

Government takes over payment of universities' salaries

By Abdul Fonti – Communication Strategist, Office of the President

The Government of Sierra Leone will start paying salaries and other allowances of academic and administrative staff of tertiary education institutions. To this effect, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between and among the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE), the Ministry of Finance and various tertiary institutions (universities/colleges).



Signing Ceremony Taking Place

The signing ceremony took place at the conference hall of the Finance Ministry on Friday July 12 2019. The Minister of Finance, Jacob Jusu Saffa said the tireless efforts of the MTHE officials in making this intervention a reality justify the decision of the President to separate the education ministry.



The Minister of Finance Jacob Jusu Saffa

“Integrating the university payroll into the national payroll is part of the government’s public expenditure review which includes payroll audit,” he announced.

The new arrangement, he said, will ensure prompt monthly payment to university staff.

The MOU dictates that the government undertakes payment of salaries and allowances including rent, medical, annual leave and 10% NASSIT contribution of core staff.

The minister noted that salary payments to associate lecturers and other allowances including ex-gratia payment to contract staff will be undertaken by the institutions using government subvention and internally generated funds.

He called on tertiary education institutions to ensure prompt reporting of staff termination, replacement, recruitment and all relevant information.

The Minister of Technical and Higher Education, Prof. Aiah Gbakima said the days of strike actions by lecturers are over, noting that the new direction government prioritises lecturers’ welfare.



The Minister of Higher Education Prof. Aiah Gbakima

He called on the universities/colleges to ensure timely submission of relevant information to the ministries of finance and higher education.

“We expect high level of efficiency from the lecturers with this new arrangement,” he expressed.

Deputy Minister of Technical and Higher Education, Dr. Turad Senesie described the event as a milestone that will support quality education.



The Deputy Minister of MTHE Dr. Turad Senesie

“This move marks the end of an era where lecturers go for months without salaries,” he noted, while highlighting the challenges being faced by university staff over the years.

According to him, “we have witnessed situations of staff allowances being accumulated over a period of one year with no assurance of bulk payment”.

Lecturers, he said, have been struggling to maintain their respect and dignity in various communities as their kids were being asked out of schools for failure to timely pay tuition fees.

He however noted that the latest laudable intervention by the government will require commitment from the lecturers to improve on the standard of education in the country through better service delivery.

With the new arrangement, the government will ensure timely payment of salaries on a monthly basis, he said.

“This new direction government places premium on welfare of lecturers,” he reiterated, adding that the government is determined to minimise poverty and support savings.

The Deputy Minister assured the public that the current government has prioritised human capital development ‘and will continue to take steps to ensure sustainable solutions to chronic challenges in all sectors’.

Tertiary Education Commission’s Prof. Alghali said this epoch making step will address welfare challenges and minimize strike actions.



Chairman, Tertiary Education Commission’s Prof. Alghali

He however called on all stakeholders to ensure they embark on ‘forward planning’ to ensure that the challenges with the new system are minimised.

He urged the beneficiary institutions to be proactive and swift in responding to queries and requests to ensure seamless delivery of service.



The audience that grace the occasion

The session was chaired by the Financial Secretary.