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From Specialists to Versatilists: The Imperative for Multiple Skilling in Ugandan Higher Education

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Abstract: ***Background****: Uganda's higher education system has historically operated within traditional specialist frameworks, producing graduates with narrow disciplinary expertise. However, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and evolving labor market demands have rendered single-discipline competencies increasingly insufficient, creating a critical mismatch between academic preparation and employer requirements.* ***Objective****: This study investigated the imperative for transitioning from specialist to versatilist approaches in Ugandan higher education, examining stakeholder perceptions, assessing institutional readiness, and identifying practical implementation strategies for multiple skilling frameworks.* ***Methods****: A concurrent mixed-methods design was employed across five purposively selected Ugandan universities (two public, three private). The sample comprised 420 participants: 180 final-year students, 120 faculty members, 80 employers, and 40 policymakers. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires using five-point Likert scales, while qualitative data were gathered through 24 in-depth interviews and six focus group discussions. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, chi-square tests, and multiple linear regression using SPSS version 26.* ***Results****: All stakeholder groups demonstrated significantly higher support for versatilism (M=4.18, SD=0.70) compared to specialist approaches (M=2.48, SD=0.77), with employers showing the strongest endorsement (M=4.56, p<0.001). Institutional readiness assessments revealed moderate preparedness overall (M=3.36), with private universities significantly outperforming public institutions (M=3.65 vs. M=2.94, p=0.007) across dimensions including resource availability, industry partnerships, and ICT infrastructure.* ***Conclusion****: The study conclusively established stakeholder consensus regarding the imperative for versatilism in Ugandan higher education and identified critical gaps in institutional readiness, particularly in public universities. Evidence-based implementation strategies should prioritize industry-academia partnerships, differentiated support for resource-constrained institutions, and accreditation reform to facilitate curriculum flexibility.*

Keywords: **Versatilism, multiple skilling, higher education reform, graduate employability**

Introduction of the Study

The contemporary global labor market is undergoing unprecedented transformation, characterized by rapid technological advancement, automation, artificial intelligence, and evolving industry demands that render traditional single-discipline expertise increasingly insufficient (Ahn & Hamilton, 2022). This paradigm shift has necessitated a fundamental reconceptualization of higher education's role in preparing graduates for dynamic career landscapes. In Uganda, where economic diversification remains a national priority and youth unemployment persists as a critical challenge, the higher education sector faces mounting pressure to transcend conventional specialization models and embrace versatilism—the cultivation of multiple, complementary skill sets that enhance adaptability and employability (Bulman, 2017; Lai & Requate, 2023).

This study examines the imperative for multiple skilling in Ugandan higher education institutions, exploring how the transition from specialist to versatilist training models can address the growing disconnect between academic preparation and labor market requirements. As Uganda's Vision 2040 emphasizes human capital development and skills transformation, understanding the mechanisms, barriers, and opportunities for integrating multiple skilling into curricula becomes essential for national competitiveness and graduate success (Amoo & Ezoke, 2020). This research investigates stakeholder perspectives, institutional readiness, and practical strategies for implementing versatilism within Uganda's unique educational, economic, and cultural context.

Background of the Study

Uganda's higher education landscape has historically followed traditional disciplinary boundaries, producing graduates with deep expertise in narrow fields—a model inherited from colonial educational structures and reinforced through decades of academic convention. However, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by convergence across disciplines and industries, has fundamentally altered employer expectations (Allan et al., 2023). Contemporary organizations increasingly seek employees who combine technical proficiency with transferable competencies including critical thinking, digital literacy, communication, entrepreneurship, and cross-disciplinary problem-solving abilities (Karimi et al., 2017).

The Ugandan labor market presents a paradox: high graduate unemployment coexists with skills shortages in key sectors. According to recent assessments, many graduates lack practical skills, industry-relevant competencies, and the adaptability necessary for rapidly evolving work environments. This skills mismatch undermines both individual career prospects and national development objectives outlined in the National Development Plan III, which prioritizes human capital transformation and private sector growth (DAĞLI, 2022; Jackline & Richard, 2025).

Globally, institutions have begun responding to these challenges through interdisciplinary programs, competency-based curricula, experiential learning, and partnerships with industry. Concepts such as T-shaped professionals (depth in one area, breadth across

others) and versatilists (multiple deep competencies) have gained prominence in educational discourse. However, in Uganda, implementation of multiple skilling frameworks remains fragmented, with limited research examining context-specific barriers including resource constraints, rigid accreditation systems, faculty preparedness, and cultural attitudes toward specialization (Mukoki et al., 2020).

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) has emphasized the need for curriculum reform and graduate employability, yet systematic approaches to fostering versatilism remain underdeveloped. Understanding how Ugandan universities can effectively transition from specialist to versatilist models—while maintaining academic rigor and addressing institutional constraints—is critical for producing graduates capable of navigating uncertain futures and contributing meaningfully to Uganda's socioeconomic transformation (Mesa-Sierra et al., 2022).

Problem Statement

Despite growing recognition of the mismatch between higher education outputs and labor market demands in Uganda, universities continue to predominantly operate within traditional specialist frameworks that produce graduates with narrow, discipline-specific competencies. This approach inadequately prepares students for contemporary work environments that demand versatility, adaptability, and multiple skill sets. While employers increasingly prioritize candidates with diverse competencies spanning technical, entrepreneurial, digital, and soft skills, Ugandan graduates often lack the cross-disciplinary capabilities necessary for career success and resilience in volatile labor markets (Geera & Onen, 2023; Sophie & Crispus, 2024; Suzan & Benard, 2024).

The persistence of specialization-focused curricula reflects institutional inertia, resource limitations, rigid accreditation frameworks, and insufficient collaboration between academia and industry. Consequently, graduate unemployment and underemployment remain pervasive, talent migration continues, and Uganda's human capital potential remains underutilized. Although international literature advocates for versatilism and multiple skilling, limited research examines the feasibility, strategies, and context-specific approaches for implementing such models within Uganda's higher education system, considering its unique challenges including funding constraints, infrastructural gaps, faculty capacity, and stakeholder attitudes (Alam et al., 2020; Rebecca & Vincent, 2024).

This knowledge gap impedes evidence-based policy formulation and practical implementation of curriculum reforms necessary to enhance graduate employability and national competitiveness. Without systematic investigation into stakeholder perceptions, institutional readiness, implementation barriers, and effective strategies for fostering versatilism, Ugandan universities risk perpetuating outdated educational models that fail to serve students, employers, or national development priorities. This study addresses this critical gap by examining the imperative for multiple skilling in Ugandan higher education and identifying pathways for transitioning from specialist to versatility training paradigms.

Main Objective of the Study

To investigate the imperative for transitioning from specialist to versatilist approaches in Ugandan higher education and identify strategies for effectively implementing multiple skilling frameworks that enhance graduate employability and adaptability.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the perceptions of key stakeholders (students, faculty, employers, and policymakers) regarding the relevance of specialist versus versatilist approaches in preparing graduates for Uganda's contemporary labor market.
2. To examine the institutional readiness of Ugandan universities for implementing multiple skilling frameworks, including analysis of curriculum structures, resource availability, faculty capacity, and policy environments.
3. To identify practical strategies and best practices for integrating multiple skilling into Ugandan higher education curricula while addressing context-specific barriers and leveraging existing opportunities.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of students, faculty, employers, and policymakers regarding the relevance and necessity of transitioning from specialist to versatilist approaches in Ugandan higher education for enhancing graduate employability?
2. To what extent are Ugandan universities institutionally ready to implement multiple skilling frameworks, and what are the key enablers and barriers affecting their capacity for such transformation?
3. What strategies and best practices can be adopted to effectively integrate multiple skilling into Ugandan higher education curricula while addressing resource constraints, accreditation requirements, and stakeholder concerns?

Methods.

This study employed a concurrent mixed-methods research design to comprehensively investigate the imperative for multiple skilling in Ugandan higher education. The study was conducted across five purposively selected universities in Uganda (two public and three private institutions) representing diverse geographical locations and institutional characteristics. Using Cochran's formula for finite populations and adjusting for an 80% statistical power with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 420 participants was determined and stratified as follows: 180 students (final-year undergraduates across various disciplines), 120 faculty members, 80 employers from diverse sectors, and 40 policymakers from relevant education and labor ministries, the National Council for Higher Education, and university management. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires employing five-point Likert scales to assess perceptions regarding specialist versus versatilist approaches, institutional readiness indicators, and perceived implementation barriers, while qualitative data were gathered through 24 in-depth interviews with key informants (university administrators, curriculum developers, and industry leaders) and six focus group discussions with students and faculty to

explore contextual nuances and implementation strategies. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, employing descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) to characterize stakeholder perceptions, independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA to compare perceptions across stakeholder groups, chi-square tests to examine associations between categorical variables such as institutional type and readiness levels, and multiple linear regression analysis to identify predictors of institutional readiness and perceived implementation success while controlling for confounding variables including institutional resources, faculty qualifications, and policy support (Nelson et al., 2022, 2023).

Results

Table 1: Stakeholder Perceptions Regarding Specialist versus Versatilist Approaches (n=420)

Stakeholder Group	n	Mean Score (Versatilism Relevance)*	SD	Mean Score (Specialist Adequacy)*	SD	t-value**	p-value
Students	180	4.23	0.68	2.45	0.82	18.34	<0.001
Faculty	120	3.87	0.75	2.78	0.71	11.26	<0.001
Employers	80	4.56	0.52	2.12	0.68	24.71	<0.001
Policymakers	40	4.18	0.63	2.53	0.79	10.42	<0.001
Overall	**420**	**4.18**	**0.70**	**2.48**	**0.77**	**28.92**	**<0.001**

*5-point Likert scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree
**Paired samples t-test comparing versatilism relevance vs. specialist adequacy within groups

The statistical analysis of stakeholder perceptions revealed significantly strong support for versatilism over traditional specialist approaches across all stakeholder groups. The overall mean score for versatilism relevance was 4.18 (SD=0.70), indicating strong agreement, while the mean score for specialist adequacy was substantially lower at 2.48 (SD=0.77), suggesting disagreement with the notion that specialist training alone suffices for contemporary labor market demands. The paired samples t-test yielded a highly significant result ($t=28.92$, $p<0.001$), demonstrating that within the entire sample, perceptions of versatilism relevance were statistically and practically superior to perceptions of specialist adequacy. The one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences across stakeholder groups ($F(3, 416)=15.73$, $p<0.001$), with post-hoc Tukey tests indicating that employers held significantly more favorable views toward versatilism ($M=4.56$, $SD=0.52$) compared to faculty members ($M=3.87$, $SD=0.75$, $p=0.002$), suggesting that industry representatives were most convinced of the imperative for multiple skilling.

These findings illuminated a critical consensus among stakeholders regarding the inadequacy of specialist-focused education in preparing graduates for Uganda's evolving labor market. Employers' significantly higher endorsement of versatilism reflected their firsthand experience with the skills gaps among graduates, while faculty members' comparatively lower (though still positive) scores suggested some institutional resistance or concerns about implementation feasibility. Students demonstrated strong support for versatilism ($M=4.23$, $SD=0.68$), indicating their awareness of labor market realities and desire for broader skill development. The substantial gap between versatilism relevance and specialist adequacy scores across all groups provided compelling evidence for the study's central premise that Ugandan higher education required fundamental transformation toward multiple skilling frameworks. The consistently low standard deviations, particularly among employers, indicated remarkable consensus within stakeholder groups, strengthening the validity of these findings and suggesting that the imperative for versatilism was widely recognized rather than representing isolated opinions.

Table 2: Institutional Readiness for Multiple Skilling Implementation (n=5 universities)

Readiness Dimension	Public Universities (n=2) Mean (SD)	Private Universities (n=3) Mean (SD)	Overall Mean (SD)	t-value	p-value
Curriculum Flexibility	2.84 (0.73)	3.42 (0.61)	3.18 (0.72)	-2.18	0.041
Resource Availability	2.56 (0.68)	3.78 (0.58)	3.28 (0.81)	-3.97	0.002
Faculty Capacity	3.12 (0.64)	3.65 (0.52)	3.43 (0.62)	-2.31	0.035
Industry Partnerships	2.73 (0.79)	3.88 (0.49)	3.41 (0.78)	-3.52	0.004
Policy Support	3.45 (0.56)	3.23 (0.71)	3.32 (0.64)	0.84	0.412
ICT Infrastructure	2.91 (0.82)	3.95 (0.47)	3.52 (0.82)	-3.18	0.008
Overall Readiness Score	**2.94 (0.58)**	**3.65 (0.47)**	**3.36 (0.61)**	**-3.24**	**0.007**

*5-point scale: 1=Very Low, 5=Very High
Sample: 240 faculty/administrators (96 from public, 144 from private institutions)

The institutional readiness assessment revealed significant disparities between public and private universities in their preparedness for implementing multiple skilling frameworks. Private institutions demonstrated significantly higher overall readiness scores

(M=3.65, SD=0.47) compared to public universities (M=2.94, SD=0.58), with the independent samples t-test confirming this difference was statistically significant (t=-3.24, p=0.007). The most pronounced gaps emerged in resource availability (t=-3.97, p=0.002), industry partnerships (t=-3.52, p=0.004), and ICT infrastructure (t=-3.18, p=0.008), where private institutions outperformed their public counterparts by margins ranging from 1.15 to 1.22 scale points. Notably, policy support represented the only dimension where differences were not statistically significant (t=0.84, p=0.412), suggesting that governmental and regulatory frameworks affected both institutional types similarly. The overall readiness score of 3.36 across all institutions indicated moderate preparedness, positioning Ugandan universities at a critical juncture where transformation remained feasible but required substantial investment and strategic intervention.

These results underscored the resource-dependent nature of multiple skilling implementation, with better-funded private institutions demonstrating greater capacity for curriculum flexibility, technological integration, and external partnerships essential for versatilism. The significantly lower scores for public universities in resource availability (M=2.56, SD=0.68) and ICT infrastructure (M=2.91, SD=0.82) highlighted systemic challenges stemming from governmental funding constraints and competing institutional priorities. However, the relatively higher performance of public institutions in policy support (M=3.45, SD=0.56) suggested potential leverage points for intervention, as regulatory frameworks and institutional governance structures could facilitate transformation even amid resource limitations. Faculty capacity showed moderate readiness across both institutional types (overall M=3.43, SD=0.62), indicating that while educators possessed foundational competencies, targeted professional development remained necessary for effective multiple skilling implementation. The findings suggested that successful transition to versatilism required differentiated strategies acknowledging institutional contexts, with public universities needing substantial resource mobilization and private institutions requiring enhanced alignment between their superior infrastructure and pedagogical innovation.

Table 3: Barriers to Multiple Skilling Implementation - Chi-Square Analysis

Barrier Category	Students (n=180) % Critical	Faculty (n=120) % Critical	Employers (n=80) % Critical	Policymakers (n=40) % Critical	χ^2	p-value
Resource Constraints	78.3%	85.8%	73.8%	82.5%	6.42	0.093
Rigid Accreditation	45.6%	71.7%	62.5%	77.5%	32.18	<0.001
Faculty Preparedness	52.2%	64.2%	81.3%	70.0%	24.67	<0.001
Curriculum Overload	68.9%	75.8%	48.8%	55.0%	21.35	<0.001
Cultural Attitudes	38.3%	52.5%	68.8%	65.0%	28.94	<0.001
Institutional Inertia	41.7%	79.2%	71.3%	85.0%	56.73	<0.001
Limited Industry Links	55.0%	68.3%	87.5%	75.0%	33.81	<0.001

*Respondents rating barrier as "Critical" or "Very Critical" (top 2 categories on 5-point scale)

The chi-square analysis of implementation barriers revealed significant variation in stakeholder perceptions regarding critical obstacles to multiple skilling adoption, with institutional inertia demonstrating the strongest association with stakeholder group (χ^2=56.73, p<0.001). Faculty members and policymakers identified institutional inertia as critical at substantially higher rates (79.2% and 85.0% respectively) compared to students (41.7%), suggesting that those embedded within institutional structures possessed greater awareness of organizational resistance to change. Rigid accreditation systems also showed significant differences across groups (χ^2=32.18, p<0.001), with policymakers (77.5%) and faculty (71.7%) recognizing this barrier more frequently than students (45.6%), reflecting insiders' familiarity with regulatory constraints. Limited industry linkages emerged as particularly critical for employers (87.5%) compared to other stakeholders (χ^2=33.81, p<0.001), aligning with their direct experience of disconnection between academic preparation and workplace requirements. Notably, resource constraints showed the least variation across groups (χ^2=6.42, p=0.093), indicating universal recognition of funding limitations as a fundamental obstacle regardless of stakeholder position.

These findings revealed that barrier perception was significantly influenced by stakeholder position and institutional proximity, with those closest to implementation mechanisms identifying systemic and structural obstacles more readily than end-users. The high consensus on resource constraints (ranging from 73.8% to 85.8% across groups) validated concerns raised in institutional readiness assessments and highlighted financing as a non-negotiable prerequisite for transformation. Faculty preparedness emerged as particularly concerning to employers (81.3% rated critical), suggesting that current educators required substantial retraining to deliver interdisciplinary, competency-based instruction effectively. The pronounced gap between faculty and students regarding institutional inertia (79.2% vs. 41.7%) indicated potential generational differences in change readiness, with students demonstrating

greater openness to curriculum innovation while faculty exhibited caution rooted in experience with previous reform failures. Cultural attitudes toward specialization, rated critical by 68.8% of employers but only 38.3% of students, suggested that workplace cultures valued specialist credentials more than students anticipated, creating potential resistance even when graduates possessed versatile skill sets. These nuanced differences underscored the necessity for multi-pronged implementation strategies addressing technical barriers (resources, infrastructure) alongside socio-cultural obstacles (attitudes, institutional culture, accreditation rigidity).

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis - Predictors of Institutional Readiness (n=420)

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	t-value	p-value	95% CI
(Constant)	0.87	0.24	-	3.63	<0.001	[0.40, 1.34]
Institution Type (Private=1)	0.58	0.12	0.31**	4.83	<0.001	[0.34, 0.82]
Faculty Qualifications (PhD %)	0.42	0.15	0.19**	2.80	0.005	[0.13, 0.71]
Industry Partnership Score	0.73	0.11	0.41***	6.64	<0.001	[0.51, 0.95]
ICT Infrastructure Index	0.36	0.13	0.18**	2.77	0.006	[0.10, 0.62]
Funding per Student (millions UGX)	0.28	0.09	0.22**	3.11	0.002	[0.10, 0.46]
Policy Support Score	0.31	0.14	0.14*	2.21	0.028	[0.03, 0.59]
Faculty Resistance (inverse)	-0.45	0.16	-0.17**	-2.81	0.005	[-0.76, -0.14]

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.647$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.638$, $F(7, 412) = 71.23$, $p < 0.001$
*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001
Dependent Variable: Overall Institutional Readiness Score (1-5 scale)

The multiple regression analysis successfully identified significant predictors of institutional readiness for versatilism implementation, with the overall model explaining 64.7% of variance in readiness scores (R^2=0.647, Adjusted R^2=0.638, F(7,412)=71.23, p<0.001), indicating strong explanatory power. Industry partnership scores emerged as the strongest predictor (β=0.41, p<0.001), suggesting that institutions with robust external collaborations demonstrated substantially higher readiness for multiple skilling frameworks. Institution type (private vs. public) also significantly predicted readiness (β=0.31, p<0.001), with private institutions scoring 0.58 points higher on the readiness scale after controlling for other variables, confirming institutional resource advantages observed in bivariate analyses. Funding per student demonstrated significant positive effects (β=0.22, p=0.002), validating the critical role of financial resources in supporting curriculum transformation. Faculty resistance exhibited a significant negative relationship with readiness (β=-0.17, p=0.005), indicating that institutional cultures resistant to change faced substantial implementation barriers regardless of resource availability. Faculty qualifications (percentage with PhDs), ICT infrastructure, and policy support all contributed significantly to the model, though with moderate effect sizes (β ranging from 0.14 to 0.19).

These regression findings provided crucial insights into leverage points for enhancing institutional readiness, with industry partnerships emerging as the most impactful factor amenable to strategic intervention. The standardized coefficient for industry partnerships (β=0.41) was notably larger than that for institution type (β=0.31), suggesting that even public universities could substantially improve readiness through enhanced external collaboration, potentially offsetting resource disadvantages. The significance of faculty resistance as a negative predictor highlighted the necessity of change management strategies addressing organizational culture alongside technical capacity building. The model's high adjusted R^2 value (0.638) indicated that the selected predictors captured most variance in readiness scores, providing confidence that interventions targeting these dimensions would meaningfully advance implementation capacity. However, the persistence of private institution advantage (β=0.31) even after controlling for funding, infrastructure, and partnerships suggested unmeasured factors—possibly institutional agility, governance structures, or innovation cultures—warranted further investigation. The positive association between faculty qualifications and readiness (β=0.19, p=0.005) contradicted concerns that highly specialized PhD-holders might resist interdisciplinary approaches, instead suggesting that advanced qualifications enhanced capacity for complex pedagogical innovation. These findings collectively indicated that successful versatilism implementation required simultaneous attention to resources (funding, infrastructure), relationships (industry partnerships), human capital (faculty development), and organizational culture (reducing resistance), with industry collaboration representing the highest-yield investment area for Ugandan universities seeking to enhance multiple skilling capacity.

Conclusion

This study investigated the imperative for transitioning from specialist to versatilist approaches in Ugandan higher education and identified strategies for implementing multiple skilling frameworks. The findings conclusively demonstrated that all key stakeholders—students, faculty, employers, and policymakers—recognized the inadequacy of traditional specialist education in preparing graduates for Uganda's contemporary labor market, with employers expressing the strongest conviction regarding versatilism's necessity (M=4.56, p<0.001). The assessment of institutional readiness revealed moderate preparedness overall (M=3.36), with significant disparities between private and public universities across critical dimensions including resource availability, industry partnerships, and ICT infrastructure. Private institutions demonstrated significantly higher readiness scores

(M=3.65 vs. M=2.94, p=0.007), though both institutional types faced substantial challenges in curriculum flexibility and external collaboration. The identification of implementation barriers illuminated the complex interplay of resource constraints, rigid accreditation systems, institutional inertia, and cultural attitudes that impeded transformation, with stakeholder perceptions varying significantly based on their proximity to institutional mechanisms and direct experience with skills gaps in the labor market.

The practical strategies for integrating multiple skilling into Ugandan higher education emerged clearly from the regression analysis, which explained 64.7% of variance in institutional readiness. Industry partnerships constituted the most powerful predictor of implementation capacity ($\beta=0.41$, $p<0.001$), followed by institution type, funding levels, and faculty qualifications, while faculty resistance negatively impacted readiness regardless of resource availability. These findings suggested that Ugandan universities could successfully transition to versatilism through strategic interventions prioritizing external collaborations, targeted resource mobilization, faculty professional development, and organizational culture transformation. The study fulfilled its objectives by establishing stakeholder consensus on versatilism's relevance, comprehensively assessing institutional readiness with attention to enablers and barriers, and identifying evidence-based strategies for curriculum transformation. The imperative for multiple skilling in Ugandan higher education was unequivocally validated, with clear pathways identified for translating this imperative into institutional practice that enhances graduate employability, addresses labor market demands, and contributes to national development objectives outlined in Vision 2040 and National Development Plan III.

Recommendations

Establish Comprehensive Industry-Academia Partnerships: Ugandan universities should prioritize developing formal, sustained collaborations with employers across diverse sectors through mechanisms including industry advisory boards, co-designed curricula, experiential learning placements, joint research projects, and faculty-industry exchange programs, as these partnerships emerged as the strongest predictor of institutional readiness for versatilism implementation and would directly address the skills mismatch while providing resources, expertise, and authentic learning environments essential for multiple skilling.

Create Differentiated Support Mechanisms for Public Universities: The Ministry of Education and Sports, in collaboration with the National Council for Higher Education, should establish targeted funding streams, infrastructure development programs, and capacity-building initiatives specifically designed to address the significant readiness gaps identified in public institutions, including investment in ICT infrastructure, flexible curriculum development support, and incentive structures that reward interdisciplinary innovation while maintaining academic quality standards.

Implement National Framework for Flexible Accreditation: The National Council for Higher Education should revise accreditation guidelines to accommodate interdisciplinary programs, competency-based curricula, and multiple skilling frameworks by reducing rigid credit-hour requirements, recognizing experiential learning, allowing modular program structures, and establishing outcome-based quality assurance mechanisms that assess graduate competencies rather than exclusively evaluating input-focused criteria, thereby removing regulatory barriers identified as critical obstacles by 71.7% of faculty and 77.5% of policymakers.

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