDAs with verified cases of forged or fraudulently obtained certificates have instituted disciplinary action including termination of service for the affected officers, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Service Commission Act, 2017, the Public Officer Ethics Act, 2003 and the Leadership and Integrity Act, 2012 but there was also notable inaction by some MDAs without valid reasons;
 - (iii) Some public institutions have allowed the offenders to resign or proceed on early retirement against section 78 of the Public Service Commission Act, 2017 and Regulations 69 of Public Service Commission Regulations, 2020, which stipulates that, "*the Commission or any other appointing authority should not allow exits from the public service, among other things*":

- a. On account of fraud or conspiracy;
 - b. Where exit is aimed at avoiding anticipated or on-going disciplinary case; or
 - c. Where exit is aimed at avoiding outstanding liabilities owed by the officer to the public body.
 - (iv) Further, the report indicates that, many MDAs have not completed the exercise due to factors beyond their control.
6. The following institutions targeted in the exercise were 331 divided as follows:
- (i) All Ministries, State Departments and Agencies - 52;
 - (ii) All State Corporations and Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies - 239;
 - (iii) All Public Universities - 40.
7. Institutions that have complied are 195 out of 331 institutions.
8. The number of officers found with forged certificates across various institutions are as follows:
- (i) Out of the 53,599 cases referred to Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) by 91 public institutions for authentication, 1,280 were verified as forged. However, I hasten to add that this number is not final as the authentication exercise is still ongoing and we expect to receive more cases of forgeries;
 - (ii) 195 MDAs - including Universities and other tertiary institutions - have so far finalized authenticating certificates for 29,314. From this number, 787 officers have been verified to have used forged certificates to procure appointment, promotion or re-designation in the public service.
9. The report reveals the following as some of the most common types of forgeries on academic certificates by officers:
- (i) Alteration of KCSE mean grades;
 - (ii) Forged KCSE Certificates – alleged candidates did not sit for exams but produced certificates required for appointment/employment;
 - (iii) Fake certificates – submitted certificates disowned altogether by the alleged issuing learning institutions;
 - (iv) Alleged candidates confirmed as NOT ever registered in the institutions alleged to have issued certificates;

- (v) Certificate number of the submitted certificate not belonging to the alleged owner;
- (vi) Faked names on the certificate in question – where the culprits name is different from the real owners of the produced certificates;
- (vii) Alleged candidates established to have never sat the alleged examination or registered as candidates; and,
- (viii) Forged – Bachelors Degree Certificate Second Division (Lower) altered to reflect Second Division (Upper).

10. In undertaking this exercise, the Commission observed the following challenges:

- (i) Records relating to academic and professional qualifications are not digitized for ease of verification by the issuing institutions;
- (ii) Delayed feedback on requests for verification of documents from issuing institutions;
- (iii) The cost of verification of certificates is high and some institutions have not been able to undertake or finalize the exercise due to unavailability of a dedicated budgetary allocation;
- (iv) Difficulty in reaching out to some foreign training institutions where public officers have obtained certificates; and,
- (v) Cases of implicated officers resigning or applying for early retirement before disciplinary action was meted against them.

11. Following the authentication exercise, the Commission has guided as follows:

- (i) Employment based on forged certificates is void *ab initio* and such employment should be declared null and void from the date of appointment;
- (ii) Such persons shall not be entitled to any form of benefits including pensions or unpaid allowances and accrued leave;
- (iii) All cases be referred to the Directorate of Criminal Investigations for prosecution and recovery of monies owed and assets procured from the fraudulent activities;
- (iv) Further, considering that the exercise was of national interest geared to the general public good especially in ***upholding the integrity of our training institutions*** and the public service in

respect to academic and professional certificates, MDAs that were yet to commence or finalize the authentication exercise are directed to do so as soon as possible.

12. The Commission has also provided guidance to the MDAs on the initial disciplinary action against culpable employees as provided for in law, which includes dismissal from the service.
13. As you are all aware, forgery or falsification of documents to gain undue advantage against deserving Kenyans is a criminal offense. It is for this reason that the Commission has today brought on board relevant Government institutions to handle matters that are outside its jurisdiction.
14. Accordingly, the Public Service Commission is handing over, here today, the Report on Forged Certificates to the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) and the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI) for necessary legal action.
15. Going forward, the Commission will also work closely with institutions of learning, the Commission of University Education and relevant examination and professional bodies with a view to encouraging them to digitize their respective databases for effective and efficient verification.
16. Falsification of academic certificates has far-reaching implication on service delivery by public institutions, the credibility of our country's education system, the global competitiveness of our graduates at a time when the Government is reaching out to various countries with a view to exporting labour and, most importantly, the economic development of our country. An officer who has secured appointment or promotion on the basis of fake academic qualifications has no integrity and will definitely have a higher propensity for corruption. They must not therefore be entrusted with any public office or resources.
17. In conclusion, I wish to assure the public that the Public Service Commission will not relent until this tumour is removed from our society.

I thank you all for your kind attention.