

# FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TO CARRY GREATER WEIGHT IN NEW SYSTEM

By Lawrence Mulondo

University lecturers and administrators have welcomed the Government's decision to introduce the competence-based education and training (CBET) curriculum, describing it as a timely reform that will produce graduates who are job creators.

The university administrators and lecturers made the remarks during the Seventh Higher Education Conference held in Gulu city last month.

Ronald Hiirya, the coordinator of graduate training, research and innovation at Muni University in Arua city, said, unlike the traditional teacher-centred model, the competence-based approach actively involves students in the learning process and enables them to apply knowledge in practical ways.

The decision by universities to shift their programmes from the lecturer/teacher-centred approach to the competence-based model follows a directive from the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni.

# ACADEMICS WELCOME CURRICULUM CHANGE

## BETWEEN THE LINES

Universities have been told to change their teaching techniques in preparation to receive students who have been taught under the competence-based model.

Under the new directive, all Ugandan universities will be required to shift to the competence-based curriculum, with implementation set to begin in the 2027-2028 academic year.

The curriculum was introduced in Ugandan lower secondary schools in 2020.

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approach as they prepare to receive students who have been taught under the competence-based curriculum.

## CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The competence-based approach emphasises continuous assessment through group work and individual projects, allowing lecturers to monitor each student's progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and assess competencies more effectively.

Under the new system, formative assessment will carry greater weight, with students evaluated continuously through practical assignments and projects. Final assessments will require individual

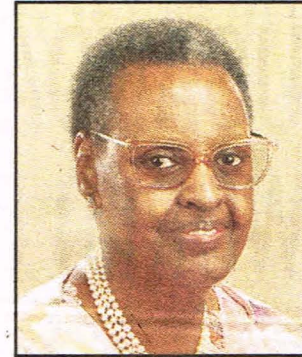
projects that demonstrate the competencies acquired over time.

Emphasis is put on scaling up student innovations and commercialising them to generate income and sustain projects.

## LECTURERS POINT OUT GAPS

Dr Ann Oguti, a lecturer in the department of electronics and computer engineering at Soroti University, said her institution is investing in staff training and infrastructure, including laboratories, to support hands-on learning in preparation for the transition.

"As a university, we are building the capacity of lecturers and developing infrastructure to provide



Directive: Mrs Museveni

is already partially embedded in the computing disciplines due to their practical nature. Sekalema said the key shift will be in assessing students based on demonstrable skills rather than theoretical understanding alone.

"If you are teaching programming, it cannot remain theoretical. Students must practice coding and demonstrate what they have learned," he said.

Sekalema raised concerns about lecturers who lack industry experience, especially in fields such as accounting, where practical exposure is essential. He said strong partnerships between universities and the industry are necessary to bridge the gap through internships and field attachments.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Dr Vincent Ssembatya, the director of quality assurance and accreditation at the National Council for Higher Education, said the body will oversee the implementation of CBET standards through institutional systems rather than daily supervision.

practical experience for students," Oguti said.

She said the competence-based curriculum addresses long-standing concerns from industry stakeholders, who have criticised universities for producing graduates with theoretical knowledge but limited practical skills. Oguti said the new approach will better prepare students to handle real-world challenges.

## INDUSTRY LINKAGES CRUCIAL

Hamza Sekalema, a lecturer in the computer science department at the Islamic University in Uganda, said the competence-based curriculum