

Guidelines. Pardon advisory committee shall provide a pathway for students to:

University to give expelled students second chance

Students who have served at least one year of expulsion, those who are remorseful and have demonstrated change of character will be readmitted

By Augustine Oduor
aoduor@standardmedia.co.ke

The University of Nairobi has set guidelines that will see students expelled for disciplinary cases allowed to complete their education.

Students who have served at least one year of expulsion, and those who are remorseful and have demonstrated change of character will be readmitted to continue with studies.

The details are contained in the University of Nairobi guidelines and framework for pardon advisory committee (PAC).

The University of Nairobi PAC is established in line with section 37 of the Universities Act (2012) and seeks to give a second chance to students who may have erred in the past and have admitted their mistakes.

Vice Chancellor Stephen Kiama said the committee shall provide a pathway for students to appeal to the chair of Senate to exercise the power of pardon.

However, students with a criminal cases pending before court will be exempted from pardon.

The committee shall recommend to the chair of Senate to grant a free or conditional pardon to an expelled student.

The committee may also propose to the Senate to postpone punishment of a student, either for a specified or indefinite period, or substitute a less severe form of punishment.

And in other cases the team may recommend remitting all or part of a punishment.

"The verdict of the committee is final. There will be no appeal against the committee's decision," read the guidelines.

Under the guidelines, the team will review all petitions and determine students' worthiness for relief.

The committee will also take into account written views of the victims of the violation in respect of which it

shall consider to pardon.

The Standard has established that starting this week, the university will roll out sittings of the special committee that will listen to the students on case-by-case basis and give verdicts that would positively change their lives.

"Once they start sitting they will filter all cases and have them heard," said Prof Kiama.

The VC noted that this was part of the wider reforms agenda for the university.

"If you look around, some of the best brains in leadership were once students expelled in various universities for various mistakes. And they have excelled because they had a small window to complete their education after reforming character," he said.

Kiama said some of the expelled students took asylum while others went on self-exile to countries where they enrolled in universities and excelled.

"It is, therefore, the responsibility of the university and its governance organs to observe, respect, protect, promote and fulfill the power of pardon as part of its integral social, economic, and cultural

policies on expelled students," said Kiama.

The VC explained that every academic year, the university admits top brains - who excel in national examinations - and because of their teenage nature, they are bound to make mistakes based on wrong judgements.

"We cannot punish them forever. If we fail to give them (students) chance then we will kill their aspirations and hopes of the communities they come from," he said. The VC said the pardon committee will work on the realisation that as human beings, we are bound to make mistakes.

"In fact, even the president pardons convicts every year under the law of power of mercy on the basis that they have demonstrated change in character and have realised their mistake," he said.

If well implemented, other institutions will benchmark with the university in a major reform plan that will accord chance to thousands of students who have lost hope after committing mistakes.

To be eligible to file a pardon petition, one must demonstrate that they have exhausted all internal administrative mechanisms.

They must have also exhausted all administrative and legal mechanisms in place at the university on violation of the Code of Conduct.

Also, they must have been accused of an offence and the process of conviction already completed.

"They will provide at least three primary character references to accompany the petition. Persons related to a petitioner by blood or marriage cannot be used as a primary character reference," read the guidelines.

Students will also be required to state specific reasons for which pardon is sought and attach any relevant documentary evidence that indicates how a pardon will help them accomplish student life.

Overall, the student must demonstrate ability to lead a responsible, productive and law-abiding student life.

"Failure to fully and accurately complete the appeal may be construed as a falsification of a petition, which may provide a reason for denial of pardon," read the guidelines.



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