HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY CLARIFIES REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING THE AWARD OF DOCTORAL DEGREES, APPOINTMENT TO PROFESSORIAL POSITIONS AND AFFILIATION WITH FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The **Higher Education Authority (HEA)** has noted with concern reports involving an institution operating in Northern Province and purporting to have the status of a university college, including claims of affiliation with a foreign Higher Education Institution and the conferment of honorary doctorates and professorships.

The Authority wishes to clarify that there is currently **no Higher Education Institution (HEI) registered by HEA as a university college in Northern Province**.

The Authority further wishes to clarify that its records do not indicate an approved affiliation between a private Higher Education Institution in Northern Province and a foreign higher education institution in relation to the matter that has come to its attention.

Under **section 39A** of the **Higher Education Act, 2013**, as amended by the **Higher Education (Amendment) Act, 2021**, a private Higher Education Institution intending to affiliate a college or another private Higher Education Institution is required to apply to the Authority for approval.

Further, **section 39B** provides for the Authority to approve, subject to the requirements prescribed by law, an affiliation involving a college or another private Higher Education Institution situated within or outside the Republic of Zambia.

Therefore, **Higher Education Institutions** and members of the public are advised that the mere existence of an agreement, collaboration, partnership, memorandum of understanding (MoU) or other arrangement between a local institution and a foreign institution does not, on its own, constitute an affiliation recognised under the Higher Education Act.

The Authority further wishes to emphasise that affiliation does not confer upon an institution the right to operate above the level at which it is registered or established.

Section 39C of the Higher Education Act expressly provides that an affiliated college or other private Higher Education Institution shall not offer any type of education outside the level at which that institution is registered or established.

Accordingly, an institution registered as a college remains limited to the level prescribed for a college, regardless of any affiliation it may enter into. Under **section 2** of the Higher Education Act, a college provides tertiary education up to certificate and diploma level. An affiliation with a university or any other institution, whether within or outside Zambia, does not elevate the registered status of that college.

Similarly, an institution cannot lawfully present itself or operate as a university, university college or other category of Higher Education Institution unless it has been registered or established as such in accordance with the Higher Education Act.

In this regard, **section 49** of the Higher Education Act prohibits a person who does not hold the requisite certificate of registration from establishing or operating a private Higher Education Institution or using the title "university" or "college" in a manner contrary to the Act.

The Authority also wishes to clarify the position regarding **honorary professorships**.

In the Zambian context, a professorship is an earned academic rank in line with the Authority's Guidelines for Promotion of Academic Staff in Higher Education Institutions, not an academic qualification. The Higher Education (Amendment) Act does not recognise honorary professorships or provide for the conferment of professorial positions on an honorary basis. Therefore, an honorary professorship cannot be represented as an earned professorial rank or an academic qualification in the Republic of Zambia.

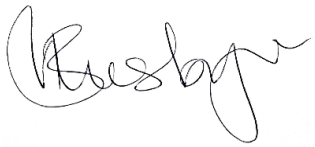
This should be distinguished from honorary degrees and other similar awards that may be conferred by a duly established Higher Education Institution in accordance with its statutes and the applicable law.

Members of the public are encouraged to verify the registration status and classification of any institution purporting to provide higher education in Zambia, as well as the accreditation status of its learning programmes, before relying on any representations made by that institution. For the avoidance of doubt, colleges and university colleges are not authorised to confer doctoral degrees, whether earned or honorary.

The Authority further calls upon institutions to ensure that any local or international affiliations are undertaken strictly in accordance with the Higher Education Act and that such arrangements are not used to circumvent registration, accreditation or classification requirements.

HEA remains committed to protecting the integrity, credibility and quality of Zambia's higher education system.

For verification and further information, members of the public may visit **www.hea.org.zm**, email **info@hea.org.zm** or call (+260) 976 936 658.



Mr. **Birbal Boniface Musoba**
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Notes to Editors

About HEA: The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is a statutory body established under the Higher Education Act, 2013. The mandate of the Authority is to regulate and monitor standards in higher education in order to ensure quality and contribute to the enhancement of human capital and national development. HEA commenced operations in 2015.

Information on registered private and recognised public Higher Education Institutions, including accredited learning programmes, is available on the Authority's official website, **www.hea.org.zm**.

The lists of registered Higher Education Institutions and accredited learning programmes are dynamic and are updated as regulatory decisions are made. Journalists and members of the public are encouraged to verify current information directly from **www.hea.org.zm**, by emailing **info@hea.org.zm** or calling (+260) 976 936 658.

Learn more and connect with us!

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