

# How universities lost out on TSC's lucrative training deal

Only four institutions out of the eight that applied have been awarded contracts

BY DAVID MUCHUNGUH

**D**etails have emerged of how top universities missed out on a multibillion-shilling training programme targeting 500,000 teachers.

Some, like the University of Nairobi, gave the tender a wide berth, according to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), while others were knocked out on technicalities.

As a result, only four institutions out of the eight that applied have been awarded contracts to train tutors under the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) which has faced resistance from some quarters.

The programme is meant for all registered teachers in public and private primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The winners of the contract are Kenyatta University, Riara University, Mt Kenya University and the Kenya Education Management Institute.

## Steeped in debt

"We would have liked to have public universities apply because that's the way to go but they did not," TSC Chief Executive Officer Nancy Macharia said as she singled out UoN.

The snub was shocking since UoN and many public universities are steeped in debt and are in need of extra cash.

The contract is for one-year and the commission said it expects more universities to apply when they advertise for the next one.

The TSC has employed 341,760 teachers while about 150,000 others work in private schools and others are unemployed.

Under the TPD programme, teachers will be required to undertake an upskilling module every five years or risk losing their teaching licences.

There are six modules to cover, with each priced at Sh6,000 an-



Mount Kenya University Vice Chancellor Deogratius Jaganyi (right) receives a letter of accreditation to offer the Teacher Professional Development Programme from Teachers Service Commission chief executive Nancy Macharia (left) on September 22 in Nairobi. PHOTO | POOL

nually for five years. This means that a teacher will pay Sh180,000 for the entire period.

Ms Macharia said the four institutions that applied but were not selected failed to meet the technical specifications.

Among the technical requirements, the institutions were meant to provide evidence of financial ability in undertaking the assignment and attach copies of audited financial statements for three years.

This might have been a hindrance as some public universities have been declared insolvent by the auditor-general.

Additionally, they were expected to present valid a tax compliance certificate from the Kenya Revenue Authority where some universities are in default.

"One condition was for them (universities) to have centres or campuses at the county level. Others didn't have online platforms, which is a requirement," Ms Macharia said.

The training will begin in December and teachers will have face-to-face training for five days during the holidays and two online follow-up sessions and blended learning.

The in-person training will be undertaken at sub-county training centres across the country. The four institutions cleared to

offer the training have already started advertising for the courses targeting to enrol students when schools close for the Christmas holidays.

"The service provider will be wholly responsible for collection of the fee directly from the teachers and the commission will not be accountable for the non-payment of fees by any of the teachers or instructional leaders," reads the contract TSC signed with the institutions.

Ms Macharia said the TPD programme is compulsory for all teachers and that the training modules were developed to ad-

dress skills gaps raised through the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development.

"A teacher who fails to undertake TPD shall be dealt with accordingly. TPD is a compliance requirement to qualify to practice in the teaching profession. We shall have quality education and pride in our profession," she said.

TSC had planned to roll out the programme in 2018 but the plan was derailed following a court case by the Kenya National Union of Teachers, which moved to court demanding that TSC pay for the teachers' training.

The case was withdrawn by the new leadership of the union which assumed office in June.

"TSC is an employer and a regulator. As a regulator is where we've been misunderstood a bit. TPD is within the law according to the Code of Regulation for Teachers," Ms Macharia Teachers who are about to retire have also questioned the rationale behind demanding that they undergo the training.

"This is a formal programme that requires registered teachers to continuously improve their pedagogical and management skills for quality learner outcomes," Ms Macharia said.

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