

Across the world, education systems are increasingly shifting from traditional timebased models of learning toward Competency-Based Education (CBE), which focuses on what learners can actually do with the knowledge and skills they acquire. In Kenya, this shift is particularly evident through ongoing education reforms, especially the adoption of competencybased approaches at the basic education level. At the same time, there is growing pressure on higher education institutions to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also skilled, adaptable, and ready for a rapidly changing labour market. Against this background, this study examined the preparedness of Kenyan public universities to implement Competency-Based Education. The study specifically explored the extent to which university curricula align with CBE principles, the readiness of teaching and assessment practices, the capacity of academic staff to deliver competency-based instruction, and the adequacy of existing infrastructure and learning resources. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was adopted, involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study covered 12 public universities in Kenya, with data collected from 360 academic staff through structured questionnaires and 36 key informants through interviews. Additional insights were obtained through document analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Findings reveal that most public universities are still in the early stages of preparing for full CBE implementation. Although policy discussions are ongoing and some curriculum review processes have begun, actual implementation remains limited. Many institutions are still grappling with superficial curriculum adjustments, limited use of student-centered teaching methods, and insufficient training for academic staff in competency-based approaches. In addition, assessment systems are not yet fully aligned with competency evaluation, while challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, weak institutional incentives, and limited financial resources continue to slow progress. Overall, while there is clear commitment and policy interest in adopting Competency-Based Education within Kenyan public universities, significant systemic, structural, and financial challenges remain. The study recommends a coordinated national approach involving the Commission for University Education (CUE), universities, industry stakeholders, and development partners to strengthen curriculum reform, enhance staff capacity, and build robust quality assurance systems that can effectively support CBE implementation.