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**MINISTER MANAMELA WELCOMES VUT COUNCIL'S DECISION TO LAUNCH
INDEPENDENT FORENSIC PROBE INTO DEGREE SYNDICATE ALLEGATIONS**

TO ALL MEDIA

10 DECEMBER 2025

For Immediate Release

The Minister of Higher Education, Mr. Buti Manamela, has received a formal response from the Council of the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) regarding serious allegations of a syndicate selling fraudulent degrees and registrations to foreign nationals.

The Minister welcomes the transparency of the Council Chairperson, Professor MJ Radebe, who has confirmed that these serious allegations were never tabled before the University Council until media enquiries surfaced in November 2025. This is despite reportedly being raised by a whistleblower in August 2024.

"It is deeply concerning that the oversight body of the institution was kept in the dark regarding allegations that threaten the core academic integrity of the university," said Minister Manamela.

The Minister has noted and endorsed the Council's resolution to:

1. Reject the preliminary report submitted by University Management as "wholly inadequate.
2. Institute an immediate independent forensic investigation into the alleged syndicate and the timeline of management's response.

Safeguarding the 2026 Academic Year

While the Minister accepts the Council's request for a three-month period to conclude this forensic investigation, the Ministry cannot allow the upcoming academic year to be compromised by the same alleged vulnerabilities.

Minister Manamela has therefore, written to the VUT Council requesting a supplementary brief on the immediate interim measures being implemented to safeguard the 2026 registration process.

"We have asked the Council to confirm specifically how they will verify the credentials of foreign nationals and applicants claiming 'recognition of prior learning' during this registration window. We also expect immediate consequence management for any staff members implicated, to prevent them from accessing the university's IT systems while the investigation is underway," the Minister added.

The Department reiterates that the integrity of South African qualifications is sacrosanct. We will support the Council in rooting out any criminal elements operating within the institution.

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