



Employability in Programme Development: Establishing a labour market to higher education feedback loop drawing on local labour market intelligence

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**What technical and general skills do employers require from new graduates?
Intellectual Output 2: Innovative survey of employers to better understand skills demand and employability**

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1. Introduction and background

Universities in the UK have a strong focus on employability, since university quality is nowadays judged not only by the quality of the academic education provided, but also by how many students find graduate employment after graduation (Clarke, 2018; Healy, 2023). Graduate employability is a multidimensional concept that includes a wide range of skills, attributes, characteristics and attitudes that graduates should possess to be able to successfully perform a certain job (Clarke, 2018). While the discussion about the definition and meaning of the term employability is still ongoing (Healy, 2023; Holmes, 2013), the focus of this report is on the skills that employers require from the new graduates they hire.

To improve graduate employment and employability, most universities provide dedicated career services to help students with career consultations, job search skills and, sometimes in conjunction with academic departments, general skills that are sought after by employers (Tomlinson, 2017). To effectively prepare graduates for work, universities need information about employers' preferences for both technical and general skills and how employers may be willing to trade off one set of skills for another.

Surveys of employers are becoming an increasingly common way to study employers hiring behaviour and to elicit information on the skills they most value in their job applicants (McDonald, 2019). Various studies have analysed what employers value in formal education. For example, besides being a measure of acquired skills, formal education is also a signal of trainability and employers are willing to overlook the signal provided by education if other more direct information of productivity is available (Bills, 1988). Nowadays employers are particularly interested in general skills such as communication and interpersonal skills (Baird and Parayitam, 2019; Humburg and van der Velden, 2015). The relative importance of general skills is partly related to the fact that they signal high level of adaptability (Biesma et al., 2007).

There is some debate in the economics field on how formal education influences employer hiring decisions. Human capital theory (Becker, 1993) argues that formal education provides human capital: skills, knowledge and attributes that influences an individual's productivity in the labour market. Skills can be divided into general skill that are transferable across firms and/or sector, and specific (technical) skills that are not transferable across firms and/or sector. In contrast, job competition theory (Thurrow, 1975) argues that formal education does not provide skills required for the job market; rather it signals trainability and which individuals will be the cheapest to train, with skills developed while on the job. A separate theory (Sattinger 1993) argues that both the demand and supply side are important with good job-person matches occurring when the preference for skills by employers matches those skills provided by applicants.

To understand the relative importance that employers place on technical and general skills, and whether education is a signal of skills or trainability, between November 2021 and May 2022 we carried out focus groups with employers in various sectors (Longhi and Jewell, 2022). We found that employers across different sectors have similar requirements from the graduates they hire. Employers consider basic technical skills necessary, but are willing to train new hires in the more specific technical skills needed for the job. Therefore, employers require adaptability, passion, and a commitment to lifelong learning since these traits characterise workers who are willing to continuously improve their knowledge to perform new (constantly evolving) jobs.

Focus groups are useful to identify shared experiences among participants, but the data are qualitative, and the results are based on small samples. To validate the results from our focus groups and identify statistical patterns and relationships, we designed a survey to elicit information on the relative importance placed by employers on general versus technical skills of the graduates they recruit.

2. The survey

Various surveys are regularly carried out by organisations that aim to inform academics and career services about employers preferences in terms of graduate skills and about skills that graduates seem to lack. While of these surveys focus on specific fields – for example, The Economics Network (2019), Institute of Student Employers (2021) – others are carried out mostly for research purposes. Most of these surveys, however, have been carried out before the pandemic; ours is one of the few that have been carried out after the pandemic and can identify shifts in the relative importance

of technical versus general skills as a result of the sudden increase in hybrid working. Our survey combines close and open questions asking directly about the importance of technical and general skills, and a set of vignettes asking respondents to evaluate fictitious job applicants to indirectly elicit information on preferences between technical and general skills. The combination of questionnaires and vignettes increases the internal and external validity of the results (Steiner et al., 2016).

Similarly to Humburg and van der Velden (2015), who only include people who have been involved in graduate recruitment in the 5 years prior to the survey, our population of interest consists of people who have been involved with graduate recruitment in the UK in the 3 years prior to the survey.

2.1. The questionnaire

The survey has three parts. The first set of questions asks respondents in what capacity they have been involved in graduate recruitment, their length of service with the employer, and some basic information about the employer (size, and sector). We decided not to collect personal information about the respondents, such as their age, sex, or ethnicity, since the aim of the project is to understand the demand for graduate skills rather than differences across respondents.

The main part of the survey focuses on the skills and attributes that employers require. We asked whether a specific field of study is required for all or some of the jobs, and whether a certain degree classification is required, for example Upper Second Class Division 1 (2:1) or above, and what recruitment methods the employer uses to select among job applicants. These questions are similar to the questions in our focus group, so that results can be compared. While in the focus groups we asked what skills employers require from graduates, in the survey we provided a list of skills and asked whether they are considered essential, desirable or if they are not important. A follow-up question asked which, among the skills listed, are considered the three most important ones. To allow flexibility, additional open questions ask whether there are other important skills that are not included the list, and if respondents think the graduates lack any important skill. We then directly asked respondents to evaluate the relative importance of technical versus general skills on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that only technical skills are important, and 10 means that only general skills are important. We also asked how satisfied respondents are with the graduates they recruit on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is completely dissatisfied and 10 is completely satisfied.

We finally asked questions about diversity and inclusion: whether diversity is important for the organisation (why yes or why not), at which stage of the process of increasing diversity the organisation is, what actions the organisation is currently taking to increase diversity, and how challenging it is for the organisation to recruit diverse people. Although the aim of the survey is not to measure differences in hiring across groups, it is nonetheless important to understand how diversity influences hiring decisions either directly or indirectly, as skills and abilities may be different across different groups.

The last part of the survey uses a set of vignettes to elicit information about employers preferences among job applicants with different technical and general skills, attributes and attitudes.

2.2. The vignettes

Vignettes are descriptions of hypothetical situations or persons that can be used to elicit respondents beliefs, attitudes or intended behaviours (Steiner et al., 2016) and they have been increasingly used to understand employer hiring decisions, see Di Stasio and van de Werfhorst (2016), Humburg and van der Velden (2015), and McDonald (2019) for reviews. In our case each vignette corresponds to one hypothetical job applicant with a set of specified characteristics aiming to indicate their level of technical and general skills. In contrast to many studies using vignettes to elicit information on hiring bias, for example against women, people of colour, or disabled job applicants our focus is on the relative importance of technical versus general skills; for this reason we decided to abstract from gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics of the job applicant which may create potential for discrimination. Hence, our job applicants anonymous.

The advantage of vignettes in this context is that vignettes aim to mimic real life situations where employers and hiring managers compare job applicants with diverse skills set, trading off one set of skills for another and provide indirect information on what skills are preferred. As a result, they are more realistic and less abstract than conventional questionnaires. Results from vignettes can validate – or be validated by – more direct information gathered on preferred skills via questionnaires, which are much more subject to respondents' rationalisation of their preferences.

We presented respondents with two sets of three fictitious job applicants, as discussed below, and asked them to score each applicant on a scale from 0 to 10 based on the probability of the applicant being offered the job. The fictitious applicants differ by four factors: 1) their degree classification, 2) the way they acquired knowledge of standard software such as Excel, 3) whether and which extra-curricular activities they have engaged in, and 4) whether they have completed an internship. The combination of these four factors allows us to disentangle the

relative importance of technical and general skills, as discussed below. Table 1 provides a summary of the four factors and their levels.

Table 1: Factors and their levels

Factor	Factor levels
1. Degree classification	1a) has achieved a first class degree
	1b) has achieved a 2:1
2. Good knowledge of Excel	2a) acquired via university study
	2b) acquired via LinkedIn learning
	2c) acquired as a result of volunteering
	2d) acquired as a result of part-time work
3. Extra-curricular activities	3a) no extra-curricular activities
	3b) part-time job during university Could be either: 3bi) worked part-time as a shop assistant 3bii) worked part-time as an assistant chef at a pub
	3c) part-time volunteering during university Could be either: 3ci) volunteered as an organiser of small events for a charity 3cii) volunteered as a shop assistant for a small charity
	3d) engagement in competitive sport Could be either: 3di) engaged in athletics competitively throughout university 3dii) played tennis, both competitively throughout university
4. Internship	4a) no internship
	4b) internship in a different field/industry
	4c) internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

The degree classification awarded to the job applicant has two levels: a) has achieved a first class degree, b) has achieved a 2:1.¹ We did not include lower degree classifications since in most cases job applicants are required to have achieved at least a 2:1 degree classification to progress to the next step in the hiring process. The degree classification achieved is a measure of subject-specific knowledge and technical skills acquired during university. Although it is possible that a higher degree classification also indicates more trainability of the job applicant, we control for this in the other factors that characterise the applicant.

The second factor is knowledge of Excel, and specifically how this knowledge was acquired. All candidates have “good” knowledge of Excel, but they acquired it in different ways: a) via university study, b) via LinkedIn learning, c) as a result of volunteering, d) as a result of part-time work. A knowledge of Excel obtained via university study only signals the level of human capital, i.e., the level of knowledge. In contrast, knowledge of Excel obtained via LinkedIn learning signals not only the level of knowledge, but also independence and personal initiative, and potential trainability of the job applicant. If independence and personal initiative are considered irrelevant by employers, we expect to find no difference in the probability of being offered a job between candidates who obtained their knowledge of Excel via university study or via LinkedIn learning other things being equal. A difference between the two would imply that employers value independence and personal initiative. Having obtained a good knowledge of Excel via volunteering or part-time work may signal additional general skills that are valued by employers, for example, general knowledge of work environments, similarly to internships. We control separately for volunteering and part-time work as part of the extra-curricular activities. Since not all candidates who engaged in volunteering or part-time work have gained a good knowledge of Excel, or may have gained it via university study or LinkedIn learning, there is no collinearity among the different factors. We expect no differences in the probability of being offered a job depending on whether the knowledge of Excel was gained via part-time work or volunteering (on top of what part-time work and volunteering signal in terms of skills, discussed below).

The third factor are extra-curricular activities, with four possible levels: a) no extra-curricular activities, b) part-time job during university, c) part-time volunteering during university, d) engagement in competitive sport. To avoid presenting to respondents candidates that are too similar, we varied the type of part-time work, volunteering, and sport. With respect to part-time work, candidates could have either worked part-time as a shop assistant, or as an assistant chef at a pub. For volunteering, candidates could have volunteered as an organiser of small events for a charity, or as a shop assistant for a small charity. For competitive sport, candidates could have engaged in

¹ In most UK universities, graduates are awarded a degree classification that broadly reflects their average mark obtained in the last two years of their study, where the marks obtained in their last year of study have double weight compared to the marks obtained in their second year of study. Those who have a final weighted average mark between 70 and 100 are awarded a “First Class” degree; those with a final weighted average mark between 60 and 69 are generally awarded a “Second Class Division 1” (2:1) honours degree; those with a final weighted average mark between 50 and 59 are generally awarded a “Second Class Division 2” (2:2) honours degree; those with a final weighted average mark between 40 and 49 are generally awarded a “Third” honours degree; etc.

athletics or played tennis, both competitively throughout university. For sport, we selected individual-level activities, to avoid signalling team work skills, which remains associated only to part-time work and volunteering.

Other things equal, we expect a higher probability of being offered the job to applicants who have engaged in any of the extra-curricular activities, which signal skills such as the ability to organise their schedule and balancing different activities, as well as motivation. Competitive sports signal higher ability to manage time and perseverance, but not team work skills; part-time work and volunteering signal more general skills as well as team work skills, but no sector-specific additional technical skills.

The fourth and last factor is internships, and has three levels: a) no internship, b) internship in a different field/industry, c) internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for. This factor measures the relative importance of sector-specific skills, that are only gained via internship in the same field, and general skills which can also be gained with an internship in a different field, but also via part-time work and volunteering. We expect applicants who have completed an internship to be preferred to those who have not done any internship. If sector-specific skills are important for employers, then applicants who have completed an internship in the same type of job should be preferred to those who have completed an internship in a different field/industry. We do not have expectations on whether employers prefer an applicant who has completed an internship in a different field/industry to a candidate who has done part-time work or volunteering during their study: it is possible that candidates can gain similar general skills via internship and part-time work and volunteering, but that part-time work and volunteering also signal more time-management skills than an internship which is done separately from university study. If this is the case, we expect part-time work and volunteering to be preferred to an internship in a different field/industry.

The combination of all factors and levels would create a population of $2 \times 4 \times 4 \times 3 = 96$ fictitious job applicants. However, it would also create applicants with implausible characteristics: for example, an applicant who acquired good knowledge of Excel as a result of part-time work (2d) but who did not engage in extra-curricular activities (3a), or who engaged in volunteering instead of part-time work (3c). This excludes half of the possible combinations, leaving us with 48 possible candidates, who were then semi-randomly assigned to groups of 3 candidates. We adjusted the groups ex-post since we had too many candidates who had done an internship and retained the most plausible groups, ending up with a total of 36 fictitious candidates divided into 12 groups. This choice is consistent with Steiner et al. (2016), who suggests to systematically partition vignettes in small and mutually exclusive sets.

The choice of only 12 groups was also partly the result of the software used to administer the survey, which did not allow for randomisation of the candidates presented to each respondent. We included variability on which candidates each respondent was presented in two steps. First, respondents were asked to think of a friend or relative and select which month their birthday was. The options were: 1. January-February, 2. March-April, 3. May-June, 4. July-August, 5. September-October, 6. November-December. Each of the six options was attached to one group of three candidates (six possible groups in total). We then asked respondents to think of another friend or relative and select the month of their birthday. Each option was then attached to six additional groups of three candidates.

Research suggests that the comparison of a large number of candidates creates excessive cognitive burden for the respondent (McDonald, 2019; Steiner et al., 2016). Our choice of presenting respondents with two series of only three fictitious candidates is comfortably within the maximum suggested and aims to prevent respondents from getting tired and providing superficial judgements.

2.3. Anchoring of vignettes

Since respondents to our survey evaluate two different sets of three job applicants each, it is good practice to “anchor” the vignettes to make the assessment of each job applicant more consistent within each respondent and to reduce randomness in the responses (Steiner et al., 2016).

For example, Humburg and van der Velden (2015) anchor their answers to a specific job by asking respondents to imagine a situation in which they need to recruit a recent graduate for a permanent entry level position. In a similar way, before presenting the vignettes we asked respondents to think of only one type of position; to help us better understand the scores given to each job applicant, we also asked to specify what type of position they had in mind. This can then be controlled for during the analysis phase. After presenting the vignettes, we also presented respondents with a blank vignette and asked them to select which level of each factor they preferred, if any.

3. Pilot, survey and ways forward

We piloted the survey in December 2022 during an informal workshop with employers, where 13 employers went through the questionnaire and the vignettes. No major issues were highlighted.

We then advertised the survey to a wide range of social and professional networks, thus also reaching recipients who are outside the target population. The survey was open between February 2023 and June 2023 and participants could sign up to a £50 high street voucher prize draw. The presence of a prize draw resulted in a high number of unsuitable answers, which had the purpose of increasing the chances of winning the prize. For example, in some instances replies to the open ended questions clearly did not fit the intended topic, and often these replies were repeated with the exact wording across multiple “respondents”. In some instances multiple responses had almost identical start and end date, differing by only a few seconds, while in other cases the survey were completed in only 6-7 minutes or less, against the expected 15 minutes. With 193 initial responses, after deleting all unsuitable answers as well as answers that were not in English, we ended up with a usable sample of less than 100 responses.

An additional possibility for data collection is to use online panels such as Prolific. This is a much faster way of data collection, where a large number of respondents is often available within a few hours or a few days, although more expensive since participants are paid a fixed amount of money per survey, and allow selection of participants based on country of residence as well as some individual characteristics such as gender or age (Mitze and Manago, 2022). These types of samples, however, have been shown to overrepresent (in the US) young people, people with lower average income, with higher level of education, and whites compared to ethnic minorities (Levay et al., 2016).

The current version of the survey is targeted to UK employers questions such as the degree classification required of job applicants are specific to the UK context. Nevertheless, the questionnaire can easily be adapted to international context by modifying these questions by asking for a more appropriate measure such as the grade point average; the vignettes can easily be modified accordingly.

4. Preliminary results

What is the relative importance of technical versus general skills when employers hire new graduates? Our initial results suggest that more respondents tend to give more weight to general skills than soft skills. Among our initial 98 respondents only 17.35% considered technical skills more important than general skills (scores 0-4 in Table 2 and in Figure 1), while 29.59% considered technical and general skills equally important (a score of 5). The remaining 53.06% considered general skills more important than technical skills (scores 6-10). This validates the results of the focus groups suggesting the relative importance of general compared to technical skills.

Table 2: Relative importance of technical versus general skills

Importance of technical vs soft skills (0 only technical skills important, 10 on	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Only technical skills are important	2	2.04	2.04
2	4	4.08	6.12
3	2	2.04	8.16
4	9	9.18	17.35
Equally important	29	29.59	46.94
6	12	12.24	59.18
7	19	19.39	78.57
8	16	16.33	94.90
9	4	4.08	98.98
Only general skills are important	1	1.02	100.00
Total	98		100.00

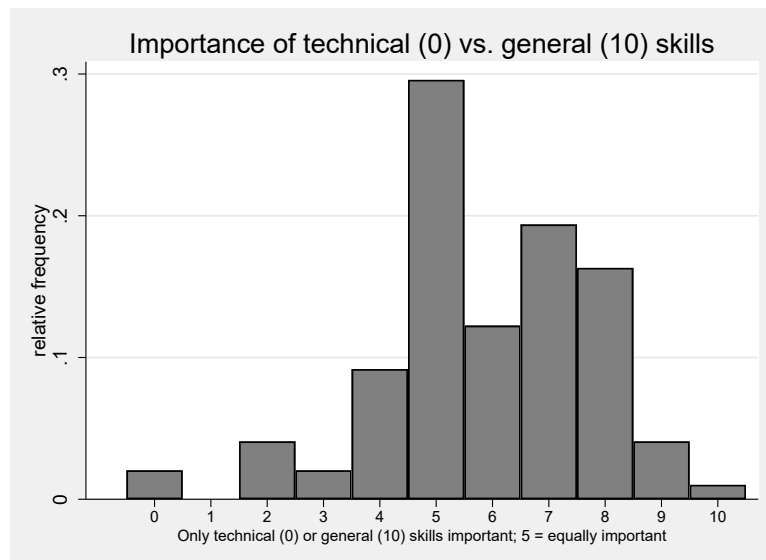


Figure 1: Relative importance of technical versus general skills

When we asked respondents to select the three most important skills from a list provided,² Industry/occupation professional skills/knowledge was selected by 44.90% of respondents, Oral communication: ability to express complex ideas and results was selected by 35.71% of respondents, and Initiative, critical thinking and problem solving was selected by 33.67% of respondents. This suggests, in line with the results of our focus groups, that general skills such as oral communication, initiative, critical thinking and problem solving are considered important by employers, provided that graduates have the basic professional skills and industry/occupation knowledge necessary to perform the job.

Interestingly, and in contrast to the results from our focus groups, Passion/enthusiasm was never selected among the top three skills, thus confirming the importance of using different methodologies of data collection to validate results.

5. Summary and conclusions

The aim of this report was to design an innovative survey to understand what is the balance between general and technical skills that employers want in the new graduates they hire. This sort of information is important for universities, who need to provide students with the right combination of general and technical skills.

The survey combines close and open questions asking directly about the importance of technical and general skills, with a set of vignettes asking respondents to evaluate fictitious job applicants. Vignettes are particularly suited to elicit intended behaviours from employers and hiring managers as they mimic real life situations where employers need to compare job applicants with diverse sets of skills, none of whom is likely to be perfect.

The survey was disseminated to our networks and yielded about 100 usable responses. While the data preparation and data analysis are not yet completed, our preliminary findings tend to confirm the result of the focus groups that we previously carried out. When asked about the relative importance of technical versus general skills more than half of respondents (53%) considered general skills more important than technical skills while almost 30% considered technical and general skills equally important. Only a minority (17%) considered technical skills more important than general skills. This confirms the importance for the university curriculum to go beyond the traditional technical skills.

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² The list included: Commercial awareness; Industry/occupation professional skills/knowledge; General IT skills (MS Word, Excel, ...); Oral communication: ability to express complex ideas and results; Written communication: writing of emails, reports etc.; Numeracy and data analytical skills (summarising data, making graphs, ...); Independent learning: ability to develop relevant knowledge and skills; Initiative, critical thinking and problem solving; Ability to work as part of a group; Ability to work independently; Flexibility, adaptability and resilience; Passion/enthusiasm.

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What mix of skills and characteristics do employers require when recruiting new graduates?

Thank you for your interest in our survey. The aim of this survey is to better understand how employers recruit for graduate roles in the UK, and specifically what technical and soft skills graduates need in a modern and post-pandemic labour market. We are interested in hearing from anyone who has been involved with graduate recruitment in the UK the last 3 years. The survey will take around 10-15 minutes. If you have not been involved with graduate recruitment, please do forward the survey to a relevant person within your organisation.

As a thank you, you will have the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win a £50 high street voucher. We will be happy to share the survey results and you can sign up for survey updates here.

This survey is carried out as part of the EU Funded project: "Employability in Policy Development (EPD)". The project brings together the University of Glasgow, the University of Reading, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Catalan Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency. You can find detailed information on the project on our website. Should you require more information or have any questions, please email Professor Sarah Jewell (s.l.jewell@reading.ac.uk) or Professor Simonetta Longhi (s.longhi@reading.ac.uk).

This project has been subject to an ethical review and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct by the Head of the School of Politics, Economics and International Relations.

Questions

1 In what capacity have you been involved in graduate recruitment in the last 3 years?

- Human resources
 - Hiring manager
 - Line manager
 - Other
- If you selected Other, please specify

2 How long have you worked for your organisation?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- More than 3 years

3 What does the organisation you work for mainly make or do?

Free text box

4 Which sector is your organisation in?

- Private
 - Public
 - Other
- If you selected Other, please specify

5 How many people does your organisation employ?

- Under 25 employees
- 25 to 99 employees

- 100 to 249 employees
- 250-499 employees
- 500+ employees
- Don't know, not sure

6 Does your organisation require graduates with degrees in specific fields?

- Yes, we require a degree in a specific field for all roles
- Yes, we require a degree in a specific field for some roles
- No, a degree in a specific field is not required, but is desirable
- No, for all roles we accept degrees in any field
- Don't know, not sure

Please specify the fields your organisation require/desire

Free text box

Please specify for which type of roles your organisation require/desire specific fields

Free text box

7 Does your organisation require graduates with a specific degree classification?

- Yes
- No
- It depends on the role

Please specify which degree classification(s) is required and for which type of roles (if applicable)

Free text box

8 Which of the following recruitment methods does your organisation use? [Please specify all that apply]

- CV or standardised application form
- Screening video or phone interviews (either live or pre-recorded)
- Numeracy tests
- Psychometric/skills tests
- Assessment centres
- Final online or in person interviews
- Other

If you selected Other, please specify

9 How essential are the following general, specific, technical skills, and attitudes when recruiting new graduates?

	Essential	Desirable	Not at all important	I don't know
Commercial awareness				
Industry/occupation professional skills/knowledge				
General IT skills (MS Word, Excel, ...)				
Oral communication: ability to express complex ideas and results				
Written communication: writing of emails, reports etc.				
Numeracy and data analytical skills (summarising data, making graphs, ...)				
Independent learning: ability to develop relevant knowledge and skills				
Initiative, critical thinking and problem solving				
Ability to work as part of a group				

Ability to work independently				
Flexibility, adaptability and resilience				
Passion/enthusiasm				

10 Among the skills rated above, which are considered the 3 most important skills?

	Select if this is one of the 3 most important skills
Commercial awareness	
Industry/occupation professional skills/knowledge	
General IT skills (MS Word, Excel, ...)	
Oral communication: ability to express complex ideas and results	
Written communication: writing of emails, reports etc.	
Numeracy and data analytical skills (summarising data, making graphs, ...)	
Independent learning: ability to develop relevant knowledge and skills	
Initiative, critical thinking and problem solving	
Ability to work as part of a group	
Ability to work independently	
Flexibility, adaptability and resilience	
Passion/enthusiasm	

11 Are there any other skills or attitudes considered essential? [List up to 3]

Free text box

12 Are there any skills you think applicants/graduates your organisation hires lack? [List up to 3]

Free text box

13 Would you say that in general technical/specific skills are more important than soft/general skills?

Please rate the importance of technical vs. soft skills where 0 means that only technical skills are important, while 10 means that only soft skills are important. A score of 5 means that both are equally important.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14 On the whole, how satisfied are you with the skills and knowledge of the graduates your organisation hires? On a scale of 0(Not at all satisfied) to 10(Completely satisfied)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

15 Are "diversity" and issues related to "diversity" a top priority for your organisation at the moment?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

(if YES) Why does your organisation consider diversity a priority?" [Please select all that apply]

- There is a business case for increasing diversity in my organisation
 - My organisation considers it important reputationally
 - My organisation considers it important for reasons of social justice
 - Don't know, not sure
 - Other
- If you selected Other, please specify

(if NO) Why does your organisation not consider diversity as a priority? [Please select all that apply]

- A lack of interest in diversity issues
 - It is too expensive to collect and analyse diversity data
 - My organisation only reacts to legislation
 - Don't know, not sure
 - Other
- If you selected Other, please specify

16 At which stage of the process of increasing diversity is your organisation?

- Raising awareness within the organisation
- Planning actions to increase diversity
- Taking actions to increase diversity
- Not considering
- Don't know, not sure

(if Taking actions) How much do diversity issues influence choices in your organisation when

	A large influence	Some influence	No influence	I don't know
Advertising a job position				
Screening CVs and applications				
Deciding who to hire				
Deciding who to promote				

(if Taking actions) What activities has your organisation undertaken (or plans to take) to attract more diverse candidates?" [Please select all that apply]

- None
 - Targeted particular groups
 - Tailored marketing materials/methods
 - Changed the universities visited
 - Worked with advocacy groups or student societies
 - Increased the number of apprentices that we were recruiting
 - Other
- If you selected Other, please specify

(if Taking actions) What approaches has your organisation undertaken (or plans to take) to increase diversity while selecting job applicants? [Please select all that apply]

- None
 - Diversity monitoring
 - Engaged more diverse assessor groups
 - Trained staff involved in selection in diversity and unconscious bias
 - Offered financial support for candidates to travel to selection events
 - Used contextualised screening or selection approaches
 - Name/University blind recruitment
 - Removed some pre-entry criteria e.g. degree classification
 - Near-miss scheme (to take in candidates who just missed the pass mark)
 - Other
- If you selected Other, please specify

17 How challenging is it for your organisation to recruit from the following under-represented groups?

	Challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not challenging	Cannot say
Women				
People from ethnic minority backgrounds				
People from working class backgrounds				

18 Are there any other under-represented groups your organisation finds challenging to recruit?

Free text box

Vignettes

We will now present to you fictitious candidates who are applying for a job in your organisation. Assume that all these candidates have passed the initial screening and are all suitable for the position. We would like you to rate each of these candidates, compared to the average candidate normally hired, in terms of their probability of being offered the job on a scale from 0 to 10, where higher numbers are given to better candidates. A score of 5 would indicate that the proposed candidate is very similar to the average candidate typically hired, while scores higher than 5 would indicate that the proposed candidate is better than the average, and vice versa.

19 Your organisation may hire graduates in different types of positions, please think of only one type of position when rating candidates. To help us better understand your answers, please state what type of position you have in mind.

Free text box

20 To select which group of candidates you will be presented with, please consider a friend/relative and select the option that contains their month of birth

- January or February
- March or April
- May or June
- July or August
- September or October
- November or December

(if January or February) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 21]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a first class degree
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has concentrated on studying with no extra-curricular activities
4. Has no work experience

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning

3. Has volunteered part-time during university as an organiser of small events for a charity
4. Has no experience of paid work

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has played tennis competitively throughout university
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

(if March or April) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 21]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as an organiser of small events for a charity
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of volunteering
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as a shop assistant for a small charity
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a first class degree
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has concentrated on studying with no extra-curricular activities
4. Has not completed any internship

(if May or June) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 21]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as an organiser of small events for a charity
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has engaged in athletics competitively throughout university
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of part-time work
3. Has worked part-time during university as a shop assistant
4. Has not completed any internship

(if July or August) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 21]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of volunteering
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as an organiser of small events for a charity
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as a shop assistant for a small charity
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has worked part-time during university as an assistant chef at a pub
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

(if September or October) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 21]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has played tennis competitively throughout university
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a first class degree
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has worked part-time during university as an organiser of small events
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as a shop assistant for a small charity
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

(if November or December) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 21]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has engaged in athletics competitively throughout university
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1

2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has worked part-time during university as an organiser of small events
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as a shop assistant for a small charity
4. Has not completed any internship

21 What is the probability of each candidate being offered the job?

	Scale of 0-10
Candidate 1	
Candidate 2	
Candidate 3	

22 Please click below to continue to the next page

We will now present to you one last set of fictitious candidates who are applying for a job in your organisation, and we would like you to rate each candidate as you did above.

23 To select which group of candidates you will be presented with, please consider another friend/relative and select the option that contains their month of birth

- January or February
- March or April
- May or June
- July or August
- September or October
- November or December

(if January or February) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 24]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has worked part-time during university as an organiser of small events
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as a shop assistant for a small charity
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a 2:1

2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of part-time work
3. Has worked part-time during university as an assistant chef at a pub
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

(if March or April) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 24]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of part-time work
3. Has worked part-time during university as an assistant chef at a pub
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has played tennis competitively throughout university
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a first class degree
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has worked part-time during university as an assistant chef at a pub
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

(if May or June) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 24]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a first class degree
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has played tennis competitively throughout university
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has engaged in athletics competitively throughout university
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a first class degree
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has worked part-time during university as an organiser of small events
4. Has not completed any internship

(if July or August) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 24]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a first class degree

2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has engaged in athletics competitively throughout university
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as a shop assistant for a small charity
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of part-time work
3. Has worked part-time during university as an organiser of small events
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

(if September or October) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 24]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of volunteering
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as an organiser of small events for a charity
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as an organiser of small events for a charity
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a first class degree
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has worked part-time during university as a shop assistant
4. Has completed an internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

(if November or December) You are faced with the following 3 candidates [then move to question 24]:

Candidate 1

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has engaged in athletics competitively throughout university
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 2

1. Has achieved a 2:1
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained via LinkedIn learning
3. Has worked part-time during university as a shop assistant
4. Has not completed any internship

Candidate 3

1. Has achieved a first class degree
2. Is proficient in Excel, and this was obtained as a result of university study
3. Has volunteered part-time during university as a shop assistant for a small charity
4. Has completed an internship in a different field/industry

24 What is the probability of each candidate being offered the job?

	Scale of 0-10
Candidate 1	
Candidate 2	
Candidate 3	

25 Please click below to continue to the next page

We now would like you to tell us about your ideal candidate by picking the best attribute from each of the four factors:

26 Factor 1: degree classification

- Has achieved a first class degree
- Has achieved a 2:1
- Indifferent between a first class degree and a 2:1

27 Factor 2: knowledge of Excel

- Obtained via university study
- Obtained via LinkedIn learning
- Obtained as a result of volunteering
- Obtained as a result of part-time work

28 Factor 3: other activities

- None
- Part-time job during university
- Part-time volunteering during university
- Engagement in competitive sport

29 Factor 4: internship

- None
- Internship in a different field/industry
- Internship in the same type of job the candidate is applying for

30 If you wish, you can explain why you selected these specific characteristics or if you were indifferent between any options

Free text box

31 Do you have any other comments you wish to add?

Free text box

32 If you would like to be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win a £50 high street voucher, please enter your email address below. The survey will close at the end of May and the prize draw will take place in early June. Your email address will not be stored with your survey responses and will only be used to contact you in the event you win the prize draw.

Free text box

Thank you for participating in our survey! Please feel free to forward the survey to others who have been involved in graduate recruitment. If you would like to be kept updated on the survey results you can sign up [here](#).