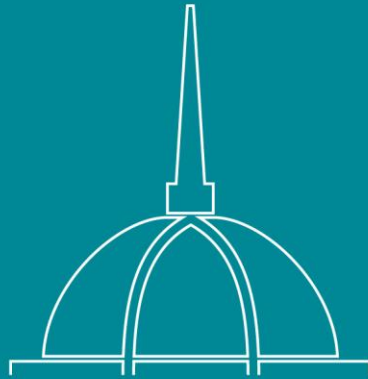




**OIEP**

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS  
AND PLANNING



# **Employer Satisfaction Survey**

Spring 2025



**OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND PLANNING**

[auk.edu.krd](http://auk.edu.krd)

## Executive Summary

During the spring 2025 semester, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP) conducted two surveys of employers.

- The Employer Expectations Survey (Expectations Survey) was designed to better understand the relative value of employee skills from the employers' perspective.
- The Employer Satisfaction Survey (Satisfaction Survey) was designed to the employers' perceptions of their AUK alumni employee's skills, performance, and workplace readiness.

This report focuses on:

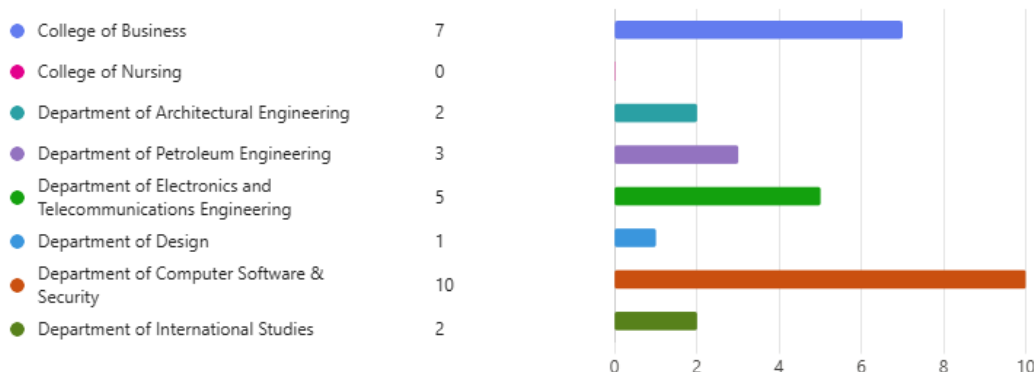
- Information (Industry field, sector, size) about the responding employers.
- Employer perception of the relative value of employee skills and abilities.
- Employer perception of their AUK alumni employee's engagement and background.
- Employer perception of their AUK alumni employee's skills and readiness for their jobs

The Expectations Survey was disseminated during the annual AUK Job Fair on April 29, 2025. Thirty employers responded to the Expectations Survey. The Satisfaction Survey was conducted between February and June 2025 through both in-person interviews and online submissions. Online participation was limited despite follow-up efforts by the Office of Advancement, partly due to the absence of a dedicated staff member for employer relations during this period. Thirty Satisfaction Surveys were completed. Each responding employer had one AUK alumni, so all responses can be related to a specific AUK alum. Details about those alumni are provided in Appendix A.

Ten of the fifty responding employers completed both surveys. For both surveys, more than 80% indicated that they supervise the employee directly or indirectly.

- Expectations Survey: Most of the 30 respondents (80%) indicated that they directly (63%) or partially (17%) supervise the AUK graduate; (20%) reported that they were not direct supervisors.
- Satisfaction Survey: Most of the 30 respondents (83%) indicated that they directly (70%) or partially (13%) supervise the AUK graduate; 17% reported that they were not direct supervisors.

The 30 evaluated alumni are from the following programs\*:

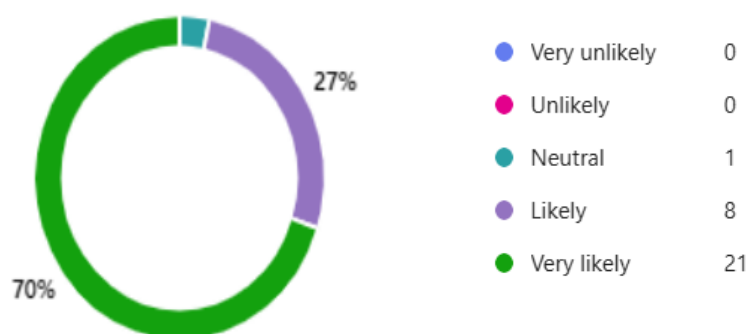


\*The Nursing department is not represented, as its first batch of graduates completed the program only recently.

AUK has graduated 563 students and 320 of them are known to be employed, therefore the 30 alumni that were evaluated for the satisfaction survey is less than 10% of employed AUK alumni. Although the response rate is low, answers were consistent and can be used to inform discussions about employer expectations and preparing students for careers in the Kurdistan region.

In some cases, responses can be compared to similar items in an Employer Satisfaction Survey that was conducted by the Office of Advancement in 2022-23. In the future, the current survey will be repeated at 1-year intervals by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning.

Satisfaction Survey responses are predominantly positive, as captured in the responses to the overarching question, “How likely are you to consider hiring another graduate from the AUK?”. Nearly all institutions, 97% with only one identifying a neutral response, responded that they are likely or very likely to do so. This is a strong improvement from the 2022-23 survey in which 27% indicated, “Maybe”.



The following report provides more specific information about the responding employers, their expectations, and their ratings of AUK alumni who work for them. The review of specific skills and related skills can be used to consider many possibilities for how AUK can continue to improve the preparation of students for life beyond AUK.

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## Responding Employer Information

Of the companies that responded to the Satisfaction Survey, 63% reported that they are in the private sector, 23% in the public sector, and 13% in the semi-public sector. The Expectations Survey drew a 20% higher proportion of responses from the private sector (83%).

<b>Sector</b>	<i>Expectations Survey</i>	<i>Satisfaction Survey</i>
Private Sector	83%	63%
Public Sector	13%	23%
Semi-Public Sector	4%	13%

Proportionately, the size distribution and range was similar among the two groups of responding employers.

<b>Size</b>	<i>Expectations Survey</i>	<i>Satisfaction Survey</i>
Fewer than 10 Employees	10%	7%
11 - 50	17%	20%
51 - 100	17%	20%
101 - 150	10%	10%
More than 150	47%	43%

Industries from which Expectations Survey respondents reported (in order of most to least): Education (7), Manufacturing (4), Technology (3), Consulting Engineering (3), Healthcare (2), Sales (2), Finance (1), Government (1), Recruitment (1), Business Development (1), Marketing/Advertising (1), Non-Governmental (1), Sustainability and Development (1), Oil and Gas (1), Real Estate and Investment (1).

Industries from which Satisfaction Survey respondents reported (in order of most to least): Technology (8), Government (4), Other (4), Education (3), Finance (2), Manufacturing (2), Telecommunication (2), Oil (2), Construction (1), Trade/Distribution (1).

These responses are depicted graphically in Appendix B.

## Employer Expectations

Employers were asked to rate the importance of 23 skills, each on a five-point scale where 1 indicated “Not important at all” and 5 indicated “Extremely Important”. The factors were grouped according to three categories: adaptation skills, communication skills, and job-related skills. Tables below present the percentage of respondents who ranked each skill as “4. Important” or “5. Extremely Important”. Nine skills (highlighted in bold) were selected by more 90% or more of respondents and can be considered the most important: five Adaptation skills, one Communication skill, and three Job-Related skill.

<i>Adaptation Skills</i>	% Respondents		
	<i>Important</i>	<i>Extremely Important</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Responsibility-taking</b>	47	53	100
<b>Time Management</b>	27	67	94
<b>Workload Endurance/Tolerance</b>	50	43	93
<b>Commitment to Ethical Action</b>	10	80	90
<b>Ability to Manage Changes</b>	43	47	90
Self Confidence/Inner Motivation	43	43	87
Ability to Manage Conflict	33	47	80
Risk-taking	40	33	73

<i>Communication Skills</i>	% Respondents		
	<i>Important</i>	<i>Extremely Important</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Oral Communication</b>	30	67	97
Application of Negotiation Techniques	37	43	80
Management and Leadership	27	53	80
Presentation	20	47	67
High-level Writing	27	37	64

<i>Job-Related Skills</i>	% Respondents		
	<i>Important</i>	<i>Extremely Important</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Commitment to Further Continuous Learning</b>	30	60	90
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	53	37	90
<b>Problem Solving</b>	30	60	90
Self Confidence/Inner Motivation	30	57	87
Ability to Manage Changes	30	57	87
Use of Modern IT	40	47	87
Information Acquisition and Processing	40	47	87
High Professional Proficiency	53	27	80
Awareness of the Practical Methods Applied	53	23	76
Risk-taking	43	27	70

Cited by 100% of respondents as Extremely Important (53%) or Important (47%): **Responsibility-taking**. Close behind, with only one neutral response, was **Oral Communication** with the highest

number (97%) of Extremely Important ratings (67%) and 30% Important ratings. **Time Management** (94% Extremely Important and Important)) and **Workload Endurance/Tolerance** (93% Extremely Important and Important). Tied at 90% Extremely Important and Important are: **Commitment to Ethical Action, Ability to Manage Changes, Commitment to Further Continuous Learning, Critical Thinking** and **Problem Solving**. Very close behind those, at 87%, are **Self-Confidence/Inner Motivation, Ability to Manage Changes, Use of Modern IT and Information Acquisition and Processing**.

High-Level Writing Skills earned the lowest “Importance” ratings yet, at 64%, nearly two-thirds of the employers ranked these skills as Extremely Important (37%) or Important (27%). This suggests that AUK is using the appropriate career skills for assessment purposes. After the following section, which summarizes Satisfaction Survey Ratings, is a section that will compare employers’ perceived value of skills to the level of satisfaction with those skills.

## Employer Satisfaction

Employers were asked to rate their AUK alumni employee(s) for 23 factors, each on a five-point scale where 1 indicated “Did not meet expectations” and 5 indicated “Exceeded expectations”. The factors were grouped according to three categories: adaptation skills, communication skills, and job-related skills. An overview of all factors provides a favorable outcome: only two items earned a “1. Did not meet expectations,” and no items earned more than two negative scores each. This means that all but two items garnered 90% or more neutral and positive responses. The few negative ratings were given to “Management and Leadership Skills” and “Ability to Manage Changes”. As AUK has only been graduating students for a few years, it is understandable that AUK graduates have not been in the workplace long enough to develop these high-level skills yet this is an important point that can inform career preparation in the curriculum and co-curriculum.

Given these generally positive responses, eliminating the “3. Neutral” score provides a bit more differentiation between items so the following discussion utilizes, for each item, the total percentage of respondents who selected the top two scores, “4. Meets Expectations” and “5. Exceeds Expectations”.

For the category of **Adaptation Skills**, five of the eight skills earned the highest favorable rankings: Nearly 90% (86.6%) reported AUK grads met or exceeded expectations in the areas of “Workload Endurance” and “Self-confidence/Inner Motivation”, 80% or more reported AUK grads met or exceeded expectations in the areas of “Commitment to Ethical Action” (83%), “Ability to Make Changes” (83%), and “Responsibility-Taking Skills” (80%). In this area, three skills earned neutral or negative scores by at least one-third of respondents: “Ability to Manage Conflict” (66% met or exceeded expectations), “Time Management” (63% met or exceeded expectations) and “Risk-taking Skills (63% met or exceeded expectations).

The category of **Communication Skills** includes five broad areas: Application of Negotiation Techniques, Presentation Skills, Management and Leadership Skills, Oral Communication Skills, and High-Level Writing Skills”. “Application of Negotiation Techniques” met or exceeded expectations as ranked by 83% of respondents; 77% of respondents agreed that “Oral Communication Skills”, “High-level Writing Skills”, and “Presentation Skills” met or exceeded expectations. Again, one-third of respondents were neutral or negative for the lowest scoring item of “Management and Leadership Skills, yet 66% of respondents reported that AUK grads met or exceeded expectations in this area.

The **Job-Related Skills** category includes 10 factors, the highest scoring was “Commitment to Further Continuous Learning” (83% met or exceeded expectations). Close behind, with 80% met or exceeded expectations, are “Use of Modern IT”, “Information Acquisition and Processing Skills”, Ability to Manage Changes”, “Self-Confidence/Inner Motivation” and “Problem-solving Skills.

“High Professional Proficiency” (76%), “Awareness of the Practical Methods Applied” (70%), “Critical Thinking Skills” (73%). This category includes the lowest scoring factor, “Risk-Taking Skills” (66.7%).

**Please provide any feedback or suggestions that you believe would be valuable for the university to consider.**

Nearly two-thirds (18) of the respondents answered the question, “Please provide any feedback or suggestions that you believe would be valuable for the university to consider.”

Several comments suggest employers want to be more engaged with AUK, once phrased as a need for “better engagement” but most often phrased in terms of AUK expanding its relationship with private

business sector. One respondent suggests AUK should more strongly emphasize the critical role the private sector plays in the growth and development of KRG. Others suggested developing learning opportunities that students, alumni, and other employees could take advantage of, including utilizing professional experts as guest lecturers to collaborate with companies other universities on workshops, seminars, capacity-building. One respondent specifically cited a need for CRM, sales, and HR training. Another directly stated, "We'd love to get more involved with the Alumni Association."

An indicator that employers value AUK alumni, one respondent suggested that AUK develop a website page for job openings from other organizations and another asked AUK to encourage graduates to apply for Erbil openings as well as Duhok jobs.

Practical skills were highly ranked in the Expectations survey, and several respondents provided feedback that undergraduates should be more exposed to workplaces through expanded internship, volunteer, and career development opportunities. One asked for more experience before graduation in project management and data research. Comments like, "Keep up hard work on career services, prep for job market, and supporting communication skills and Microsoft platforms for data analysis and time management" suggest that employers are not saying AUK is lacking in this area, but that more is better.

More critical feedback included three comments that suggest more work is needed to prepare students for communication technology and interaction skills across departments and with external stakeholders. One respondent stated that, "students need to be more open and social to the community," and another noted that more emphasis on the English language would be desirable.

### **How would you describe your overall perception of the American University of Kurdistan?**

One third of the Satisfaction Survey respondents answered the open-ended question, "How would you describe your overall perception of the American University of Kurdistan?" No responses were negative, and all responses concurred with the "quite positive" comments. The following words were used by two respondents each: excellent, practical, career-oriented, and professional. Three respondents presented the claim that AUK is or has the potential to become a top contributor to the region and shaping Kurdistan's workforce. Other words used to describe AUK were "trustworthy" and "unique".



## Employer Expectations Compared to Employer Satisfaction

Adaptation Skills	% Respondents		
	Employer Importance	Alumni Met or Exceeded Expectations	
Responsibility Taking	100	80	
Time Management	94	66	2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest/ 2 <sup>nd</sup> lowest
Workload Endurance/Tolerance	93	86	
Commitment to Ethical Action	90	83	
Ability to Manage Changes	90	83	
Self Confidence/Inner Motivation	87	87	
Ability to Manage Conflict	80	67	
Risk-taking	73	63	

Communication Skills	% Respondents		
	Employer Importance	Alumni Met or Exceeded Expectations	
Oral Communication	97	77	
Application of Negotiation Techniques	80	93	
Management and Leadership	80	67	
Presentation	67	77	
High-level Writing	64	77	

Job-Related Skills	% Respondents		
	Employer Importance	Alumni Met or Exceeded Expectations	
Critical Thinking	90	73	
Commitment to Further Continuous Learning	90	83	
Problem Solving	90	80	
Self Confidence/Inner Motivation	87	80	
Ability to Manage Changes	87	80	
Use of Modern IT	87	80	
Information Acquisition and Processing	87	80	
High Professional Proficiency	80	77	
Awareness of the Practical Methods Applied	76	70	
Risk-taking	70	67	

Cited by 100% of respondents as Extremely Important (53%) or Important (47%): **Responsibility-taking**. Close behind, with only one neutral response was **Oral Communication** with the highest number of Extremely Important ratings (67%) and 30% Important ratings (97% total). **Time Management** (94% Extremely Important and Important) and **Workload Endurance/Tolerance** (93%

Extremely Important and Important). Tied at 90% Extremely Important and Important are: **Commitment to Ethical Action, Ability to Manage Changes, Commitment to Further Continuous Learning, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**. Very close behind those, at 87%, are **Self-Confidence/Inner Motivation, Ability to Manage Changes, Use of Modern IT and Information Acquisition and Processing**.

All but two employers (93%) said their AUK alumni met or exceeded expectations for Application of Negotiation Techniques, the second-ranked Communications skill in terms of importance. Even for the skill that earned the lowest score (Risk-taking), nearly two-thirds of employers believe that their AUK alumni met or exceeded expectations for that skill, both as a job-related skill and as an adaptation skill. Interestingly, Risk-taking was one of the lowest ranked skills for importance as well, although it is important at 73% (adaption) and 70% (job-related).

So, generally speaking, employers concur that AUK has identified appropriate skills for the workplace and the curriculum is preparing students to do well in those areas. With AUK's intention to continually improve, some suggestions can be found by looking at two gap scores.

The most apparent gap is that the skill that received the second-highest importance score, Oral Communication, received the second-lowest met/exceeds expectations score.

Another gap is found for Critical Thinking, tied for fourth most important skill to employers (90%), yet earning the fourth-lowest "met" score, 73%.

## Appendix A: Alumni Employment Position, Department, and Academic Program

### Alumni Employment by Position and Department

	Department	Position/Role	Industry Sector	Alignment with Academic Program
1.	Performance Management	Not Provided	Technology	Architectural Eng.
2.	Operations	Not Provided	Manufacturing	Architectural Eng.
3.	Security	CCTV Operator	Oil Production	Business
4.	Business, Engineering, Education and Public Service	Not Provided	Finance	Business
5.	Not Provided	Not Provided	Technology	Business
6.	Business Development	B.D. Manager	Generic pharmaceutical	Business
7.	Procurement	Coordinator	Finance	Business
8.	Volunteer KRD Organization	Not Provided	Education	Business
9.	HR	Not Provided	Oil Industry	Business
10.	Programming	N/A	Construction	Computer Software Security
11.	IT Department	Not Provided	Government	Computer Software Security
12.	IT Department	Not Provided	Government	Computer Software Security
13.	IT Department	Not Provided	Education	Computer Software Security
14.	Operation	Not Provided	Trade/Distribution	Computer Software Security
15.	Development and Operations	Not Provided	Government	Computer Software Security
16.	Business Intelligence and Dev.	Not Provided	Technology	Computer Software Security
17.	CEO Department	Not Provided	Technology	Computer Software Security
18.	Web Developer	Not Provided	Technology	Computer Software Security
19.	CE (CEO Department)	Not Provided	Technology	Computer Software Security
20.	Grahpics Design/ Social Media	Not Provided	Education	Design
21.	Project Management	Not Provided	Government	ETE
22.	Advocacy Department	Project Officer	NGO	ETE
23.	Several departments	N/A	Telecommunication	ETE
24.	Telecommunication department	N/A	Telecommunication	ETE
25.	Technical Department	N/A	Technology	ETE
26.	Operations	Not Provided	Sustainability & Dev.	International Studies
27.	Public Relations	Not Provided	NGO	International Studies
28.	Commercial Department	Account Mgr.	Technology	Petroleum Eng
29.	HSE	Engineer	Manufacturing	Petroleum Eng
30.	Quality Control & Construction	Not Provided	Oil Industry	Petroleum Eng

## Appendix : Respondents' Industry Field

### Expectations Survey: Respondents' Industry Field



### Satisfaction Survey: Respondents' Industry Field

