

The new programmes target global needs and respond to gaps in trainings, research and specialised skills.

BY SYLVIA NAMAGEMBE

As the 2026 academic year begins, various universities are unveiling new and proposed academic programmes aimed at better aligning higher education with the demands of the job market and national development needs.

This initiative is a direct response to current concerns about the mismatch between graduate skills and labour market demands. Concerns have been raised regarding the practicality of some university courses, with employers pointing out that many graduates are missing essential skills for the workplace.

Makerere University

At Makerere University, the country's oldest public institution of higher learning, four new programmes have been introduced aimed at strengthening research and responding to national needs.

According to the academic registrar, Prof Buyinza Mukadasi, the programmes are targeting global needs, particularly in economic management, climate change adaptation and agricultural development.

"The world now lies on research and value addition which is critical. For instance, the meteorology programme is intended to address the shortage of trained weather and climate experts, at a time when Uganda continues to experience extreme weather events that affect agriculture and disaster preparedness," he explained.

Kyambogo University

The Vice Chancellor of Kyambogo University, Prof Eli Katunguka, stressed that the proposed programmes to the NCHE intend to meet societal and professional needs, as institutions adjust to changes in the economy and technology.

"The proposed programmes respond to gaps in advanced training, research and specialised skills required in the public sector, private industry and community development. These programmes reflect our commitment to skills-based training, inclusion and responsiveness to societal needs and have been developed in line with NCHE standards and are aligned to Kyambogo's mandate as a skills-oriented institution."

Makerere Business School

Prof Moses Muhwezi, the principal of Makerere University Business School (Mubs), said the university is actively developing and refining programmes across multiple fields, including health management, innovation, auditing, business intelligence and energy management.

"These programmes are designed to meet current labour-market demands, public-sector reform priorities, and learner-centred education," Prof Muhwezi said.

He added: "We are moving beyond traditional theory-driven models toward skills-based, learner-centred, and employment-ready education."

Under the CBC model, 80 percent of assessment is based on practical work, including projects, assignments and real-world tasks, while exams account for only 20 percent.

MUST

7 universities introduce courses to fill skills gap

University	New Programmes (2026)	Duration	University	New Programmes (2026)	Duration	
Makerere	PhD in Accounting & Finance	3 years	Kampala International	Bachelor of Auditing & Forensic Analytics	3 years	
	PhD in Management	3 years		Bachelor of Sustainable Energy Management	3 years	
	Bachelor of Science in Meteorology	3 years		Master of Science in Real estate	2 years	
	Bachelor of Science in Horticulture	4 years		Bachelor of Energy Economics and Governance	3 years	
Victoria	Bachelor of Science in AI & Data Science	3 years	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	Bachelor of Business Intelligence & Data Analytics	3 years	
	Bachelor of Science in Cyber security & digital forensics	3 years		Postgraduate Diploma in Competency-Based Teacher Education	1 year	
Kyambogo	PhD in Procurement and Supply chain management		Kampala International	Bachelor of Business Software Engineering	3 years	
	PhD in Human resource management			Master of Transport and Logistics Management	2 years	
	PhD in Entrepreneurship			Kampala International	Master of Medicine in Dermatology	2 years
	PhD in Accounting				Integrated Master of Pharmacy	6 years
	PhD in Civil Engineering			Master of Veterinary Pharmacy	2 years	
	PhD in Mathematics			Master of Pharmaceutical Microbiology	2 years	
	Master of Education in Curriculum Studies			Master of AI & Data Science	2 years	
	Master of Hospitality and Tourism			Master of Clinical Pharmacy	2 years	
	Master of Science in Mathematics Education			Mbarara University of Science and Technology	Bachelor of Science in Animal Health and Production Technology	3 years
	Master of Education in Educational Technology				Bachelor of Science in Environmental Conservation and Tourism Management	3 years
Postgraduate Diploma in Visual Impairment		Bachelor of Science in Water Resources and Irrigation Engineering	4 years			
Bachelor of Ugandan Sign Language Translation and Interpretation (BSLTI)		Bachelor of Science in Food Systems and Technology	4 years			
MUBS	Bachelor of Vocational Studies in Fashion and Cosmetology with Education		Kampala International University	Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Health and Management	3 years	
	Bachelor of Illustration and Animation			Bachelor of Islamic Banking	3 years	
	Diploma in Community Nutrition			Bachelor of Interior & Landscape Design	3 years	
	Bachelor of Health Management	3 years		Bachelor of Science in Oil & Gas Management	3 years	
	Master of Innovation and Entrepreneurship	2 years		Bachelor of Environmental Science & Technology	3 years	
	Bachelor of Social Enterprise Development	3 years		Bachelor of Administrative & Secretarial Services	3 years	
Makerere Business School	Bachelor of Multilingualism & Franchising	3 years	Kampala International University	Bachelor of Nursing & Midwifery	3 years	
	Bachelor of Digital Business Innovation	3 years		Bachelor of Public Health	3 years	
	Masters in Sports Administration and Talent Administration	2 years		Bachelor of Real Estate Mgt	3 years	
	Bachelor of Science in Taxation and Applied Accounting	3 years				

NCHE SPEAKS OUT

When our reporter checked in with the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) to find out the status of new university programmes, officials confirmed that some courses had already been accredited, while others remain under evaluation and await final approval.

Dr Vincent Ssematya, the director of the Quality Assurance Department, said the accreditation process is multi-staged. "Programmes go through a desk review, facility verification, departmental and management evaluations and final approval by the council. Only after these stages is a programme posted as accredited and the university allowed to admit students," he said. He added that universities are at different stages, with some still completing internal submissions before NCHE can begin its review. "Institutions proposing new courses must provide a clear rationale, demonstrate demand and national relevance, and show they have the resources, teachers, and facilities required to run the programme."

Government institutions also need a Certificate of Financial Implications from the Ministry of Finance before courses can be approved," Dr Ssematya explained. "The timeframe runs up to August which is the intake month. If the remaining steps are completed, they can be cleared in one of the three council meetings [in February, May and August]."

Kampala International University

KIU Vice Chancellor, Prof Muham Ngoma called for a broader shift from teaching-only models toward universities that are driven by research, innovation and problem-solving.

"Universities must move away from knowledge reproduction to knowledge creation and research should inform public policy, industry and national development. With time, we shall introduce bachelor's degree programmes in the same areas," Prof Ngoma said.

"Our goal is to produce graduates who are confident, competent, relevant to society and competitive in the job market," the university added.

Kampala University

Mr Julius Ssekatawa, the university public relations officer, said: "All our [programmes] are new and already accredited. We have been observing them and they are new on board in response to market and public demand."

He cited developments in Uganda and the gas sector as a key motivation.

"We have seen people retire after 40 years of work but fail to manage their assets. We thought it is necessary for people to be prepared for that stage of life," he said.

The Vice Chancellor of Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Prof Pauline Byakika-Kibwika, said a proposed faculty would help address persistent challenges affecting agriculture and livelihoods in south-western Uganda, including low productivity, animal and crop diseases, climate shocks, limited extension services and weak value addition.

She added that the university aims to align the new faculty with national priorities under the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), particularly increasing production, productivity and value

addition while promoting environmental conservation.

"We will directly contribute to national development through training, research and innovation in agriculture, environment and veterinary sciences," she said.

Victoria University

Victoria University has introduced a Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence & Data Science and in Cyber Security and Digital Forensics for the 2026/2027 academic year.

Mr Conan Businge, the university's mar-

keting and student recruitment manager, said the courses are designed to respond to a rapidly changing job market and skills gap in Uganda and globally being created by digital transformation.

"Some of the courses we have started are those the country badly demands for at this time, with the changing job market globally. We design these with a global outlook, since we don't only teach Ugandans but also students from more than 50 countries and need to be trained to work anywhere in the world," he said.