



TEXT OF A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE RELEASE OF A CONTENTIOUS DOCUMENT TITLED “SCHEMES OF SERVICE FOR POLYTECHNICS” BY THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION (NBTE) DELIVERED AT THE END OF THE 110TH MEETING OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF POLYTECHNICS (ASUP) ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 2024 IN ABUJA

Gentlemen of the Press,

You may recall that our Union had earlier issued a press statement outlining our displeasure on the defining principles conveyed by the Scheme of Service for Polytechnics as received by our Union from the NBTE on the 19th of June, 2024 in Kaduna. We had equally notified the public that after further scrutiny of the document, the position of our Union will be communicated in details to the public.

Having concluded our review process and deliberated extensively on the contents of the controversial document, and after further scrutiny by the Union’s Think Tank Committee (Body of Former Presidents of ASUP), as well as the Council of National Officers (CNO) of the Union, the 110th meeting of the Union’s NEC hereby communicates the following specific findings:

1. The document approved as Schemes of Service for Polytechnics contains significant and fundamental deviations from the document prepared by stakeholders in the sector and coordinated through series of consultative engagements by the NBTE for over 6 years.
2. The document’s approval route which gave rise to the significant and contentious alterations is legally questionable as the role of The Office of The Head of Civil Service of The Federation (OHCSof) as an approving authority is challengeable. This assertion is underlined by the provisions of Section 3 (1) of the Federal Polytechnics Act amended in 2019 where Governing Councils are established for each Polytechnic as Body Corporates with perpetual succession and common seal. The status of these Polytechnics is settled in law by rulings of the National Industrial Court. The Governing Councils are the employers of staff in the Polytechnics and the Federal Executive Council has also underlined same in its recent letter of 18th December 2023 CM1/5.II/1/304 where OHSCoF was excluded from any role in the employment of staff in tertiary institutions. Our conviction is that the OHCSof

cannot be preparing or approving a document on career development of staff including assessment of such staff for career growth when she is neither an employer nor regulator.

3. The status of Nigerian Polytechnics was again brought to question by this controversial document. The tertiary educational institution status of Polytechnics is settled in different laws and policy instruments. Therefore the introduction of sub tertiary level qualifications like in this instance the National Skills Qualifications (NSQ) as mandatory conditions for academic staff career growth is a misnomer as the possession of NSQ has no meaningful contribution to the delivery of the contents of the curricula of the different programs offered at the tertiary education level in Polytechnics. This is again amplified by the sustenance of titles for the Lecturer and Librarian cadres in the document which are at variance with the norm in tertiary education globally.
4. The unwholesome and condemnable discrimination against holders of Higher National Diploma certificates as against holders of Bachelor's degrees from Universities was further entrenched in the document. Several provisions in the controversial document eroded gains made in our Union's battle against this condemnable act. We affirm that Polytechnics cannot discriminate against its products in the manner prescribed in this document. This is evident in the provision of discriminatory entry points into the Lecturer cadre for degree holders and HND holders; lowering the career progression bar of holders of HND both in the teaching and non-teaching cadres; discrimination against holders of HND in the appointment of Registrars and Bursars irrespective of their possession of higher level certificates; classification of technologists as non-teaching staff etc.
5. The contentious document curiously, unjustifiably and unacceptably elongates the career progression steps of the Lecturer cadre from a 7 step to a 9 step career development cadre and at the same time added extra year for promotion to the final two levels. This implies that anyone on the lecturer cadre will now endure a minimum of 26 tortuous years from the base to the highest level. This is not acceptable particularly in view of the fact that this deviates from the norm in other subsectors and that the retirement age in the sector remains unchanged.
6. The unfair career progression guide in the sector particularly as it affects the teaching and non-teaching staff cadres is a recipe for crises as such is not reflective of the remuneration accruing to the cadres.
7. The document was manifest with a proliferation of directorates with unsustainable financial implications on the overhead of the institutions. Equally, we view it as an act of duplicity for the NBTE to enter into a questionable Memorandum of

Understanding with the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria on the issue of the status of the HND program in Pharmaceutical Technology run by Polytechnics, while at the same time creating a cadre which requires manpower of same qualification. This contradiction is unfortunate.

8. The release of documents by the NBTE subtly amending some provisions and seeking approval for amendment of others amounts to an admission of guilt and a halfhearted attempt at lifting the mourning mood in the sector imposed by the release of the contentious scheme of service. This is unsatisfactory and self-indicting on the commitment of the NBTE to the ideals and aspirations of the Nigeria Polytechnic System.

RESOLUTIONS:

Following critical review of the document by the NEC of the Union, and in pursuit of our Union's commitment to the advancement of the interest of members and the Polytechnics in Nigeria, the following resolutions was made:

- A. In view of the fact that several provisions in the document fell short of the expected standards as earlier observed, our Union is hereby issuing a 15 day ultimatum to proprietors of all public polytechnics for the owners of the document, the NBTE to suspend implementation of the identified provisions until the requisite amendments are effected. The ultimatum is with effect from 8th of July 2024.
- B. At the expiration of the 15-day ultimatum, the Union's NEC will reconvene to decide a specific and legitimate course of action to address the issue.
- C. Zones and Chapters of the Union are to prepare members for necessary action within the 15 days ultimatum through Congresses, peaceful protests, and media campaigns on the issue.



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