

## Doubts over Jo'burg courses

Students who are part of an artisans development programme claim a Johannesburg college is running an unregistered course.



The programme was designed by the department of higher education to develop electrical and civil engineering students and the six-month course is offered by Central Johannesburg College in Ellis Park.

The students claim the course was not registered with the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education Training Authority (Merseta) and that this meant their test results would not be recognised.

One student said that since they started in mid-May, they had not done any practicals. "We are scared that we are wasting our time," said the student, who asked not to be named for fear of victimisation. "Some students have already dropped out of the programme because of non-activity."

The student added that if the course was not registered, as they had heard, "we are doomed". "The results of the tests we write won't be recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)."

### Students drop out

Most students said they had to drop out of college to be part of the programme on a full-time basis. "We thought this will assist in our practicals because as artisans we needed 18 months for practicals," said another student.

Merseta's senior manager in the education and training quality assurance division, Christo Basson, said Merseta has no record on its system of an artisans development programme.

"If there are no formal contracts signed, and the learners are not recorded on the Merseta database, there will be no recognition of the learning," he said.

"The results of such learning will not be recognised by SAQA either."

Asked if there was a penalty for colleges offering courses which are not registered, Basson said: "If a provider offers a course without accreditation, the institution will be informed that this is an illegal activity. It may be reported to the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations or legally prosecuted."

Students also claimed the college has failed to deliver on its mandate. "We don't have our own class. We don't have proof of registration, but we are part of the programme," they said.

The students claimed the college was not following the seven steps set by the department of higher training. The steps are career guidance, fundamental and vocational theory, learner programme registration, a trade test, quality assurance and certification as well as work training.

Source: Sowetan via I-Net Bridge

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