



NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY

(Founded 1971 and established by Act of the National Assembly No. 12 of 2003)

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NISLT/PRESS/2024/001

17th September 2024

To All NISLT members

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF SCIENCE LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY

The attention of the Institute has been drawn to a press release by the Executive Secretary of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). The Institute wishes to address the following issues:


- **Retraction of Statements:** The NBTE Executive Secretary's statement accusing the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) of "aiding illegality" must be retracted.
- **SLT as a Professional Course:** NBTE has recognized Science Laboratory Technology (SLT) as a professional course, as noted in its list of professional bodies.
- **NYSC Meeting:** A meeting called by NYSC, attended by NBTE and other professional/regulatory bodies, resulted in an agreement that aligns with the professional standards of all parties involved.
- **Previous NBTE Missteps:** This is not the first time the NBTE Executive Secretary has caused disruptions. Previously, his actions nearly derailed the Polytechnic condition of service before intervention.
- **Accreditation of SLT Programmes:** NBTE has failed to follow proper procedures for accrediting professional courses, particularly concerning the number of students admitted to institutions with inadequate laboratory facilities. It is rumoured that NBTE now considers online accreditation, which is unsuitable for SLT programmes.
- **"Top-up Degree" Controversy:** NBTE introduced a "top-up degree" scheme for Higher National Diploma (HND) graduates from Nigerian polytechnics without consulting the National Universities Commission (NUC). This programme has since been discontinued.
- **Unfulfilled MOU:** In 2009, NBTE signed an MOU with NISLT. Despite several requests from NISLT to review the MOU in line with its provisions, NBTE has ignored these calls. The MOU requires that any disagreement between NISLT and NBTE be resolved by a joint committee. NBTE has violated this MOU, particularly in institutions offering SLT programmes, although the MOU acknowledges the importance of NISLT licensure.
- **Unregistered SLT Lecturers:** Shockingly, 90% of SLT lecturers in polytechnics are not registered members of NISLT, which goes against the mandate of the Institute. This malpractice is being condoned by NBTE.
- **SLT Programmes in Universities:** SLT programmes are offered in over 17 universities under the regulation of NUC without any issues. Graduates of these programmes are inducted into NISLT after completing their studies and mandatory professional examinations, receiving the necessary licensure to practice.
- **Legal Framework and Standards:** Part I of the NISLT Act 12 of 2003 outlines the responsibility of NISLT to set and review the standards of knowledge, practical skills, and competence for individuals seeking licensure as Science Laboratory Technologists. It also mandates the Institute to promote the highest standards of practice and competence, safeguard the interests of its members, and serve as a certifying body for SLT professionals.

- **Licensure Requirement:** No professional in Nigeria, including lawyers, teachers, engineers, medical professionals, and SLT practitioners, can legally practice without a valid license. The Institute ensures that SLT professionals have demonstrated the necessary knowledge, skills, and adherence to legal regulations through examinations as per the NISLT Act. NBTE's actions are undermining these legal frameworks and promoting unlicensed practices, which is tantamount to supporting quackery.
- **NSQF Framework Flaws:** NBTE's development and release of the Nigerian Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) for licensed professionals contradicts the Acts that establish professional bodies in Nigeria.
- **Lack of SLT Expertise within NBTE:** NBTE's lack of qualified SLT professionals within its ranks compromises the accreditation process for SLT programmes in polytechnics.
- **NAPS Endorsement:** The Senate President of the National Association of Polytechnic Students (NAPS), alongside other executives, visited NISLT and acknowledged the importance of mentoring, professional examinations, and licensure before NYSC mobilization, as agreed with NYSC in 2022.

It is important to note that professional courses, such as SLT, are designed to equip individuals with practical skills and knowledge for their chosen professions, distinct from conventional academic degrees. The SLT programme aims to produce highly skilled and competent laboratory technologists with interdisciplinary knowledge in science and the ability to design, test, and maintain scientific systems and products.

While the NBTE, established by Act No 9 of 11 July 1977, is responsible for regulating Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria, it should focus on its mandate rather than interfere with the affairs of professional bodies. This interference contravenes Presidential Executive Order No. 5, which stipulates that any professional practicing in Nigeria must be registered with the appropriate regulatory body.

In conclusion, SLT is a professional course that requires mandatory professional examinations, overseen by NISLT. Any individual claiming to be an SLT professional without a NISLT license is a quack and should be reported for prosecution.


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