

# **INCLUSIVENESS AND SENSITISATION OF KEY EXTERNAL ACTORS**



**OPENING REMARKS OF THE REGISTRAR,  
PROF. IS-HAQ OLANREWaju OLOYEDE, OFR, FNAL AT THE  
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT ON  
MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF 2017 UTME**

**HOLDING AT AREWA HOUSE,  
KADUNA, KADUNA STATE**

**ON WEDNESDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2017**

**PROTOCOLS**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

On behalf of the Management and staff of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, I happily welcome participants to this Strategic Planning Retreat on the Structure of Supervision and Evaluation of the Conduct of the 2017 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME).

When we sent out invitation to you and gave you a very short notice, we were skeptical on your finding time out of your tight schedules to honour our invitation. However, this large turnout has further confirmed our identification and choice of you as critical stakeholders with genuine and undiluted interest in this Nation's education sector in general and in its assessment and evaluation sub-sector in particular where the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board plays a major role. I therefore thank you and appreciate your presence here today.

Before I go further, please permit me to pay tributes to my illustrious predecessors in office. We pray that the soul of Mr. Michael S. Angulu continue to enjoy eternal rest. Mr. Angulu as the first Registrar of the Board laid the foundation on which his successors have continued to build on. I salute Dr. Mohammed Abdulrahman, OON for the strong pillars built on the initial foundation and for the strong commitment at domesticating and internalizing various major activities that were hitherto carried out abroad. I congratulate Professor Bello A. Salim, OFR for the various innovations introduced into the system and for starting online activities, particularly in the registration process and the introduction of external monitors in the conduct of the Board's examination. I commend Professor Adedibu Ojerinde, OON for taking the bull by the horn with

the introduction of the Computer Based Test (CBT) to replace the Paper and Pencil Test (PPT) in the administration of the Board's examination.

I am not unmindful of the acting tenures of Dr. Saleh Abubakar and Dr. Peter I. Odor for which they are all commended. There are many retired Directors of the Board who have been invited to this Retreat and who have graciously honoured us with their attendance. I congratulate you all and others who are not here on your modest efforts. You have all served your fatherland meritoriously and the Nation is proud of you.

## **2.0 IDEALS OF THE JOINT ADMISSIONS AND MATRICULATION BOARD**

On my assumption of office as the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) Registrar of the Board, I pledged to revisit and revamp the original ideals of those who thought it most appropriate to have a body like this Board and to pursue with vigour and passion their original objectives. I therefore salute the vision of the Vice-Chancellors of the then six (6) Universities who introduced the idea of synergy of their mandate in the areas of entrance examination and admission into the few universities that the Nation had. If synergy, peer review, cost saving, elimination of wastages, collaboration, cooperation and enhancement of academic excellence were identified and recognised then with only six Universities, these salient attributes, ideas and ideals are now more than ever before the basic of all requirements that are most critical for the integration and cohesion of the Nation's Tertiary Education.

Though a lot of water has passed under the bridge between 1977 and today, the idea of inclusiveness is still as germane today as it was many years back. This is why between August 2016 when I assumed duties and

this month, March, 2017, a period of eight months, I have visited various Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, where I have met with the Management of the various institutions in order to renew and restrengthen our relationship and partnership. The Managements of the Board has also met with the Committee of Vice-Chancellors, Committee of Rectors and Committee of Provosts. We have equally met with the Management of National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). We have taken the Board's major events and activities to the Bayero University, Kano, Baze University, Abuja, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, University of Lagos, and others.

A few weeks ago in February, 2017, we held a retreat in Abeokuta, Ogun State where we were guest of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, who as Head of State in 1977 promulgated the enabling law of the this Board and gave birth to the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board. At the retreat, we looked at the processes of registration and admission, we reviewed them and we adopted new strategies in tandem with new thinking and new challenges.

It is therefore in our stride and continuation at bringing all stakeholders on board our inclusive train that we have organised this retreat to take

another look at the Board's supervision and evaluation of its conduct of the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME).

The aim of this retreat is to adopt an all-inclusive mode of examination supervision and evaluation. Recognising the stakeholding of major players in the Tertiary Education Sector, the Board wishes to give operational responsibilities to the major players in the administration of the Board's examination. It is not enough for Politically Exposed Persons (PEP) to visit examination centres with sirens and large entourage of government functionaries with very little impact to show for their participation, other than to be under television camera lights and beamed same to the whole world but yet, the outcome of the examination is laced with stories of examination malpractice. This time around, the major players with requisite integrity, intelligence and appropriate knowledge of the assessment would be fully engaged to actively participate in the supervision of the examination.

### **3.0 INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO SALE OF APPLICATION DOCUMENTS**

As part of our approach to the ideal of Inclusiveness, we invited all Central Bank of Nigeria approved commercial banks to participate in the sale of the 2017 Board's Application Documents. Sixteen (16) commercial banks and NIPOST honoured attended the interactive session where we explained the reason and need for all of them to partake in the exercise.

After the interactive session, thirteen (13) banks including NIPOST signified interest to participate in the sale of the 2017 Application

Documents. Between the date of commencement of sale on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> March and yesterday, Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2017, the following nine banks have paid for the number of Application Documents they require in the first instance.

The banks are:

- (i) Zenith Bank
- (ii) Union Bank
- (iii) Sterling Bank
- (iv) Unity Bank
- (v) First City Monument Bank
- (vi) Fidelity Bank
- (vii) First Bank
- (viii) Skye Bank
- (ix) Jaiz Bank

Still in the spirit of our All-Inclusive approach, backed by our sincerity of intent and purpose, honesty, integrity and truthfulness and with the sole aim and objective of reaching out to all nooks and crannies both in urban and rural areas, we had to patronise the NIPOST, a sister agency, which has the reach out to very remote towns and villages. Even when NIPOST could not raise the capital to purchase the pins for the Application Documents, we had to open a credit line for NIPOST to also vend pin and pay later without reducing the commission that the organisation is entitled to per sale of document.

No bank needed to know the Registrar or any Management member or anybody at all before being patronised. Rather every bank was given the opportunity to participate. We are actually for everybody and belong to everyone.

#### **4.0 PIN VENDING SYSTEM**

Emerging from the retreat at Abeokuta, the Board has innovated a contemporary sale of application method, which has led to the elimination of scratch cards. The Board has adopted a cost saving procedure PIN Vending System. It is a secured system which has redressed the sharp practices associated with the use of scratch cards.

We are aware of the teething problems attendant to the introduction of the new sale format, and as a responsive body, we have taken steps to ease the challenges and in a few days, the results would be a seamless registration exercise all over the country.

#### **5.0 SUPERVISION OF THE UNIFIED TERTIARY MATRICULATION EXAMINATION**

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board has no university of its own. It is our desire that all concerned should take the UTME as their own and make it a project. The process and product of the examinee would end up in our various tertiary institutions and as such, we should be mindful of this process. Whatever level of preparation carried out by us towards the conduct of the 2017 examination, if it is not well supervised, it will not produce the kind of results we expect.

The Board is using this retreat to place a clarion call to all stakeholders to ensure that all hands are on deck to make the conduct of public examination better.

The conduct of the Board's examination which is a selection examination is the foundation of the quality of education in Nigeria. In view of this, I urge you to see Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination and your involvement as a call to national duty and personal sacrifice.

I therefore urge all stakeholders especially our tertiary institutions to be actively involved in the supervision of the Board's examination which will at the end benefit all and boost the quality of candidates that will be admitted into various institutions.

No sacrifice in this regards would be too big or too small to make by you and all Nigerians, as no amount can be paid to you that is worth your integrity.

## **6.0 EXAMINATION SCHEDULES**

A large number of candidates who register for the Board's examination are those who are also taking their Senior School Certificate Examination. These candidates sit for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination usually need in March/April when they have not completed the syllabus of the public examinations. This contributes to some extent to the dismal performance of the candidates in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination.

What we have done this year is to ensure that the examination is scheduled in such a way that the candidates would be prepared and ready for both UTME and SSCE.

To achieve this, we met with other sister examination bodies and streamlined our timetables not only to ensure that candidates are prepared but also to avoid any clash of examination dates.

### **7.0 USE OF EIGHT KEYS WITHOUT A MOUSE**

From the general feedback on the adoption of the Computer Based Test mode, we have noted the challenge of computer low level literacy of some candidates, especially with the phobia for the mouse. This has been responsible partly for the call by some people for reversal to the Paper and Pencil Test mode. In order to ensure equity and level playground for all candidates taking the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, the Board has designed a system that will allow candidates use only eight (8) keys without the use of the mouse.

All the candidates need to do is to press the letters A,B,C,D for responses (answer) to questions and keys:

P = Previous question

N = Next question

S = Submit responses when candidate has finished examination

R = Reverse (do not intend to go further to submit again)

## **8.0 EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF CANDIDATES TO CENTRES**

Following the standardisation of the Computer Based Test (CBT) centres in terms of carrying capacity of two hundred and fifty (250), candidates would be distributed evenly to all centres without any discrimination. No Centre would be favoured and no Centre would be discriminated against.

The examination Schedule, Timetable and Sessions have all been designed, streamlined and synchronised for the examination to start and end on the same day, except otherwise dictated by the number of candidates in a few states with low subscription.

## **9.0 NEW TRAINING MANUAL, FORMS AND ORGANOGRAM OF EXAMINATION OFFICIALS**

From this year, the Board has automated different reporting forms for examination officials. These forms have been reviewed such that they are now designed to be responsive to issues at centres to serve as a quick signal for both the examination and Centre situations.

A new structure has also been put in place for the administration of the examination. We have introduced officials such as the Chief External Examiners, Zonal External Examiners, External Examiners, Peace Monitors etc.

All these categories of officials and their roles would be explained in the presentation that would follow shortly after these introduction and opening remarks.

## **10.0 AFFIRMATIVE INCLUSIVENESS FOR THE BLIND CANDIDATES**

Please permit me, once again to salute and appreciate my predecessors in office for all the efforts that they put in place to take the Board to its present height. In particular, we note their efforts, commitment and passion for the candidates with different ability, especially the blind candidates. A lot of resources is committed every year for the conduct of the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination for the blind candidates.

Meanwhile, in order to amplify the past efforts and also expand the frontiers of equity and inclusiveness, we have met with the Executive Committee of the Association of Blind Persons in Nigeria at the Board's Headquarters in Abuja in February 2017 and we also met with prospective blind candidates from a school for the blind in Lagos about two weeks ago at the University of Lagos. The outcome of these meetings revealed that, while the challenged group fully appreciates the Board's recent efforts at improving and upgrading the facilities for the administration of the Board's examination for the blind candidates, with the purchase of sophisticated and expensive Braille Apex equipment, the paradox of it, is that we have put majority of the blind candidates at a disadvantage as many of them have never been exposed to these latest gadgets in the various schools.

Though, the Board also made efforts at training the blind candidates on the equipment before the examination, it is apparent that the two days to one week training and exposure to the sophisticated gadgets are inadequate and have little impact on them before the examination. The

Association pleaded that the Board takes another look at our approach in order to have value for the resources that we are committing to their teaching, learning and assessment.

Firstly after our interaction, the Board appealed to some universities and other tertiary institutions to admit all the blind candidates that met the minimum requirement for registration in the 2016 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination and I am happy to inform this august gathering that all candidates who fall into this category have been admitted. I thank the Vice Chancellors and Provosts who graciously partnered with us to admit the blind candidates into their institutions.

Secondly, the Board has approached the Digital Bridge Institute to partner with it to set up Visually Impaired Candidates centres where the blind candidates can be trained all year round and which can also serve as examination centres for them. The Institute has agreed to set up these dedicated centres in Abuja, Lagos and Kano in 2018 and the Board will support the centres with all necessary inputs that would make teaching, learning and assessment at the centres seamless. The centres would also have residential accommodation for the blind candidates and their guides.

Thirdly, having noted the complaints of the Association and looking forward to 2018 when the project of dedicated centres would come to fruition, the Board has reached an understanding with the Association for the Blind Persons in Nigeria and Blind students in Lagos, that an abridged approach would be used for the 2017 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, whereby, all prospective blind candidates would be invited

to three centres in the country for special assessment in their subjects of choice that are relevant to their desired courses and programmes. The Board is reaching out to academics and counsellors in special education to handle this special assessment with each candidate.

The session would be interactive with the purview covering the Use of English and three subjects, just like the sighted candidate. The assessment would be scored and each candidate would be given his or her score. The outcome of the exercise and the ordinary level results in the Senior School Certificate Examination will form the basis for the recommendation of these candidates to the various tertiary institutions of their choices.

In addition, the Board shall be responsible for the transportation and accommodation of every blind candidate and one guide.

These affirmative actions of the Board for the differently abled persons are also part of our all-inclusive approach to all comers. Again and indeed, we are for everybody.

### **11.0 AWAITING RESULT**

For the umpteenth time, I would want to use this opportunity to emphasize that awaiting result candidates are eligible to register and sit for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination.

However, they would not be considered for admission on awaiting result status. The Board urges all candidates desirous of admission to upload their O' level results on the Board's portal the moment they receive them

and before the commencement of admission exercise as their O' level results would form a crucial part of their registration requirements.

## **12.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this retreat's objective is hinged on sensitisation of key stakeholders and on your responsibilities, not only to the Board but to the Nigerian Nation and to also alert you to the readiness of the Board's enhanced inclusiveness in our approach at reassuring you that we are on this journey together and together we shall succeed.

Let me again thank you all for honouring our invitation to be here today. Your sacrifice to participate and contribute to the fine-tuning of the supervision and evaluation of the Board's examination are clear demonstration of your deep interest in the development of education in Nigeria.

We are determined to make a change with this examination as we are aware of the strategic role our examination plays in deciding the direction of tertiary education in Nigeria. We appeal to you all to give us the required support.

At the end the various remarks, presentations, interaction and comments, we shall be breaking into syndicate groups where each cluster would discuss in deeper details the expected roles and obligations of each examination official. The guiding principle would be to formulate ideas and map out strategies that would ensure the maintenance and sustenance of the integrity of the Board's examination and the sanctity of its process.

Thank you.