

# Mass communication now four-year course

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**Prof. Baryamureeba**

MAKERERE University has revamped some of its academic programmes in a restructuring exercise which started with the scrapping of about 30 courses early this year.

A committee appointed on December 4, 2010 by the vice- chancellor, Prof. Venansius Baryamureeba, chaired by Prof. Frederick Jjuko, a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law, said it was acting on the directives of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE).

Among the affected courses is the bachelor's degree in mass communication, whose study period has been increased from three to four years.

"Students should undertake broad academic quality education for the first two years before embarking on the skilled courses of mass communication," says a report submitted to the Senate.

The new academic semester that commenced on August 14 carried with it the waves of change.

Currently, the first year students are pursuing journalism and communication and not mass communication. The programme now comprises six core units which include: introduction to journalism, writing skills, sociology and computer applications.

Previously, only four core units were offered.

The grade point for first class degree under the programme now starts at 4.8, a upper second at 4.3. A lower second begins at 3.9 whereas a pass degree starts at 3.0. In the past, a first class degree started at 4.4-5.0, a upper second at 4.0-4.3, lower second at 3.0-3.9 and a pass degree at 2.0-2.9. The pass mark, however, remains at 50%.

The head of department, Dr. George Lugalambi says the changes will compel students to work harder.

"It was noted that getting an upper second class degree was a piece of cake. The more the course units, the more the students work harder," he says.

The curriculum puts an emphasis on multimedia and this is why the programme's name was changed. It is believed that offering diversity of course units will enable students to have knowledge on all the forms of media that are operating today.

The Senate, at its 141 meeting held on July 28 considered a new classification of degrees from the NCHE.

"The senate has been empowered to work out the new grading system to tally with the classification," Alfred Masikye Namoah, the academic registrar says.

However, the current classification for the second and third year students is to continue. About 100 students were admitted for the academic year 2010/2011 for the programme.

The post-graduate diploma programmes in environmental journalism and mass communication will no longer be offered at the university.

This article can be found on-line at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/9/35/736181>

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