



Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum

Reflection from the UVCF Secretariat

IMPACT OF THE TVET ACT 2025 ON UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER DEGREE AWARDING INSTITUTIONS

Presented by Dr Olive Sabiiti

Chairperson UVCF TVET Ad hoc Committee

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Executive Summary

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act, 2025 introduces a unified legal framework for regulating, coordinating, and enhancing the quality and accessibility of technical and vocational education in Uganda. This position paper analyses relevant provisions of the Act and outlines the implications for higher education institutions, especially universities and degree-awarding institutions. Recommendations are made to support alignment, implementation, and engagement with the new TVET regime.

1.0 Introduction

The enactment of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act, 2025, marks a significant shift in Uganda's higher education and skills development landscape. While the Act primarily targets the coordination, regulation, and promotion of technical and vocational education, its implications extend to universities and other degree-awarding institutions (ODAs) that offer TVET-related programs or collaborate with technical institutions. As the national agenda increasingly emphasizes skills-based learning and employability, the TVET Act 2025 introduces a new framework for curriculum alignment, institutional accreditation, quality assurance, and governance structures. This shift demands strategic adaptations among universities and ODAs to remain compliant, relevant, and competitive in delivering programs that bridge academic knowledge and practical competencies. This paper explores the key impacts of the TVET Act 2025 on universities and ODAs, analysing opportunities, challenges, and policy implications as Uganda moves toward a more integrated, skill-driven higher education system.

1.1 Scope of TVET under the Act – Regulated Fields and Vocations

The TVET Act recognises and regulates a broad range of vocational and technical fields, including but not limited to business education, sports education, technology education, hospitality, health professions, agriculture, etc. This scope underscores the strategic role of TVET in national development and has implications for universities offering diploma or certificate programmes in these areas. Understanding the regulated fields is essential for aligning programme offerings and compliance strategies.

Circular Standing Instruction No. 1 of 2025 relating to the commencement and implementation of the TVET Act No. 3 of 2025 explains that the Act in alignment with the TVET Policy of 2019 focuses on more technically orientated education and practical training to prepare the trainees for 'blue collar' occupations although Annex 2 which is meant to provide examples of blue-collar jobs stated in S.30(2) is not easily accessible.

2.0 The Management Structure of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

2.1 Ministry of Education & Sports (MoES)

- a) Overall policy oversight, coordination, and regulation of TVET in Uganda.

- b) Administers TVET through its **Directorate of Higher, Technical and Vocational Education and Training**, within which a **Commissioner of TVET** leads, assisted by four Assistant Commissioners overseeing operations and management of both public and private institutions.

2.2 TVET Council

- a) The statutory apex governing body created under the Act. Chaired by Allen Kagina and composed of industry leaders and educational stakeholders (e.g. Sikander Lalani, Douglas Opio, Ziria Tibalwa Waako, Tonny Tumwesigye, Jean Byamugisha, Diriisa Ssekitoleko).
- b) **S.8 (2) TVET Act** – The Minister shall appoint two -thirds of the Members including the Chairperson from employers.
- c) **S.5 Functions of the TVET Council**. Responsible for policy direction, quality assurance, accreditation, licensing of institutions and trainers, financing mechanisms for TVET and advising the Minister on TVET matters **S.5 (1) (b)**.
- d) **S.5(1)(d)**. Shall appoint the members of the Sector Skills Expert Committees with the approval of the Minister.

2.3 Assessment Bodies – Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB)

- a) Two assessment boards are created by the Act, namely the Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB) and the Uganda Health Professions Assessment Board (UHPAB) **S.77 (1) and (2)**.
- b) The **functions** of the assessment boards are provided for in **S.79** and shall include, *inter alia*, accreditation of assessment centres, registering candidates, assessing and certifying candidates of TVET, preparing, protecting, conducting, supervising and marking TVET assessments, awarding qualifications, conducting investigations into malpractice, and developing curricula and assessment standards.
- c) External TVET assessment, the assessment boards shall not apply to TVET providers accredited to award a national higher diploma or degree or postgraduate qualification **S.76(1)**, but all certificate and diploma programs must comply with UVTAB AND UHPAB. Note **S.76(2)** allowing certain TVET Providers the power to carry on assessment of the trainees and award qualifications as well as to develop and manage the TVET training packages and curricula albeit in consultation with the Sector Skills Expert Committees with the approval of the TVET Council.
- d) **Governance**: Chaired by a Minister appointed Chairperson; includes representatives from the Ministry responsible for finance, TVET providers, and employers. **S.81 (1), (2)**, The Executive Secretary serves as secretary and chief executive **S.81(6)** and **S.91(a)**. Note **S.81(4)** which mandates the Minister to appoint at least one **person with a disability** and at least **two women** as part of the TVET Assessment Boards.
- e) **Challenges**:
 - i. Dual reporting may arise: NCHE for academic quality and UVTAB/UHPAB for vocational quality.
 - ii. The dissolution of the old boards (**S.126**) means universities must update institutional policies and agreements to reflect UVTAB/UHPAB authority. Note **S.126(1)** on the Members of the UBTEB Board shall cease to be members at the commencement of the Act. **S.126(4)** Members of the Board of the Uganda Allied Health Examinations Board and Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examination Board shall also cease to be members.

2.3.1 Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB) S.77(2)(a)

- i. Formed by merging UBTEB and DIT, as provided in the Act. **S.77(3)**
- ii. UVTAB governs all assessments and certification of competences obtained through technical and vocational education and training. **S.77(5)**

2.3.2 Uganda Health Professions Assessment Board (UHPAB) S.77(2)(b)

- i. Formed by merging The Uganda Allied Health Examinations Board and Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examination Board **S.77 (4).**
- ii. **Health programs with TVET elements** are governed by UHPAB for assessment and certification of health professionals under TVET S.77(6)

2.4 Institutional Governance

- a) Each TVET provider (public and private) must have a **Governing Council or Board of Governors** appointed by the Minister or Foundation body in the case of a private TVET S.51(2) and S.58(1).
- b) These bodies oversee institutional management, finances, and strategy.
- c) **S.51(2) provides for seven members of the Governing Council of an upper TVET Provider but they are more.**
- d) There shall be two levels of TVET namely the **lower TVET** known as Vocational Education and Training and **Upper TVET** known as Technical Education and Training. **S. 31**

3.0 Summary Table of the Organisational Structure

Layer	Role & Governance
MoES – Directorate of HTVET	Coordinates policy, supervises training delivery, led by Commissioner & Assistants
TVET Council	Strategic regulator: policy, licensing, financing, quality assurance
UVTAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for assessment and certification of competences obtained through formal and informal technical and vocational education and training. S.77(5) Consolidated assessment board: exams, certification, standard-setting, malpractice
UHPAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second assessment board S.77(2)(b) and S.77(6) Responsible for the assessment and certification of health professionals under technical and vocational education and training.
Institutional Governing Councils	Governing bodies for individual colleges/institutes for operational oversight

Additional Notes:

- a) The Act also introduces a **Skills Development Fund (S.109)** supported by a 10% levy on TVET providers' gross revenue and parliamentary allocation. The Fund is guided by the TVET Council to finance priority training programs. **S.110** provides for the funding of the skills development fund.
- b) The imposition of a **skills development levy** on an employer, who has in employment, at least five employees payable on monthly basis to the Skills Development Fund. The levy shall be a sum of money equal to one percent of the total gross monthly emoluments payable by the employer to the employees in respect of each month. **S.111(1), (2). Emoluments** are defined in **S.111 (5) (a)**.
- c) S.113 (3) provides that the **SDF shall not form part of the consolidated fund**. The receipts, earning and accruals of the Fund at the end of the financial year shall not be repaid to the Consolidated Fund, but shall be retained by the Skills Development Fund for the purpose for which the Fund is established.
- d) Under Section 126 of the Act, prior assessment bodies like UBTEB, UNMEB, UAHEB, and DIT have been dissolved and their functions absorbed into the UVTAB and UHPAB.
- e) The Minister has authority to decentralise licensing duties to local governments via statutory instruments.

4.0. Curriculum and Programme development

- a) **Section 28** explicitly empowers the **TVET Council, with the approval of the Minister**, to **develop the TVET qualification framework**, including the curricula, training standards, competence profiles, and certification frameworks that all practitioners and providers must follow.
- b) This means that Section 28 places core elements of curriculum design, training content, and assessment standards under the regulatory authority of the TVET Council—and not individual institutions

5.0 Impact of the TVET Act 2025 on Universities

5.1 Expands Regulatory Oversight Over University Programs

If a university offers *technical or vocational training* (e.g., diploma or certificate courses in engineering, ICT, agriculture, hospitality, etc.), those programs now fall under the **purview of the TVET Council and the Uganda Vocational Qualifications Framework (UVQF)**.

Note: This introduces an **additional layer of accreditation** separate from the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), potentially creating **duplication or conflict of mandates**.

5.2 Universities Must Obtain TVET Licenses for Certain Programs

- a) **Section 30(3)** a formal TVET provider shall be licensed and accredited by the Council to offer a TVET programme or course developed by the TVET Assessment Board with the approval of the Council Also **SECTION 30(5)** mandates that *training providers* offering industrial or vocational courses must be **licensed by the TVET Council**.

- b) **S.31(4)** A university, other degree awarding institution or tertiary institution established under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, shall not offer a TVET programme leading to an award of a National Higher Diploma, Degree or postgraduate.
- c) Universities with affiliated technical institutes or that run certificate/diploma-level training (common in regional universities) must now comply with **dual registration**—with both NCHE and TVET authorities.

This affects **program design, budgeting, reporting lines, and staff qualifications**.

The trainees must also be referred to the Assessment Boards for **assessment and certification** S.30(6)

5.3 Legal and Institutional Ambiguity

The Act does not clearly define how **TVET oversight intersects with university autonomy**. This raises concerns on

- a) Jurisdictional overlaps
- b) Interference with existing quality assurance mechanisms
- c) Institutional identity: Are universities now "TVET providers"? **YES. Note lower and Upper TVET S.31**

31. Levels of TVET

- (1) There shall be two levels of TVET as follows—
 - (a) **lower TVET** known as Vocational Education and Training; and
 - (b) **upper TVET** known as Technical Education and Training.
- (2) The Vocational Education and Training shall be offered through a Skills Development Centre or Vocational Training Institute accredited by the Council to offer a TVET programme leading to an award of a National Craftsperson Certificate and below.
- (3) The Technical Education and Training shall be offered through a—
 - (a) Technical College accredited by the Council to offer a TVET programme leading to an award of a National Technician Diploma and below;
 - (b) National Polytechnic accredited by the Council to offer a TVET programme leading to an award of a National Higher Diploma and below; and
 - (c) National Technical University accredited by the Council to offer a TVET programme leading to an award of a Degree, postgraduate and below.

S.31(4) A university shall not offer a TVET programme leading to an award of a National Higher Diploma, Degree or postgraduate

Will TVET providers be able to absorb all the learners in all the TVET identified programmes?

5.4 Budgetary and Compliance Burden

- a) Universities must now **budget for separate licensing, inspections, and staff training** to meet TVET-specific standards.
- b) Academic registrars and faculty may need to **coordinate parallel reporting systems**, increasing administrative overhead.

5.4.1 Legal Penalties for Non-Compliance

- a) The Act prescribes strict enforcement measures, including fines, imprisonment, or both, for institutional leaders or governing bodies found in breach of the law. While these provisions aim to uphold quality and accountability, they also create a heightened compliance environment for universities.
- b) Universities must therefore ensure that their governance and operational frameworks are fully aligned with the Act's requirements to avoid reputational and legal risks.
- c) A currency point is defined in Schedule One of the TVET Act and is UGX 20,000.
- d) Examples of Penalty clauses include S.50 (2) (a); S.57(2) (a); S.65(4), S.75(1) (D)

5.5 Potential Erosion of Institutional Autonomy

- a) **Under Section 28, the TVET Council** has authority over defining qualifications, curricula, assessment and certification for all TVET providers—including those embedded within university systems—potentially encroaching upon institutions' own control over faculty, internship structures, and curriculum design.
- b) This can be interpreted as **TVET authorities encroaching** on university territory, undermining their self-regulation and charter mandates.

5.6 Opportunity for Reform or Realignment

- a) On the positive side, universities can use this as an opportunity to **align their vocational programs with national skills priorities** and enhance employability outcomes.
- b) Notably, the Act mandates that certain boards include women and persons with disabilities (PWDs) as part of their governance structure. This progressive measure strengthens diversity, equity, and inclusion, offering universities an opportunity to lead by example. Such representation can enrich decision-making, enable innovative solutions, and reflect the societal values that higher education institutions seek to uphold. **S.81(4)**
- c) Collaboration with the TVET Council could open access to **national skills development funds, industry partnerships, and standardized assessment tools**.

Why exclude universities and confine them only to skills development, vocational training and technical courses of a diploma and below. S.31(3) a.

6.0 Proposed Recommended Actions For Universities in response to the Act

- a) **Legal interpretation:** Section **S.31(3)** regarding whether universities are required to obtain additional licenses from the TVET Council. **It is very clear. Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act shall not apply. S. 118 provides for the disapplication of certain Acts such as the UOTIA, NCDC Act, Education (Pre- Primary, Primary and Post- Primary) Act and the UNEB Act.**
- b) **Engage through UVCF:** Use the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum to advocate for harmonization between the TVET Act and the operational instrument, avoiding overlapping regulatory requirements. **Circular Standing Instruction 1 of 2025 and the Commencement Instrument on TVET** are available on the TVET website (www.tvet.go.ug).
- c) **Audit vocational programs:** Identify diploma and certificate programs that may be considered "industrial training" and assess any risk of conflicting regulation. To advise and enable Member compliance by those who are not following developments in the TVET field.

- d) **Strengthen internship and industry links:** Continue partnering with industries for hands-on training within the framework of NCHE-approved curricula. Incentivize the collaboration through establishing a government policy
- e) **Gather outcomes data:** Collect evidence on graduate employability, skills application, and training quality to defend the relevance of university-led vocational education.
- f) **Explore collaborative areas cautiously:** Be open to collaboration with the TVET Council on national skilling initiatives—such as curriculum alignment—without compromising university autonomy and objectives. Note the TVET provisions on curriculum development S.95 and Sector Skills Expert Committees S.25 and S.27
- g) **Clarify Academic Career paths:** TVET should map their diplomas seamlessly into university degree programs. Dual qualifications-National Technical University
- h) **Promote a united sector voice:** Work together, through UVCF to ensure the higher education sector speaks with one voice on this issue in future stakeholder meetings and policy forums.

7.0 Universities' Call to Action

- **Review compliance status:** Ensure all diploma/certificate programmes are registered and aligned with TVET Council processes.
- **Engage with UVTAB:** Understand the assessment and certification criteria; train exam supervisors and administrators.
- **Audit faculty qualifications:** Confirm instructors are licensed, industry-attached, and enrolled in continuous development as required.
- **Update governance frameworks:** Adapt internal boards or committees to mesh with TVET Council expectations—especially around curriculum design and oversight.
- **Plan for financial contributions:** Budget for the TVET Council levy and incorporate it into programme fees or institutional budgets.

Prepared by Committee Members.

Appendix A: Committee Members

1. Dr. Olive Sabiiti- chairperson
2. Prof. ERIABU Lugujo
3. Ms. Suzanne Kwesiga
4. Mr. Ronald Balimunsi

Impact of the TVET Act 2025 on Universities and Other Degree-Awarding Institutions with Recommendations

Section / Sub-section	Provision	Impact on Universities & ODAs	Recommended University Action
S.8(2)	Two-thirds of TVET Council members, including the Chairperson, must come from employers.	Limited direct university representation in policy and accreditation decisions.	Advocate for UVCF representation on the TVET Council to ensure higher education input.
S.25 & S.27	Establish Sector Skills Expert Committees to advise on qualifications and curricula.	Universities must align vocational/diploma programs to industry-driven standards.	Participate in committees to influence curriculum frameworks and ensure academic pathways remain intact.
S.28	TVET Council defines qualifications, curricula, training standards, competence profiles, and certification frameworks.	Reduces autonomy over certificate/diploma curriculum design and assessment.	Audit all vocational programs for alignment; engage TVET Council early to avoid conflict with NCHE standards.
S.30(3)	TVET providers must be licensed and accredited by the Council to offer approved programs.	Universities with vocational/diploma programs require additional licenses.	Seek formal clarification on licensing requirements; register programs with TVET Council to avoid penalties.
S.30(5)	Industrial/vocational course providers must be licensed by the TVET Council.	Creates dual regulation alongside NCHE, adding administrative and cost burden.	Streamline internal compliance systems to handle both NCHE and TVET Council obligations.
S.30(6)	Trainees must be referred to TVET Assessment Boards for certification.	University vocational graduates may require external certification by UVTAB.	Coordinate with UVTAB to register students, train exam supervisors, and meet assessment timelines.
S.31(1)–(3)	Defines two TVET levels: lower (vocational) and upper (technical) with institutional delivery limits.	Universities must classify their diploma/certificate programs within TVET levels.	Map all programs against TVET levels to confirm compliance and adjust marketing and admissions messaging.

S.31(4)	Universities and other tertiary institutions shall not offer a TVET program leading to a National Higher Diploma, Degree, or postgraduate award.	Restricts universities from awarding National TVET qualifications even if they deliver similar programs.	Engage UVCF to seek legal clarification; structure programs as academic awards under NCHE rather than national TVET awards.
S.51(2)(a)	Every TVET provider must have a Governing Council or Board appointed by the Minister or Foundation Body.	Universities with affiliated TVET units must create separate governance structures.	Establish dedicated boards or committees for TVET units to meet statutory governance requirements.
S.76	Assessment board provisions do not apply to providers accredited to award a national higher diploma, degree, or postgraduate qualification.	Degree programs remain internally assessed, but certificate/diploma programs must comply with TVET processes.	Separate academic and vocational assessment policies to ensure clarity and avoid regulatory breaches.
S.77(1)–(2)	Establishes UVTAB and UHPAB to set exams, certify, investigate malpractice, and accredit centers.	Universities must coordinate assessment and certification for vocational or health-related programs.	Formalize liaison with UVTAB/UHPAB; ensure vocational students are registered and assessed under national standards.
S.77(2)(b)	Recognizes UHPAB as a separate assessment body for health programs.	Health faculties with diploma or certificate programs must comply with UHPAB assessment.	Align health training programs with UHPAB guidelines and submit faculty credentials for recognition.
S.95	Curriculum development must align with TVET Council standards.	Vocational programs must be reviewed or adjusted to meet national TVET frameworks.	Establish joint curriculum review committees with industry and TVET Council participation.
S.110 & S.113(3)	Creates a Skills Development Fund (SDF) funded by levies on TVET providers, outside the Consolidated Fund.	Universities offering TVET programs may be required to contribute financially.	Budget for possible levies or fees and factor them into program cost structures.
S.118	The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act shall not apply in certain contexts under TVET framework.	Creates legal ambiguity about dual accreditation.	Seek legal interpretation through UVCF and advocate for harmonized regulations.
S.126	Dissolves UBTEB, UNMEB, UAHEB, and DIT; functions transferred to TVET Council/UVTAB.	Universities must now deal with a single central assessment body rather than multiple boards.	Update institutional policies and MoUs to reflect UVTAB as the sole assessment authority.