



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

UPDATE ON THE BACHELOR OF MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES PROGRAMME AT THE NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

BY

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**MINISTER OF EDUCATION, INNOVATION, YOUTH, SPORTS, ARTS, AND
CULTURE**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members of the National Assembly,

I rise today to provide the House with an update concerning the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences programme at the Namibia University of Science and Technology, and, in particular, the circumstances affecting students who formed part of the 2025 intake.

I wish at the outset to acknowledge the concerns and uncertainty experienced by the affected students and their families. For a young person who has worked hard towards a professional qualification, uncertainty about whether and where one can continue one's studies is understandably deeply concerning.

The Ministry therefore considers it important that Parliament and the public receive a clear and factual account of the matter, including the steps being taken to protect the interests of students while maintaining the standards required for professional health education.

Honourable Members,

The Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences is a professional programme. In addition to academic instruction, students are required to undertake appropriate practical and work-integrated training under the applicable professional and regulatory requirements.

The 2025 intake at NUST comprised 150 students, making it the largest intake into this programme since its establishment in 2008.

While increased access to higher education is an important national objective, professional programmes must also have sufficient practical training capacity, appropriate facilities and qualified supervision to accommodate the number of students admitted.

The increased size of the 2025 cohort placed considerable pressure on the available practical training capacity, particularly with regard to work-integrated learning placements.

This situation has required NUST to take steps to align the progression of students with available training capacity and the requirements of the Health Professions Councils of Namibia.

Honourable Members,

Following consideration of the students' academic status, admission requirements and available professional training capacity, the 150 students have been categorised according to their individual circumstances.

First, 50 students have been selected for placement in accordance with the available professional training capacity. The required documentation was submitted to the Health Professions Council of Namibia, and these students have received their student registration certificates from the Council.

Second, a further 55 students are currently unable to proceed to practical placement because of capacity constraints. NUST is therefore exploring opportunities with universities within the Southern African Development Community region that offer comparable Medical Laboratory Sciences qualifications.

The University has indicated that it will provide the necessary support to facilitate possible transfers for students who may be accommodated by such institutions.

Third, 20 students were found not to meet the admission requirements for the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences programme.

These students will be considered for placement into other programmes at NUST for the January 2027 intake, subject to their meeting the admission requirements of the programmes concerned and subject, of course, to their own academic interests and choices.

Fourth, 48 students have outstanding modules from their first or second year of study.

These students will be required to complete and pass the outstanding modules before they can progress in the programme.

Honourable Members, will note that these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive in the sense of representing 150 unique students, as a student's circumstances may involve more than one consideration. The University is therefore dealing with each student's academic record and circumstances on an individual basis.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members,

As part of the measures to address the regulatory and training-capacity concerns, NUST did not admit a new cohort into the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences programme for the 2026 academic year.

Applications for this programme also remain closed for the 2027 academic year.

This measure is intended to ensure that the existing challenges are addressed before further students are admitted into a programme requiring substantial practical and professional training.

It is important to distinguish between access to higher education and the requirements governing entry into a regulated health profession.

The Government has a responsibility to expand opportunities for our young people to pursue higher education. At the same time, we cannot compromise the quality and professional standards required to train the health professionals who will ultimately serve the Namibian public.

The Health Professions Council of Namibia has an important statutory role in safeguarding professional standards, including the requirements applicable to the education and training of health professionals.

NUST, as the institution delivering the programme, has a corresponding responsibility to ensure that its programmes are properly resourced and that students receive the academic and practical training required for professional registration.

The Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture will continue to engage with both NUST and the relevant regulatory authorities to ensure that these responsibilities are properly discharged.

Honourable Speaker,

Our immediate concern must be the students.

Whatever the institutional or regulatory challenges may be, students should not be left without clear information about their academic options and the pathway available to them.

I have therefore directed that the Ministry remain engaged with NUST and the relevant stakeholders to monitor the implementation of the measures announced.

Particular attention should be given to:

- providing each affected student with clear information on his or her individual status;
- ensuring that students are treated fairly and consistently;
- facilitating engagement with prospective SADC institutions where transfer opportunities are being explored;
- providing appropriate academic guidance to students who may need to change programmes; and
- ensuring that students with outstanding modules receive clear information on what is required for them to progress.

We must also ensure that communication with students is timely, respectful and transparent.

Honourable Speaker,

The objective must not simply be to resolve the immediate difficulty before us. We must ensure that the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences programme is placed on a sustainable footing. This requires appropriate alignment between student numbers, academic capacity, laboratory facilities, practical training placements, professional supervision and regulatory requirements. It also requires stronger coordination between higher education institutions, professional regulatory bodies and the health sector.

As Namibia continues to expand access to higher education and to develop the human resources required by our economy and our public services, we must ensure that access is matched by quality and by the capacity to train students properly.

Our young people deserve both: the opportunity to enter higher education and the assurance that the qualification they pursue will be properly recognised and professionally credible.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members,

Let me conclude by reiterating that the Ministry is aware of the concerns surrounding the 2025 Medical Laboratory Sciences cohort at NUST.

The University has put measures in place to address the immediate situation, including student placement, exploration of opportunities within the SADC region, alternative study options for eligible students, and the completion of outstanding academic requirements.

The Ministry will continue to monitor these processes and engage with NUST, the Health Professions Council of Namibia and other relevant stakeholders. Our responsibility is to ensure that the interests of students remain central, that professional standards are upheld, and that Namibia continues to produce health professionals who are properly trained and equipped to serve our people.

I thank you.