

Uproar over law exam question papers

• NDAPEWOSHALI SHAPWANALE

HUNDREDS of law students could not sit for one of their qualifying examinations at the University of Namibia's Khomasdal campus on Wednesday evening due to a shortage of question papers.

The candidates showed up at the venue for the examination as part of their qualifying requirements, but could not sit for the paper, and are now demanding that the examination be nullified and retaken.

The students attend the year-long course at the Justice Training Centre (JTC) before writing an exam which will determine whether they can be admitted as legal practitioners.

The JTC is controlled by the Board of Legal Education, which falls under the justice ministry, and is chaired by Chief Justice Peter Shivute.

Students told *The Namibian* on Wednesday evening that they were supposed to write the exam at 17h30.

While about 80 students sat for the exam, more than 200 others had to go home without writing the exam after waiting from 17h30 to 21h15.

"This is so disappointing. We pay N\$15 000 for this programme, and this is what we have to deal with," a student who declined to be named, charged.

She said that she was among those who were forced to go home after waiting for hours for question papers to arrive, without success.

According to the students, there had been no communication regarding the rescheduling of the examination by yesterday afternoon.

Another student who just wanted to be identified as Joseph for fear of victimisation told *The Namibian* on Wednesday evening that he is repeating the module, and cannot afford to repeat again.

The lecturer of the module, advocate Yo-

leta Campbell, told *The Namibian* yesterday that the students angrily notified her of the incident, and that she is aware that some students did not write the exam.

Asked why there were not enough question papers, Campbell said while she lectures and sets the question paper for the module, the JTC is responsible for logistics such as the printing of question papers.

She, too, was not aware of any postponement or nullification of yesterday's examination.

JTC director Samuel Amoo declined to comment on whether the exam will be nullified and retaken.

Unam spokesperson John Haufiku told *The Namibian* that the university was made aware of the incident yesterday evening, but that the JTC is independent of the university.

Haufiku said the problem was caused by more students going to write the module than those who qualified for the exam.

"Some requirements need to be met before a student can sit for that exam. Only around 100 qualifying students were expected, but close to 400 showed up, and that is where the problem started," he explained.

He added that the university and the board for legal education were, after yesterday, discussing a proposal for the university's examination department to take over the examination process. The university resolved yesterday to take over the examination after the pro vice-chancellor, Frednand Gideon, expressed disappointment at the way the examination was being conducted as it did not meet university standards.

"We need the board's [board for legal education] permission first of course, but the university wants to take over the process," Haufiku said.

Secretary to the board of legal education, Amber Coerecius told *The Namibian* that the board could not respond to questions regarding the incident yesterday, as they needed to meet and address the queries first.