# Quality Assurance Report: 2025–2026

Office of Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Committee

Catholic University in Erbil

Academic Year 2025–2026

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This report aims to present the results of quality assurance activities carried out at Catholic University in Erbil for the academic year 2025–2026. This report contains the following sections: (1) evaluation of academic programs; (2) the academic evaluation process of teaching staff; (3) published research; (4) quality assurance and scientific activities; (5) implementation of the Bologna Process and the Curriculum Development and Study Programs Committee; (6) the accreditation process; and (7) university ranking.

## Evaluation of Academic Programs

With the support of each department's scientific committees, Curriculum Development and Study Programs Committee, an evaluation of academic programs and coursebook updates was conducted at the start of the 2025–2026 academic year. The goal was to align programs and module learning outcomes with the new vision and mission of each department. A thorough review of the learning outcomes for all modules was carried out, and work was carried out to redesign the associated knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Coursebooks for all modules, across all scientific departments, were updated to link each module learning outcome to its corresponding program learning outcome, in preparation for the accreditation process. Coursebooks were also developed for new modules being delivered for the first time in the new and growing departments.

In addition, a mission and vision statement was developed for each department, and curriculum maps were generated for all programs to meet accreditation requirements — aligning and mapping module learning outcomes to program learning outcomes, and program learning outcomes to institutional learning outcomes.

## The Academic Evaluation Process of Teaching Staff

The academic evaluation process at Catholic University in Erbil for 2025–2026 was conducted to a high standard. A series of introductory seminars and workshops was held at the start of the academic year to familiarize new academic staff with the process, covering three key components in detail: the Academic Portfolio, Continuing Academic Development (CAD), and Student Feedback. The entire process was conducted electronically through the university's system, and most faculty participated and achieved the required grades and levels, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Results of Faculty Evaluations**

| CAD | | Portfolio | | Student Feedback | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade** | **% of Teachers** | **Grade** | **% of Teachers** | **Grade** | **% of Teachers** |
| A* | 81.6% | A | 65.3% | A* | 55.1% |
| A | 10.2% | B | 28.6% | A | 44.9% |
| B | 0% | C | 0% | | |
| C | 2.0% | D | 6.1% | | |
| E | 6.1% | | | | |

Table 1 shows that faculty performed strongly across all three evaluation areas. For CAD, the large majority of faculty (81.6%) achieved the top grade of A*, with a further 10.20% receiving an A; only a small proportion received lower grades (2.0% C, 6.12% E, and no B grades). In the Portfolio component, most faculty (65.3%) achieved a B grade, with 28.57% achieving an A, and a small minority (6.1%) receiving a D. Student Feedback results were the strongest overall, with all faculty achieving either an A* (55.1%) or an A (44.9%), reflecting consistently high satisfaction among students. Overall, the results indicate that the great majority of faculty met or exceeded the expected standards across all three evaluation components.

## Published Research

Catholic University in Erbil supports the conduct and publication of research and encourages academic staff to publish in high-quality journals. During this academic year, more than 30 papers were published, mostly in Impact Factor and Scopus-indexed journals. A sample of these publications is shown in the enclosed list of publications.

## Quality Assurance and Scientific Activities

During the academic year 2025–2026, Catholic University in Erbil conducted a number of local and international scientific and social activities, including workshops, seminars, trainings, awareness meetings, symposia, and scientific conferences. The topics of these activities included accreditation, quality assurance requirements, academic and scientific health and safety, women's empowerment, English language and capacity building, and professional development for academic and administrative staff, as shown in Table 2.

## Quality Assurance Educational Activities

Throughout the 2025–2026 academic year, Catholic University in Erbil hosted a wide range of activities designed to strengthen teaching quality, advance institutional priorities, and enrich the intellectual and cultural life of the university community. A strong emphasis was placed on quality assurance and pedagogical development, with training sessions and workshops on implementing program assessment, aligning module learning outcomes with program learning outcomes, preparing coursebooks for the spring semester, and using the Moodle platform for grading and exam committee management. The university also devoted particular attention to the Bologna Process, running two dedicated committee workshops — one on the structure and calculation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), and another on the process's implementation across the Kurdistan Region — alongside broader sessions on 21st-century

teaching strategies and active student engagement. Complementing these efforts, faculty had access to sessions on research and professional growth, including a seminar on publishing in Scopus-indexed journals and training on using digital tools such as Turnitin and Google Drive for academic collaboration.

Beyond these professional development activities, the university held a series of seminars, symposiums, and events that reflected its disciplinary breadth and its commitment to social awareness and community engagement. Departmental celebrations such as English Language Day, IT Day Symposium, and World Pharmacists Day showcased the achievements and identities of individual programs, while seminars on entrepreneurship education, the future of the knowledge economy in Kurdistan, and leadership and public service addressed broader questions facing higher education and society. The university also created space for interdisciplinary and reflective discussion, with seminars spanning linguistics and communication (implicatures in face-to-face interaction, speech and rhetoric), the arts and neuroscience (building neural connections through art, the neurophilosophy of anxiety), and ethics in multicultural academic communities. Several activities addressed pressing social and health issues, including symposiums on breast cancer awareness and antimicrobial resistance, and a seminar on ending digital violence against women and girls, along with sessions exploring the role of Kurdish women in Syria's peace process. Together, these thirty-three activities illustrate a university actively investing in faculty capacity, institutional alignment with international standards, and a vibrant, socially engaged academic community.

**Table 2. List of Activities, 2025–2026**

| No. | Title | Type of Activity |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Implementing Program Assessment | Training Session |
| 2 | English Language Day Event | Event |
| 3 | Bologna Process Committee Session I: Understanding ECTS — Structure, Classification, and Credit Calculation | Workshop |
| 4 | Integrating Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education: Why It Matters for Every Discipline | Seminar |
| 5 | From Passive to Active: 21st-Century Teaching Strategies to Engage University Students | Seminar |
| 6 | Bologna Process Committee Session II: The Implementation of the Bologna Process in the Kurdistan Region | Workshop |
| 7 | How to Publish Research in Scopus | Seminar |
| 8 | The Future of Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy in Kurdistan | Seminar |
| 9 | Implicatures in Face-to-Face Interactions and Possibilities for Communication Failure | Seminar |
| 10 | IT Day Symposium | Symposium |
| 11 | Exam Committee and Grades on Moodle | Workshop |
| 12 | Building New Neural Connections Through Art: Literature, Painting, and Music | Workshop |
| 13 | Speech, Rhetoric, and Communication | Seminar |
| 14 | Electronic Applications in Banking Operations | Training |
| 15 | Ending Digital Violence Against Women and Girls | Seminar |
| 16 | Aligning Daily Practices with Institutional Values | Seminar |
| 17 | Coursebook Preparation for the Spring Semester | Training Session |
| 18 | Breast Cancer Awareness | Symposium |
| 19 | Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Workshop | Workshop |
| 20 | Leadership, Public Service, and Shaping the Future | Seminar |
| 21 | CUE Central (CAD, Portfolio) and Academic Profile | Workshop |
| 22 | Exam Committee Guidelines and Moodle Grading System | Workshop |
| 23 | Alignment of MLOs to PLOs | Training Session |
| 24 | ICT Training: Using Google Drive for Online Collaboration | Training Session |
| 25 | Kurdish Women in Syria's Peace Process | Seminar |
| 26 | From Print to Pixel: Understanding the World of Digital | Seminar |
| 27 | World Pharmacists Day 2025 | Event |
| 28 | Training on Sketch-Up Program for Architecture Students | Training Session |
| 29 | The Neurophilosophy of Anxiety and Its Effect on Learning | Seminar |
| 30 | Ethics in Multicultural and Multi-Faith Academic Communities | Seminar |
| 31 | Turnitin Instructor Training Session | Training Session |
| 32 | Online Teaching Platform | Training Session |
| 33 | Moodle Grading System Workshop | Training Session |

## Implementation of the Bologna Process

Catholic University in Erbil has been implementing the Bologna Process across all programs since 2021–2022, in accordance with the guidelines of the Quality Assurance Directorate of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The process is supported by a teaching platform (Moodle), through which all course requirements and activities are shared electronically with students. During this academic year, continuous monitoring was conducted to ensure full compliance with the process, and training and awareness seminars were held for both faculty and students.

The Curriculum Development and Study Programs Committee was established at CUE on October 19, 2025. Its duties were defined as follows: (a) accepting curriculum-alteration suggestions from departments on a semester/annual basis (departments must submit these suggestions to the Committee only after making their own expert decisions internally, through their Department Scientific Committees); (b) examining these curriculum-related suggestions and making decisions on them; and (c) submitting the Committee's decisions to the University Council for approval.

In the 2025–26 academic year, the Committee's main task was examining and editing all individual module descriptors across every department and stage at the university, to ensure they met the standards issued by the Office of Academic Affairs, as well as international requirements — particularly those related to the Bologna Process. All module descriptors were revised to meet these standards and were designed in relation to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). All activities and assessment types were designed around the principles of student-centered learning, ensuring that graduates achieve the intended PLOs and SLOs.

The Committee's final task was improving existing departmental curricula following CUE's first comprehensive, systematic Academic Program Assessment cycle (2025–2026), conducted by the Office of Academic Affairs across the university's seven graduating academic programs — English Language, International Relations and Diplomacy, Business Management, Accounting, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Architecture, and Computer Science and Information Technology. The assessment of PLOs 1 and 2 combined direct and indirect measures: as a direct measure, most departments evaluated a graduation project (Architecture used a graduation portfolio), while all departments shared a common indirect measure — focus group discussions with 10–15 graduating students on their achievement of the program's learning outcomes and their broader learning experience. On Assessment Day, each department's Scientific Committee and Advisory Board reviewed the direct-data results alongside the consolidated focus group notes to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement, and to recommend changes to assessment methodology, the learning environment, or the learning itself. Each department subsequently produced its own assessment report documenting the PLOs assessed, the data collected, the analysis conducted, and the resulting decisions — establishing a repeatable, evidence-based assessment cycle that led to curricular changes within several departments.

## Accreditation Process

Catholic University in Erbil (CUE) is currently pursuing accreditation at both the national and international levels. Nationally, the University is working with the Kurdistan Accrediting Association for Education (KAAE), a national accreditation body established by the Kurdistan Regional Government to enhance the quality of higher education through structured evaluation and accreditation processes grounded in accountability, continuous improvement, and transparency. CUE has already received Eligibility Status and is now preparing to move forward to the Candidacy Stage.

In parallel, CUE is assessing its readiness to apply for Candidacy status with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), a U.S.-based institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE). MSCHE is authorized to carry out accreditation and pre-accreditation (candidacy) reviews for institutions of higher education, including those offering distance education, correspondence education, and direct assessment programs. These parallel efforts reflect the University's broader focus on strengthening its academic and institutional standards in line with recognized quality assurance frameworks.

## University Ranking

### Times Higher Education (THE)

THE World University Rankings: The Ranking Committee coordinated and submitted the university's institutional data for the THE World University Rankings. The university is currently awaiting the publication of the official results.

THE Asia University Rankings 2026: Catholic University in Erbil was listed as a Reporter Institution. The official feedback indicated that insufficient research publications were the main reason for not being included among the ranked institutions. This result highlights research output as a priority area for future improvement.

### Arab University Ranking

Catholic University in Erbil was included in the Third Edition of the Arab University Ranking 2025. Locally, among Iraqi universities, CUE achieved 16th place out of 63 participating Iraqi universities, reflecting improvement in its national standing. At the Arab level, the university was ranked 119th out of 236 participating Arab universities. The university has

completed registration with new institutional credentials and has started preparations for participation in the Fourth Round of the Arab University Ranking 2026.

### Webometrics Ranking

The Ranking Committee continued to monitor the university's performance in the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities as part of its institutional benchmarking activities.

## Summary

The 2025–2026 academic year marked significant progress in strengthening Catholic University in Erbil's quality assurance framework. The university completed its first systematic program assessment cycle across seven programs, updated coursebooks and curriculum maps to align module, program, and institutional learning outcomes, and recorded strong faculty evaluation results. A broad range of professional development and scientific activities further supported teaching quality, while advances toward national and international accreditation will continue to improve standing in the Arab University Ranking which will reflect growing external recognition. At the same time, feedback from the THE Asia University Rankings confirms that research output remains the key area for continued growth. Sustaining these efforts will be central to the university's accreditation and ranking goals.

# List of Publications 2025-2026


1. **Almukhtar F**. Real-time neural spike-sorting and morphology estimation using hybrid CNN-BiLSTM architectures for brain–computer interface applications. Appl Comput Intell Soft Comput. 2026;2026:8858823. doi:10.1155/acis/8858823.
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and real-time neural optimization. Neural Comput Appl. 2026;38:202. doi:10.1007/s00521-026-11845-2.

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