

MOR/010/p-4/3

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PRE - UNIVERSITY STUDIES AT SOMAFCO

Proposals towards a programme in 1980

1. In an earlier document, 'Pre-University Students at SOMAFCO' dated 2nd September 1979, it was noted that for the foreseeable future there would always be a group of students at SOMAFCO who were waiting to take up places at some university. It was thought desirable that these students should not be left on their own, but should be prepared for their future university education in a systematic way.
2. It has now been established that there is in fact a group of 20 students who are termed post-matric at SOMAFCO in that they have passed Form V or the equivalent in South Africa or elsewhere. These students have been pursuing a programme of group discussions based on 'The Development of Societies' syllabus and related material.
3. However, as a result of a visit by the member responsible in the Lusaka Education Committee for Pre-University Studies, the process of organising this programme systematically has begun. A series of consultations were held with the students, their records examined, and their academic interests identified. They have been organised in five faculty groupings, namely Science, Technology, Mathematics, Social Sciences and Arts. The students were given several lectures on studying at university level and they have been set a project in each faculty which is to be tackled by the relevant group. All these activities were carried out in close consultation with the Principal and in pursuance of the mandate given by comrades attached to the Education Department at Headquarters and the Education Committee in Lusaka. It will be appreciated that there is some urgency in this matter since the students are anxious to get a formal programme underway.
4. The rationale for the division of the students in the faculties listed above is that this is the structure of Open University teaching. The Faculties break down as follows:-



Science: Physics, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Biology.

Technology: All disciplines related to engineering, Telecommunications, Computers, Systems Theory and the like.

Mathematics:

Social Sciences: Political Science, Economics, Sociology and Geography.

Arts: History, Philosophy, Literature and Art History.

5. The projects were selected in consultation with the students, often at their suggestion and include

Science: Public Health at SOMAFCO

Mathematics: A discussion on New Maths

Social Sciences: A Profile of the Student Body at SOMAFCO based on a questionnaire survey.

Arts: A project of African literature based on certain texts in the SOMAFCO library.

A project leader was elected for each faculty group and they jointly constitute a Projects Committee.

The students were also set the task of organising the books now at SOMAFCO, so that they would be available for easy reference.

6. Some supervision and advice on the projects will be offered by the Principal, a new member of the teaching staff who has accepted responsibility for the Pre University Programme for the present, and other members of the teaching staff. Project reports will be sent to Lusaka for evaluation and comment.
7. The proposed programme for Pre University Studies was put to a meeting of the teaching staff and the staff indicated a willingness to cooperate though many aspects still require elaboration.
8. It is now suggested that the following measures and procedures be followed.



9. A full set of Open University Course material plus set books should be obtained for the Foundation Courses of the five faculties listed above. This material should be inspected by the Lusaka Education Committee for suitability and then sent to the students at SOMAFCO. It may be necessary to modify this material in some way and some may be unacceptable on political grounds. But they will at least form a basis for systematic programme of study.
10. The educational principles upon which the programme is based are self-learning, group learning and distant teaching. Thus a faculty group of students will work together through a set of printed material, they will study this and related materials individually preparing essays etc required, and they will be marked and guided by Correspondence Tutors working preferably but not necessarily from Lusaka.
11. The students will be assisted to some extent in administrative matters by the Coordinator of Pre-University Studies at SOMAFCO, and they will receive whatever academic guidance is possible from the teaching staff there.
12. But their real tutors will be working at a distance, as Correspondence Tutors. This is because it is inconceivable that the College can ever afford University level tutors working in five faculty areas at the campus itself.
13. It is ofcourse understood that these studies are not formal and do lead to any kind of certification. They could however form the basis of an assessment by SOMAFCO of the suitability of a candidate for a particular scholarship elsewhere.
14. If these initial suggestions are acceptable, a detailed document will be required setting out the programme in full.

B.T.

4.12.79.