

Universities told to embrace competence-based learning

BY KARIM MUYOBO

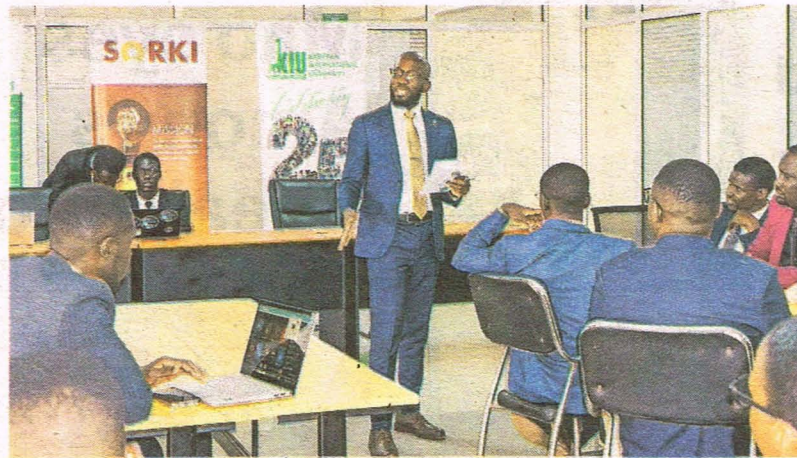
KAMPALA. Universities have been urged to fully embrace competence-based learning to ensure graduates acquire practical skills required in the job market, amid growing concerns over the rising number of unemployed degree holders in Uganda.

The government rolled out the competence-based curriculum in February 2020, starting with the lower secondary curriculum (LSC) in a phased approach. However, last year, the government gave universities and other institutions of higher learning up to the 2027/2028 academic year to fully align their teaching programmes with the national competence-based curriculum, marking a ma-

ajor shift in the country's higher education landscape.

Competence-based learning emphasises that students gain mastery of certain skills and knowledge at their own pace, prioritising skill acquisition over traditional measures like time spent in class or age.

Speaking at the opening of the 2026 Philip C. Jessop International Law Moot Court Competition at Kampala International University (KIU) on Monday, Dr Muhammed Ngoma, KIU Vice-Chancellor, said the new government policy now requires all universities to adopt a competence-based curriculum, shifting learning away from exam-centred teaching towards skills acquisition, which they are already implementing.



Mr Brian Alex Kiira, the national administrator for the Philip C. Jessop International Law Moot Court Competition, addresses students during the launch of the competition at Kampala International University in Kampala on Monday. PHOTO/ KARIM MUYOBO

“One of the challenges we face is that many students focus on passing exams.

Training happens in class, but the practice of law happens in courts and in so-

ciety. Students should pick these concepts not just to pass exams, but to apply them in real-life situations,” Dr Ngoma said.

He added: “The Jessop-competition is important to law students globally because it tests their ability to apply what they have learnt. This is a clear demonstration of competence-based education.”

The Philip C. Jessop International Law Moot Court Competition is the world's largest moot court contest, bringing together law students from universities across the globe. National winners from participating countries proceed to represent their countries at the international finals held in the United States.

Mr Brian Alex Kiira, the national administrator of the competition, said the university that wins the competition will represent the country in Washington DC, US, on the international level, where they will face 100 universities across the globe.