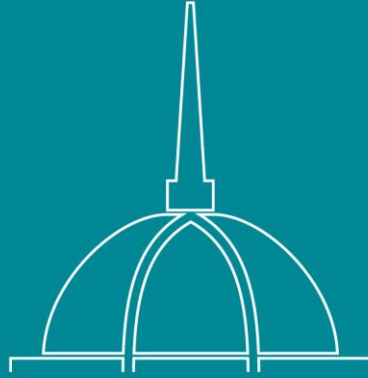




OIEP

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
AND PLANNING



EMPLOYER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2022-2023



OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND PLANNING

Research Objective:

The objective of this study was to assess the satisfaction of employers regarding the performance and preparedness of The American University of Kurdistan (AUK) students & graduates. The survey aims to gather feedback on various aspects such as skills, knowledge, professionalism, and overall satisfaction with the performance of University students & alumni.

Research Design: The research design consists of a structured survey questionnaire to gather quantitative data. The survey consisted of face-to-face interviews with employers who have worked with students from AUK, both in the capacity of employees and interns.

Sampling: Humanitarian Organizations, Construction companies, International oil companies, telecommunication & network companies, public and governmental offices/directorates, banking, architecture agencies, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Selection of Variables:

The questionnaire consists of a combination of closed-ended questions, rating scales, and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions will provide respondents with pre-defined response options, while rating scales will allow employers to rate specific aspects on a numerical scale. Open-ended questions will encourage employers to provide detailed feedback and suggestions.

The survey questionnaire will cover various dimensions related to employer satisfaction, including:

- General information about their company/organization.
- Overall satisfaction with University graduates' performance
- Assessment of graduates' skills and knowledge
- Evaluation of graduates' professionalism, work ethics, and communication skills
- Perception of graduates' readiness for the job market
- The skills and qualifications that hold the highest importance for employers during the hiring process within their specific industries.
- Suggestions for the essential skills and qualifications required in their respective fields for the future.

Survey Highlights

Quality Hires: The survey revealed a high level of overall satisfaction among employers, with 72.2% expressing a desire to rehire them as both interns and full-time employees, and no respondents declined; 27.7% were uncertain. A noteworthy 58.82% of the research participants belong to companies with over 100 employees. This indicates that AUK graduates have excelled in comparison to many other candidates, as larger companies typically attract more applicants, resulting in heightened competition

Additionally, in the meetings, employees voiced their observations that AUK graduates possess a remarkable work ethic. According to their assessment, this quality is seen as a crucial element in their potential for advancement, making them promising candidates for future leadership roles. This is also evident in Figure 8, in which work ethics of AUK student was averaged on a (4.3/5.0)

Positive Attributes: The top-ranking attributes that employers look for in prospects is communication (Figure 6), which is also the attribute AUK student got the second highest (4.2/5.0) on an average.

Cost-Effectiveness: Employers recognized the cost-effectiveness of hiring graduates and interns, finding them to be a valuable addition to their teams while also being budget-friendly.

Based on the survey results, several key recommendations emerge:

Cognitive Skills: Problem-solving, creativity and innovation, and job-related technical skills obtained the lowest ratings from AUK students, each below (3.4/5.0). These should be the focal points of AUK curriculum and learning objectives.

Site visits: A significant suggestion was made for university students to engage in more site visits to improve their practical skills and job-related comprehension. This is corroborated by Figure 8, which displays that AUK students scored lower in job-related skills and knowledge (3.4/5.0). There was an example given that a university had developed a course for Site Visits particularly.

Enhanced communication between the University and employers is crucial, necessitating greater collaboration and continued research efforts to stay in sync with the ever-expanding market. Furthermore, all research applicants displayed a willingness to participate in future surveys, underscoring the significance of this initiative in strengthening the ties between universities and the industry.

In conclusion, the Employer Satisfaction Survey of University students underscores our commitment to meeting the needs of our valued employers. The positive feedback and constructive insights provided will guide our ongoing efforts to deliver high-quality candidates and ensure our continued success in the dynamic job market. We extend our gratitude to all participating employers for their invaluable feedback.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE OF EMPLOYERS

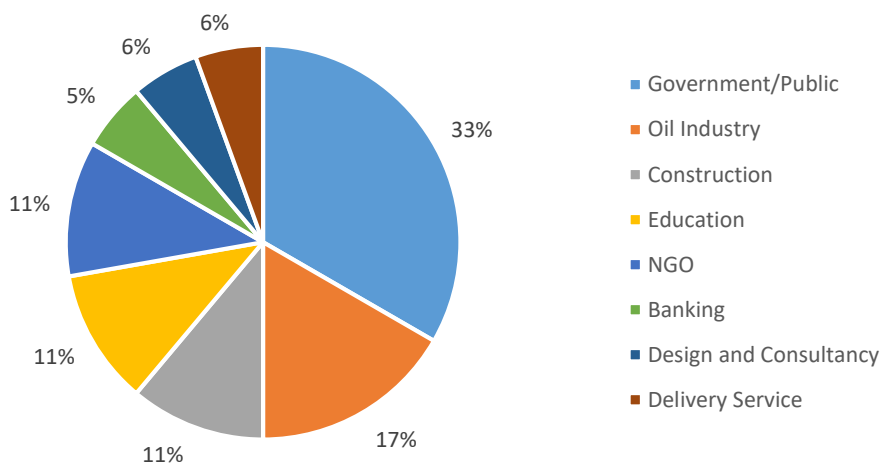


Figure 1: Sectors where AUK graduates and students are working/engaged in an internship

Figure 1 illustrates a diverse range of sectors in the research, representing the primary industries where AUK students and alumni have either undertaken internships or secured employment. The largest category is Government/Public (33%).

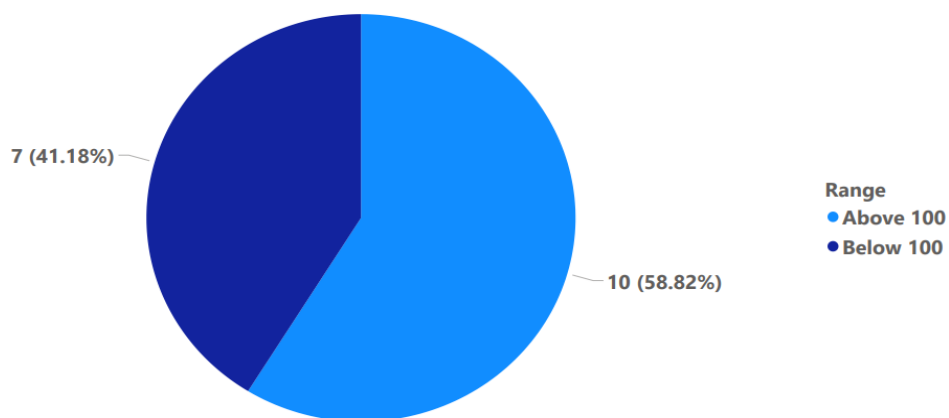


Figure 2: Number of Employees in the research subjects

Figure 2 shows the number of employees in these companies/entities, 58.82% are above 100 employees.

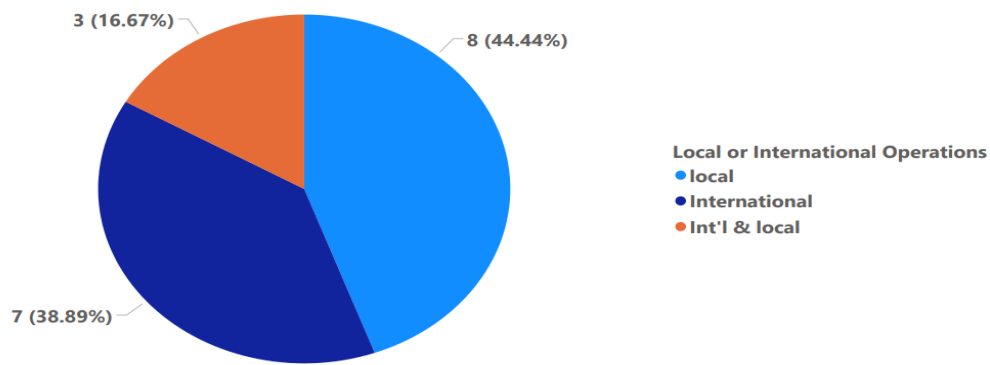


Figure 3: Scope of Operations

Figure 3 illustrates the extent of their business activities, with 44.4% engaged in international operations, 38.9% operating locally, and 16.67% conducting business in both international and local markets.

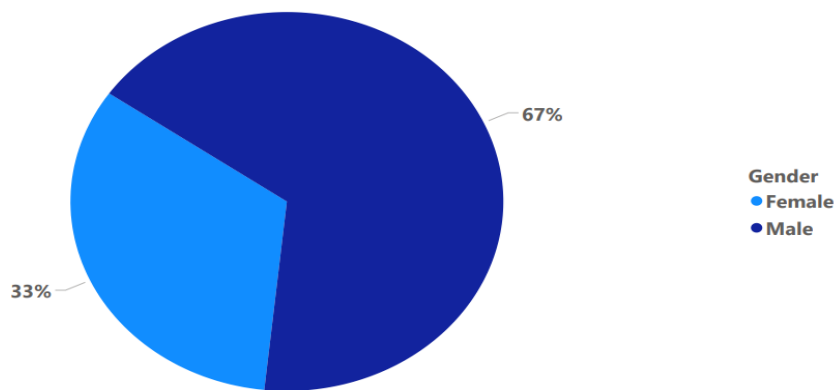


Figure 4: Employee Sex Ratio

Figure 4 reflects the sex ratio, with the majority being male at 67%.

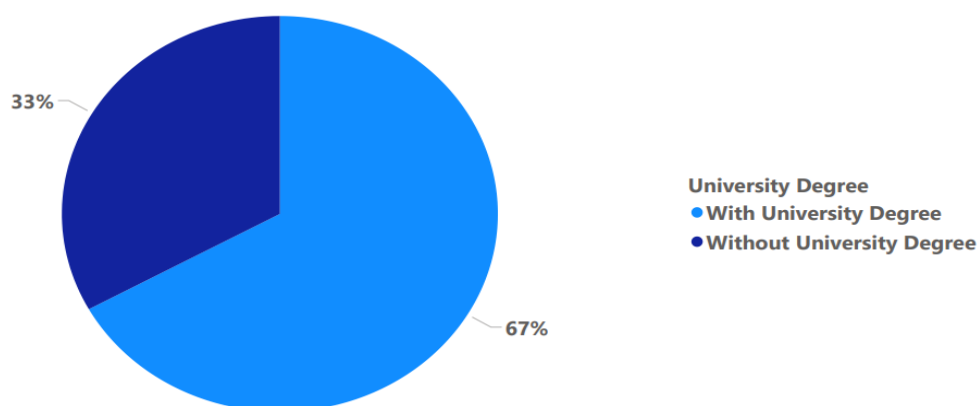


Figure 5: Employee Education

Figure 5 demonstrates that a significant majority of the employees in the research subjects possess a bachelor's degree or higher, comprising 67% of the workforce

AUK STUDENT/ALUMNI PERFORMANCE & SATISFACTION LEVELS

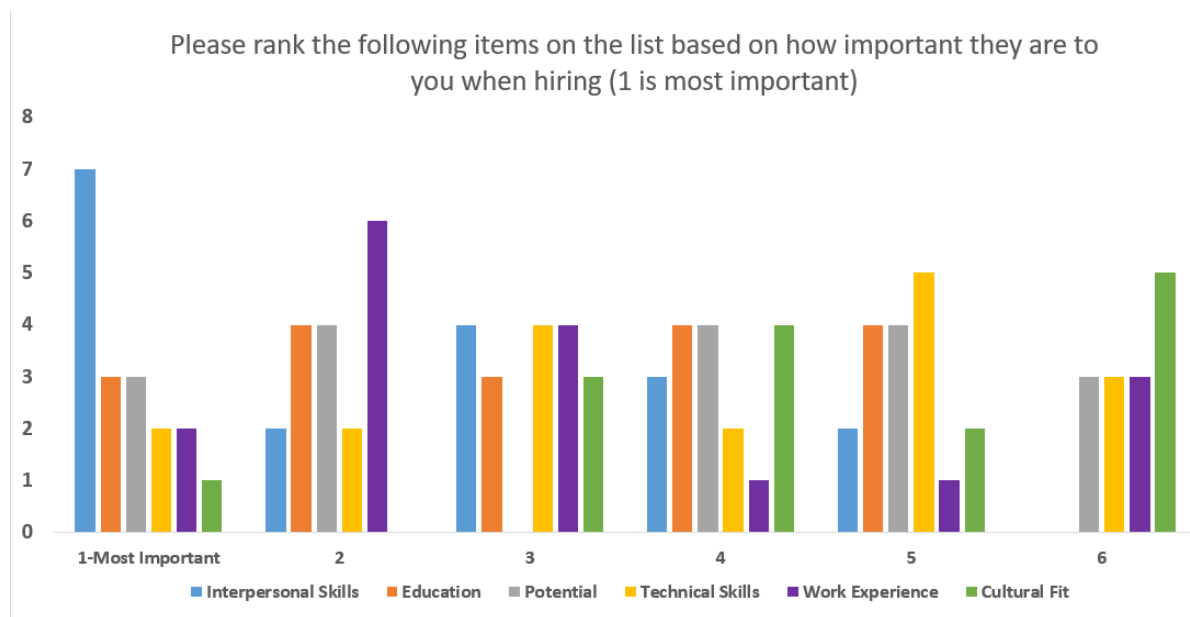


Figure 6: Ranking of Employee Preferred Skills/Attributes of Prospects

Figure 6 reveals the top-ranking attributes among employers based on the provided choices. Interpersonal skills emerge as the clear frontrunner, with 41% of respondents ranking it as their top priority. Following closely, work experience received the second-highest ranking, while education came in third. Education is ranked third in priority, yet it deserves a higher level of emphasis because a significant number of job opportunities necessitate candidates to possess at least a bachelor's degree.

The lowest mean score was observed in the "Cultural fit" category, with the majority of respondents ranking it as the least important area. Specifically, five respondents rated it as the least important aspect

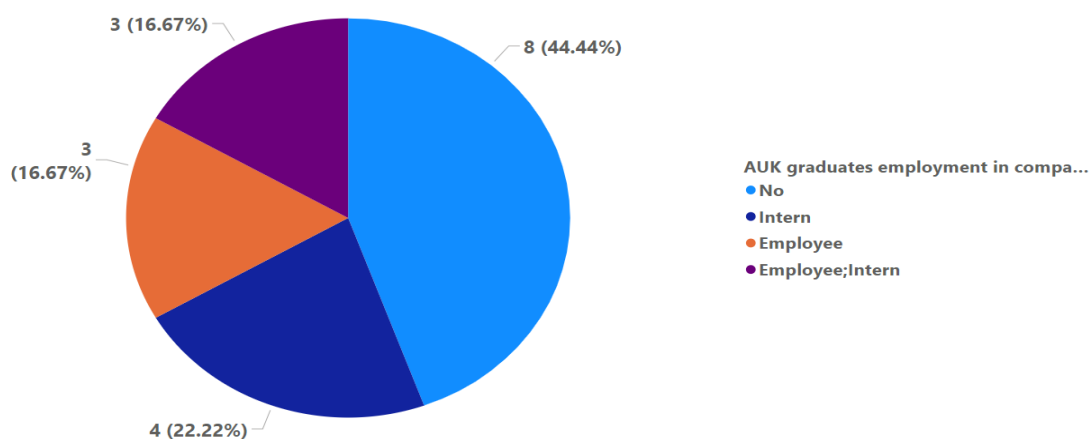


Figure 7: AUK Student/Alumni Employment Status

Figure 7 shows that 55.6% of these study targets had AUK students/alumni working as full-time employees or interns at the time of the survey.

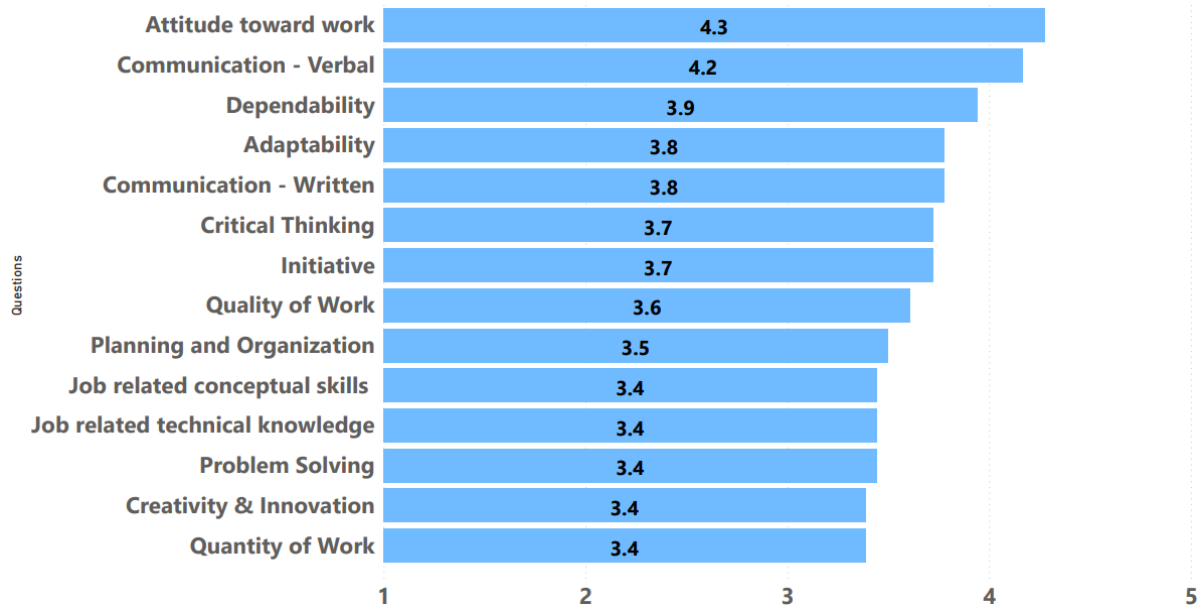


Figure 8: Rating of AUK Student/Alumni Skills

Figure 8 The employers were asked to rate AUK interns/employees in the provided areas, with 5.0 representing the highest score. The figure demonstrates that employers express the highest level of satisfaction with AUK students' work attitude (rated at 4.3/5.0) and verbal communication skills (rated at 4.2/5.0).

The following areas require attention as they fall below the threshold of 3.5/5.0: Planning and Organization (3.5/5.0), Job-related conceptual skills (3.4/5.0), Job-related technical knowledge (3.4/5.0), Problem Solving (3.4/5.0), Creativity and Innovation (3.4/5.0), and Quantity of Work (3.4/5.0).



Figure 9: Based on your past experience, would you consider rehiring a student or alumni from AUK?

Figure 9: Indicates that employees are highly satisfied with AUK students, with 72.2% expressing a desire to rehire them as both interns and full-time employees. Notably, there were no respondents who declined, and only 27.7% expressed uncertainty by saying "maybe".

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The employers were asked to comment on the reasons for the employing new graduates, a key reason voiced out for choosing new graduates in preference of experienced ones was that new graduates are easily trainable in the shape required by the employer. The newly graduates are also cost effective in terms of salary given compared with experienced employees.

A significant number of the research participants emphasized the importance of choosing candidates who exhibit promising qualities (as indicated in Figure 6). They expressed a commitment to investing in such individuals, shaping them to meet the specific requirements of their operations.

Based on the qualitative data, employers expressed concern that although graduates have a strong theoretical background, their practical understanding of the profession is lacking (as seen in figure 8, where job-related technical/conceptual knowledge is on average poor). In order to overcome this deficiency more emphasis should be put on practical implementations of theory in course content, seminar conducted by individual working in the field and internships/site visits.