

Computer courses to be compulsory in middle level colleges

Eighty per cent of students, lecturers and administrators in intermediate institutions are not computer proficient

BY BENJAMIN MUINDI
bmuindi@ke.nationmedia.com

Computer studies will be compulsory for students aspiring to join the government's tertiary training institutions, says a baseline survey conducted by the Ministry of Higher Education in the 47 mid-level colleges in the country.

The study shows that 80 per cent of students, lecturers and administrators are not computer proficient.

Studies in computers will be offered during the first year of learning, regardless of the course that one will be pursuing in colleges.

"A curriculum is to be developed for all entry level students to ensure they acquire good foundation computer skills," the government report says, adding that where already offered, the curriculum is to be revised.

This means that more than 18,000 students currently enrolled in the institutions that include polytechnics, university colleges, technical training institutes and institutes of technology may undergo refresher courses in computers.

Computers policy

Findings of the baseline study indicate that the institutions do not have a formal computers policy. Of the few institutions, only a fifth have developed computers work plans and have made budget allocations.

Although a high level of confidence has been registered in the relevance of existing computers policies, respondents cast doubt on institutional capacity for policy implementation.

"The ministry will explore globally recognised options or other internationally certifiable computer courses that are aligned to the job market and for which students will earn additional certifications," the report says.

The findings that are yet to be made official to the colleges say the cur-

riculum is to be revised.

The survey started last year to assess computer proficiency in the colleges at a time that Kenya is working towards becoming a middle income economy and eventually a knowledge society by implementing its developmental blueprint — Vision 2030.

In the new order, course schedules will be reviewed to allow for the acquisition of computer skills. "Additional attention needs to be given to ensure that adequate time is built into class schedules to accommodate this," says the report.

“

The ministry will explore globally certifiable computer courses that are aligned to the job market”

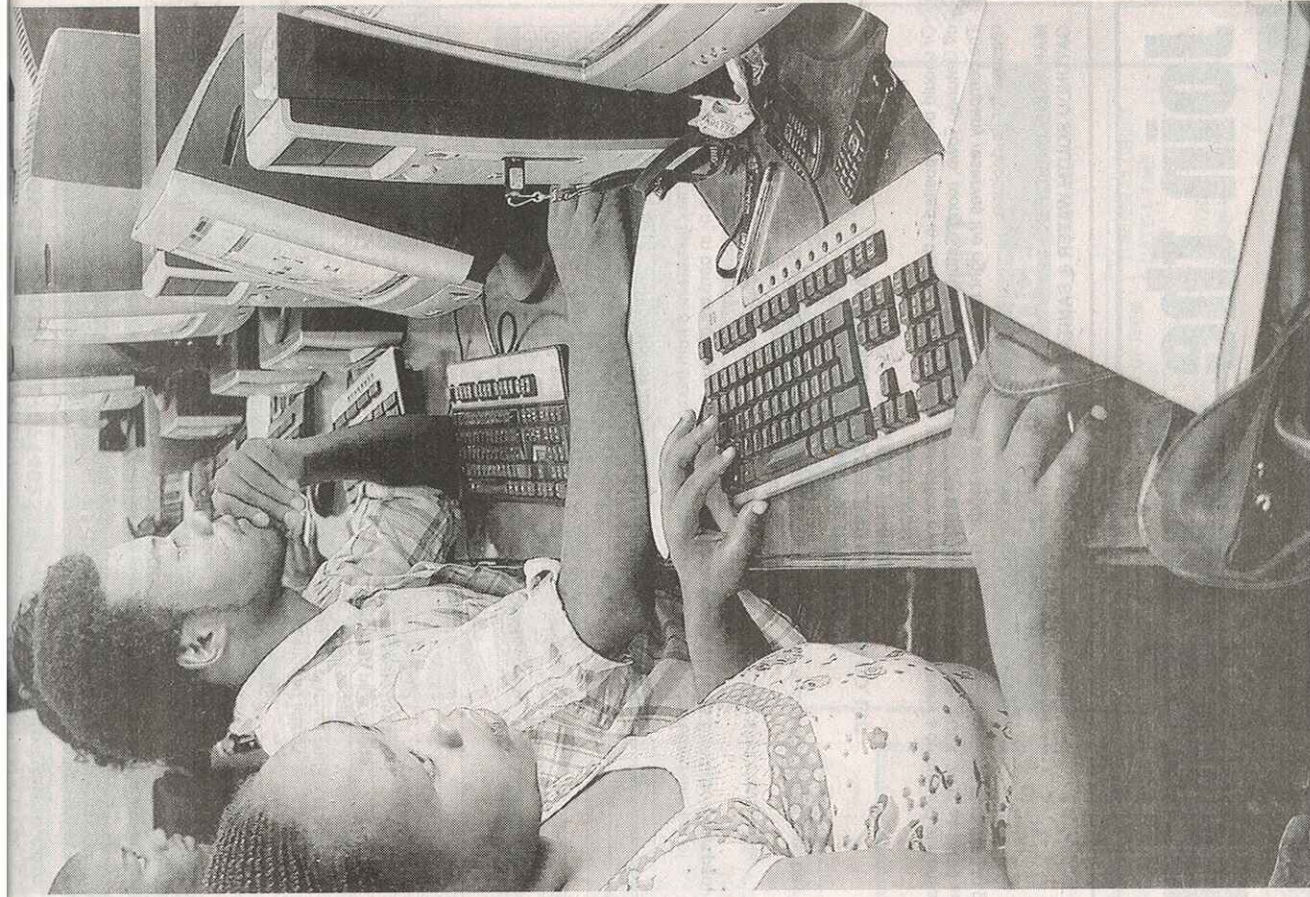
Ministry of Higher Education report

The registered frequency of computer use in teaching practice was rated poorly. "This is partly due to low computer (knowledge) among lecturers since the art of teaching and learning through and with computers is largely driven by individuals rather than institutional policy."

The report therefore recommends a review in the curriculum at the teacher training institutions.

Access to tools and resources at the institutions should also be planned. "The complexity of integrating computers in education demands careful planning and execution," says the report

Specialised computer skills are required in the workplace for production and communication, and are seen as an essential complement to traditional content



FILE | NATION

University of Nairobi journalism and public relations students in a computer laboratory last February.

Most of the students expressed concerns that both the curriculum and assessment systems were outmoded.

Secondary school leavers who do not proceed to university directly join the colleges for two-year craft courses or three-

National polytechnics, technical teachers colleges, institutes of technology, technical training institutes, industrial training centres, youth polytechnics, vocational training centres and other private commercial colleges will be affected by this