|  |
| --- |
| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1893**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 19/05/2023**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 18 OF 2023**

**Mr S S Zondo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

Considering that South African universities often come under criticism due to their financial mismanagement, blatant corruption, and the credibility of the qualifications obtained and/or lack thereof, what active steps does his department take to ensure that they follow up on the specified concerns and address them, since a threat to the credibility of domestic qualifications simply means that our higher education system in its entirety will eventually come under scrutiny?

**NW2145E**

**REPLY:**

In terms of section 27 (1) the Higher Education Act, it is the Council of a public higher education institution which must govern the institution. In respect of financial mismanagement or presumed corruption, especially where an institution does not comply with conditions linked to allocations from money appropriated by Parliament, Minister may request the Council to comply. In terms of Section 42, should the Council not comply within a predetermined timeframe, Minister may withhold payments of further allocations.

The Higher Education Act further provides that the Minister may:

1. issue a directive to the council of a public higher education institution if the Minister has reasonable grounds to believe that the Council or the management of that public higher education institution is involved in financial impropriety, or the public higher education institution is being otherwise mismanaged.
2. appoint an independent assessor if circumstances arise at a public higher education institution that involve financial or other maladministration of a serious nature; or seriously undermine the effective functioning of the public higher education institution.
3. appoint an administrator, if an audit of the financial records of a public higher education institution or the report by an independent assessor or any other report or information reveals financial or other maladministration of a serious nature or serious undermining of the effective functioning of the public higher education institution.

The Minister has intervened in several institutions by appointing independent assessors to conduct investigations into various allegations of mismanagement and other maladministration; and where reports reveal maladministration of a serious nature, administrators have been appointed to identify and initiate processes and initiatives that restore proper governance and management. In addition, directives have been issued to some institutions to direct on steps to be taken to remedy various deficiencies that would have been identified.

In the instance of compromised qualifications, the Minister may request the Council of Higher Education to provide conduct quality assurance on the relevant qualification/s and thereafter act on the recommendations provided by the CHE.