NIIT

India Skills Gap Report 2026

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Executive Summary

India Skills in Demand Index 2026

India's skills challenge is no longer about whether people hold qualifications. It is about whether they can perform in roles that are changing faster than the systems preparing them. As Artificial Intelligence becomes part of everyday work, the meaning of "job-ready" is being rewritten. Readiness is no longer a milestone reached at graduation; it must now be rebuilt continuously as work itself evolves.

The NIIT Skills in Demand Index, based on perspectives from 3,500 learners, professionals, employers, recruiters, CXOs, and academic leaders, shows that what appear to be small gaps in readiness are no longer closing on their own. They are becoming structural constraints across the talent ecosystem.

Insights that define India's current skills reality

1. AI literacy is now a basic requirement for confidence at work

Confidence in readiness rises with exposure to real, technology-enabled work. Senior professionals feel prepared. Students do not.

The problem is not awareness; it is application. Academic leaders believe graduates are ready, but far fewer students feel the same. Employers, meanwhile, say talent is available, but rarely without effort.

This gap is not about aspiration. It is about experience, validation, and confidence in using technology in real roles.

2. Mid-career talent has become the system's main bottleneck

Professionals with 6–15 years of experience are the most sought after and the hardest to replace. Employers are hiring earlier to manage this pressure, but this only moves the shortage forward. When progression slows, delivery is the first to suffer.

The constraint is no longer hiring. It is capability progression.

3. Ecosystem aligns on digital skills, but fragments on broader job readiness

Digital and data skills are the only shared priority across the talent ecosystem. Beyond this, expectations diverge sharply.

Each stakeholder group is building toward a different definition of "ready."

The result is not a skills shortage, but a signalling failure, no one is hiring for the same outcome.

4. Employers now trust proof more than paper

Formal qualifications alone no longer signal readiness. Employers are moving toward evidence of ability including portfolios, certifications, and real-world application.

Candidates are adjusting more slowly. This gap reflects a structural shift in how employability is evaluated: from credentials earned to capability proven.

Therefore, upskilling is no longer the problem. Access is.

Most people are willing to learn. Most organisations are willing to invest. Time expectations are aligned.
What is missing is reach.
Cost, discoverability, and scalable delivery still limit participation, especially for early-career and first-generation learners. In an AI-shaped economy, the constraint is no longer motivation, it is access at scale.

What this means for the talent system

- Employers must treat skills as a progression challenge, not just a hiring one.
- Institutions must connect learning to real roles, not just curriculum outcomes.
- Learners must build proof of ability, not just proof of completion.

NIIT's point of view

India does not face a skills shortage.
It faces a readiness and progression failure.
Without AI literacy at scale, this failure shows up first in early- and mid-career roles, where expectations rise faster than support systems can adapt. The assumption that formal education alone ensures relevance no longer holds.
NIIT's role is not to add more courses to the system. It is to help the system change how readiness is built, validated, and renewed.
As India moves toward Viksit Bharat, the real question is not whether AI will shape employability. It already has.

The question is who will build readiness fast enough to keep pace.

Pankaj Jathar
Chief Executive Officer, NIIT Limited

Overview of Insights

Talent Supply Readiness & Confidence

- Confidence in job readiness rises with real work experience, and students are clearly missing it. Senior leaders rate their readiness at 82 out of 100, mid-level professionals at 75, and early-career talent at 68. Students, by contrast, score just 57, showing a wide confidence gap at the point of workforce entry.

- That gap is reinforced by conflicting expectations. 51% of academic leaders believe graduates will be employer-ready within three to five years, yet only 35% of students feel very optimistic about their future. Nearly one in four students (24%) say they are unsure. Employers remain cautious as well. While 86% say skilled talent is available, only 49% are very confident in finding it, and 37% say it takes real effort.

- **Inference:** Workforce readiness confidence is strongly shaped by practical experience, yet many students enter the job market with limited exposure to real-world work environments. Without clearer career pathways, earlier and more structured industry engagement, and stronger mechanisms for skills validation, student confidence is likely to remain low even as employers and academic institutions assume graduates are prepared.

Mid-Career Talent Emerges as the Critical Pressure Point

- Talent with 6-15 years of experience has become both the most in-demand and the hardest to secure, creating a significant constraint on organisational growth. This shortage is reshaping how employers approach hiring, capability building, and long-term workforce planning.

- Hiring data reflects this shift. 46% of employers now recruit a mix of entry-level and experienced talent, while 29% focus primarily on fresh graduates. Only 20% depend exclusively on experienced hires, signaling increased willingness to hire earlier despite experience gaps.

- The imbalance is most evident at mid-career level. This group accounts for the largest share of recruitment at 47% yet is also cited as the scarcest talent pool by 38% of recruiters.

- **Inference:** As availability tightens, employers are responding by hiring earlier, accelerating skill development, and strengthening long-term talent pipelines to sustain growth.

Workforce Shifts in motion & Work Models

- A growing mismatch between early-career expectations and organisational work models is reshaping talent competition. Hybrid work has become a baseline expectation, yet many organisations continue to operate with office-first assumptions.

- Early career professionals are the most mobile segment, with 87% having interviewed in the past year, far exceeding other cohorts. Despite this, alignment remains weak. While 62% of students prefer hybrid work and 17% favour remote roles, 68% of early-career professionals currently work from the office, and only 49% say this is their preferred model.

- Employer policies remain fragmented. 38% offer fully remote roles and 44% allow remote work selectively. Senior leadership remains the most cautious, with just 11% of CXOs viewing on-site presence as essential.

- **Inference:** As early-career talent becomes more selective, organisations that fail to align work models with expectations risk losing candidates before retention efforts begin.

Technology Disruption & AI Readiness

- AI is still viewed primarily as an efficiency tool rather than a business-model disruptor, even as adoption accelerates. Around 40% of employers and academic leaders expect a moderate impact over the next three to five years, with roles evolving and some displacement anticipated.

- Perceptions and preparedness remain misaligned. 51% of employers see AI mainly as a driver of cost savings and productivity, yet only 34% of academic leaders report actively integrating AI and digital skills into curricula.

- **Inference:** As AI adoption scales, delayed skill integration and limited mid-career upskilling risk creating capability gaps at the very moment organisations require execution readiness.

Skills in Demand: Stakeholder Divergence

- Digital and data skills are the only shared priority across the talent ecosystem, ranking in the top three for 30% of both students and employees. Beyond this point, expectations diverge sharply.

- Early career professionals place greater emphasis on remote working skills (20%), reflecting evolving work patterns. Academic leaders continue to prioritise digital capability and innovation, while senior leadership focuses on influence and adaptability. Recruiters, by contrast, emphasise execution-oriented skills such as project management and domain expertise.

- **Inference:** The outcome is a fragmented definition of employability. While digital and data skills provide a rare point of alignment, the absence of broader consensus complicates how readiness is developed, assessed, and hired for.

Credentials: What Signals Employability

- Employability signals are shifting from formal qualifications to demonstrated capability. As roles become more execution-driven, credentials matter mainly for the skills they prove.

- A portfolio of work is the strongest shared signal, ranked in the top three by 45% of employers and candidates. Beyond this, priorities diverge. Candidates continue to favour traditional markers. 43% value on-the-job experience compared with 32% of employers, while degrees matter to 31% of candidates versus 21% of employers.

- Employers are moving faster toward alternative credentials. 38% value micro-credentials, 28% industry certifications, 24% apprenticeship experience, and 15% bootcamp qualifications.

- Inference: The data highlights a clear shift. Employers are redefining credibility around proven skills, while candidates remain more anchored to conventional qualifications.

Upskilling Behaviour & Barriers

- Upskilling demand has shifted decisively toward digital, flexible, and work-embedded learning. Intent is high, but access has become the primary constraint.

- Online courses are the most preferred format (42%), followed by on-the-job learning (37%) and workshops (35%). Short, practical formats continue to gain traction, with 35% valuing workshops and masterclasses and 33% citing podcasts or YouTube.

- Participation is active. 36% are exploring learning options, while 27% are already enrolled. Time expectations are aligned across stakeholders. 47% of learners are willing to spend two to five hours per week on upskilling, a view shared by 49% of employers and academic leaders.

- **Inference:** The signal is clear. Willingness and time are no longer the barriers. The challenge lies in delivering relevant upskilling at scale within real work constraints.

The Upskilling Bottleneck Is Access, Not Intent

- Demand for upskilling is strong across career stages, but cost and discoverability continue to limit participation. Time commitment is largely aligned between learners and employers, making access the primary constraint.

- Self-funded learning increases with seniority. 40% of senior leaders pay for their own training, compared with 34% of mid-management and 31% of early-career professionals. Willingness to pay varies sharply. 52% of senior leaders are willing to invest when value is clear, while 42% of students prefer free options or remain undecided.

- The main barriers are practical. 35–40% cite high costs, and around 25% of students and early-career professionals report low awareness of available options.

- **Inference:** The conclusion is clear. Motivation exists, but unless learning is affordable and easy to find, upskilling will not scale.

Skills Budgets Are Rising, Impact Isn't

- Investment in skills development is increasing, driven by business growth and digital transformation priorities. However, this rise in spending has yet to translate into scaled workforce impact.

- 69% of organisations increased skills budgets last year, with 49% reporting consistent year-on-year growth. Business expansion (59%) and digital transformation (55%) are the primary drivers. Despite this investment, 62% report that learning programmes still reach less than half of their workforce, limiting overall effectiveness.

- This constrained reach is reinforced by current talent strategies. 37% of organisations continue to prioritise external hiring, while only 23% focus primarily on reskilling. A further 38% attempt to balance both approaches, leaving capability development dependent on market availability rather than internal pipelines.

- In response, organisations are beginning to explore partnerships as a path to scale. 40% already work with academic or private providers, and 38% expect EdTech partnerships to grow in importance over the next three to five years. Inclusion is increasingly embedded within these efforts, with 44% integrating diversity and inclusion objectives across programmes.

- **Inference:** Overall, while skills budgets are rising, limited programme reach and a sustained preference for hiring over reskilling continue to constrain impact. Without scalable delivery models and stronger investment in internal capability development, increased spending is unlikely to result in workforce-wide skill gains.

Report Process

Objectives, Methodology & Sample Design

Objective, Methodology & Sample Design

The objective of this study is:

To measure perception gaps across students, employees, academia, and employers on skills and readiness

To map emerging trends in India's skill ecosystem

Online survey was done using YouGov's India panel

3500

Total respondent base

Recruiter Experience	CXO / Senior Leadership	Sector Coverage
< 1 year — 7%	< 50 employees — 30%	IT / ITeS
1–2 years — 14%		BFSI
2–3 years — 13%	50–250 employees — 23%	Manufacturing
3–5 years — 12%		E-commerce
5–8 years — 15%	251–1K employees — 26%	EdTech
8–10 years — 12%		Healthcare
10–15 years — 14%	> 1K employees — 21%	Government
15+ years — 13%		FMCG
		Telecom
		Auto

Target Group

Students/Employees
2800

- Students - **700**
- Early Jobbers - **700**
- Mid Management Professionals - **700**
- Senior Management Professionals - **700**

{they respond about themselves unless otherwise asked in this survey}

Academic heads/Employers
700

- Recruiters - **400**
- CXOs/Senior leadership - **200**
- Academia Heads - **100**

{they respond about their organization or employees/students unless otherwise asked in this survey}
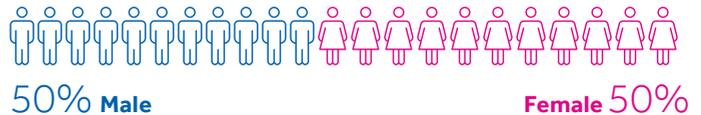
Other Quotas- Each cohort among Students/ Employees

City Tier

Tier 1	33%	population >= 50L (includes metropolitan cities)- Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai
Tier 2	33%	population between 15L and 50L (this is a list of about 20 cities, mini-metros like Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Pune and other cities like Jaipur, Indore, Bhopal, Kanpur, Nagpur, Vadodara, Surat)
Tier 3	33%	urban cities with population < 15L (this includes 150+ cities from across the country, for example, Amritsar from the North, Mangalore from the South, Nashik in West and Bhubaneshwar from the East)

Centre

North + Central India	25%	South India	25%
East/ North-East India	25%	West India	25%

Gender

50% Male   **Female 50%**

Target group definitions

EMPLOYEES	**Students**	Currently students – College, UG, PG, identify being full time student
	Early Jobbers	18–26 years of age, identifies being full-time working professional or junior, executive resource
	Mid level professionals	3+ years of experience, identify with being mid level professional, middle manager, junior manager, team leader
	Senior professionals	Senior manager, Director – 1 level
EMPLOYERS	**Recruiters / CHROs**	Decision making in recruitment, a mix of all level of recruiters – mid to senior levels
	CXOs	CXOs from company sizes: up to 200, 200–1000, 1000+, identify being at director level, MD, Chairperson, Partner, Owner, Non-executive director, board-level director, etc.
	Academia / Academia heads	Identify being at director level, MD, Chairperson, Partner, Owner, Non-executive director, board-level director, etc. in Education sector

Report Findings

Skill Confidence Landscape

Hiring & Placement Trends

Upskilling Initiatives & Learning Behaviour

Skill Confidence Landscape

Confidence Gap

Technical/Domain Specific Skills

Q. How confident are you in your own / your students' / your employees' proficiency in the above skills?

- **Confidence in knowledge of the latest ways of working in their sector increases with experience:** Senior management **(80)** leads, followed by mid-management **(74)**, early jobbers **(68)**, and students **(56)**.

- **Confidence in workforces operational and project management skills:** Senior leadership scores operational skills at **(76)**, above early jobbers' self-ratings **(67)** and in line with mid-management **(75)**.

- **Confidence in skills related to tools or software specific to their sector:** Students show the lowest self-confidence with a score at **(52)**, far below academic **(72)** and recruiter assessments **(74)**.
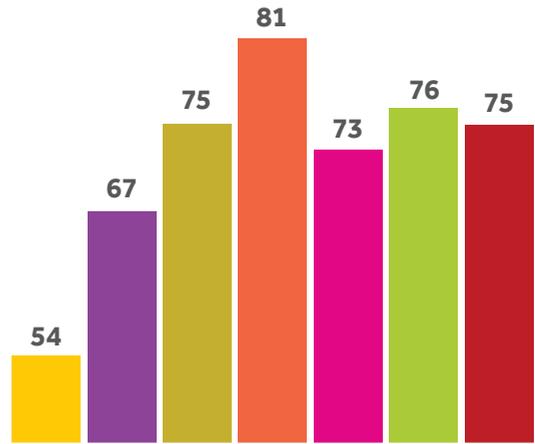
Operational and project management (e.g. managing teams, timelines, vendors, and resources efficiently)
Values: 54, 67, 75, 81, 73, 76, 75

Knowledge of latest ways of working in my industry (e.g. for some industries- legal/regulatory awareness and compliance, manufacturing processes)
Values: 56, 68, 74, 80, 74, 75, 77
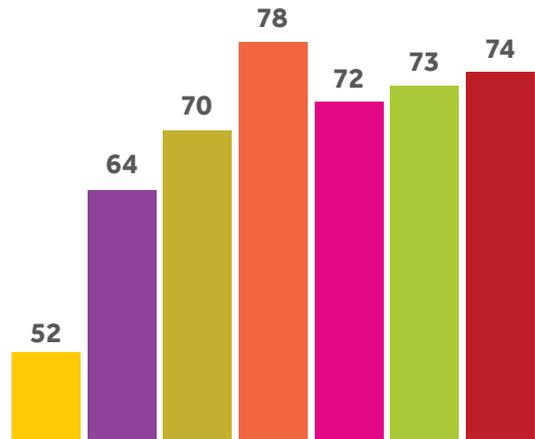
Tools or software in my sector (e.g., for some industries- AutoCAD, SAP, CRM systems etc.)
Values: 52, 64, 70, 78, 72, 73, 74

Legend:
- Student
- Early Jobbers
- Mid Management
- Senior Professionals
- Academia Heads
- CXO/Senior Leadership
- Recruiters

Overall Base-3500
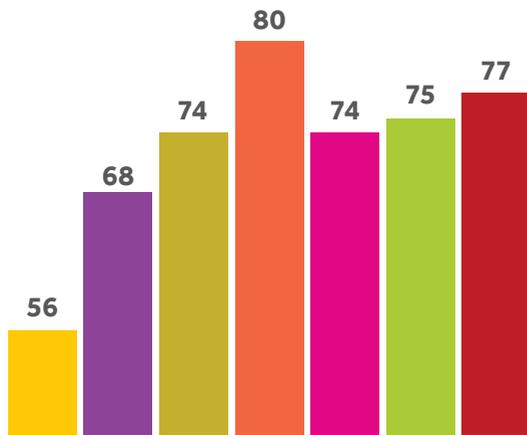
Digital and Data Skills

Q. How confident are you in your own / your students' / your employees' proficiency in the above skills?

Early jobbers express a higher level of confidence than students on data analysis (67/100 vs 56/100), cybersecurity basics (64/100 vs 57/100) and cloud tools (66/100 vs 56/100) but may be more comparable in confidence on AI literacy today (67/100 vs 62/100)

AI literacy (Basic understanding of Artificial Intelligence concepts)

Values: 62, 67, 71, 77, 68, 73, 74

Data analysis (Excel, SQL, Python, etc.)

Values: 56, 67, 71, 77, 71, 74, 75

Cybersecurity basics (password hygiene, phishing awareness etc.)

Values: 57, 64, 70, 76, 70, 72, 73
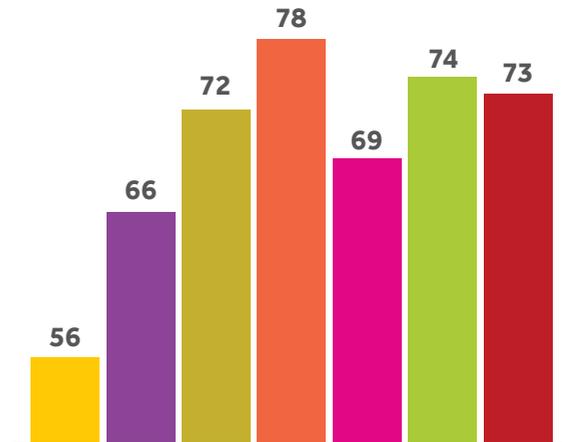
Cloud tools (Google Workspace, Microsoft 365, AWS, etc.)

Values: 56, 66, 72, 78, 69, 74, 73

Legend:
- Student
- Early Jobbers
- Mid Management
- Senior Professionals
- Academia Heads
- CXO/Senior Leadership
- Recruiters

Overall Base-3500

Entrepreneurial Skills

Q. How confident are you in your own / your students' / your employees' proficiency in the above skills?

Senior management express higher confidence in their financial literacy (83/100) and Strategic thinking (83/100) skills than expressed by all other groups.

Sales and negotiation

Student: 59, Early Jobbers: 68, Mid Management: 72, Senior Professionals: 82, Academia Heads: 72, CXO/Senior Leadership: 78, Recruiters: 76
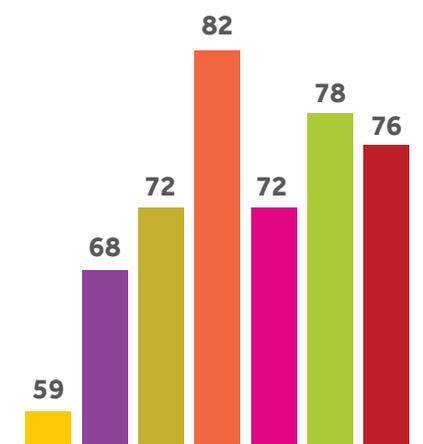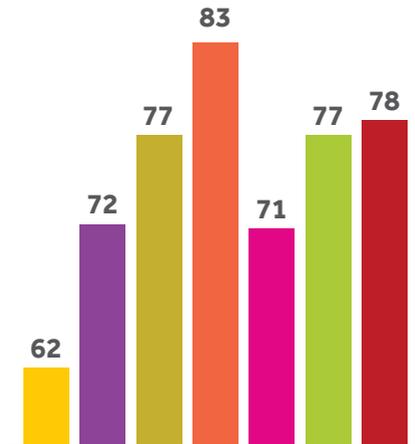
Financial literacy (budgeting, company/team/personal finance)

Student: 62, Early Jobbers: 72, Mid Management: 77, Senior Professionals: 83, Academia Heads: 71, CXO/Senior Leadership: 77, Recruiters: 78
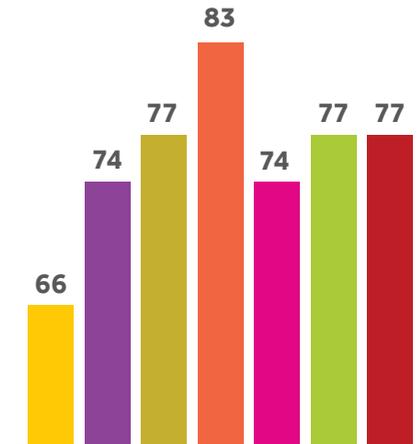
Strategic thinking and research

Student: 66, Early Jobbers: 74, Mid Management: 77, Senior Professionals: 83, Academia Heads: 74, CXO/Senior Leadership: 77, Recruiters: 77

Adaptability & continuous learning

Student: 68, Early Jobbers: 77, Mid Management: 79, Senior Professionals: 85, Academia Heads: 77, CXO/Senior Leadership: 77, Recruiters: 78
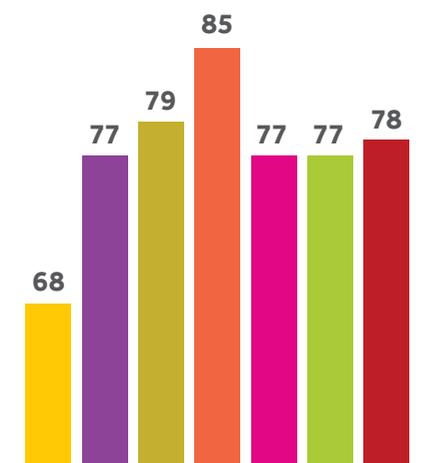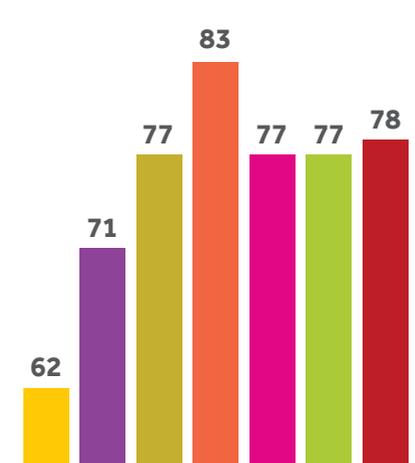
Interviewing, hiring and talent management

Student: 62, Early Jobbers: 71, Mid Management: 77, Senior Professionals: 83, Academia Heads: 77, CXO/Senior Leadership: 77, Recruiters: 78

Legend:
- Student
- Early Jobbers
- Mid Management
- Senior Professionals
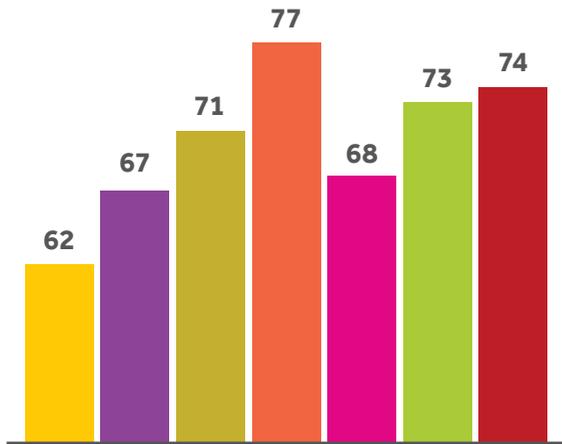- Academia Heads
- CXO/Senior Leadership
- Recruiters

Overall Base-3500

Power and Influence Skills
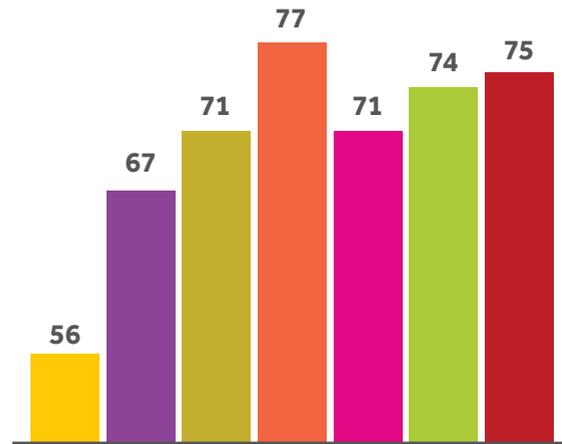
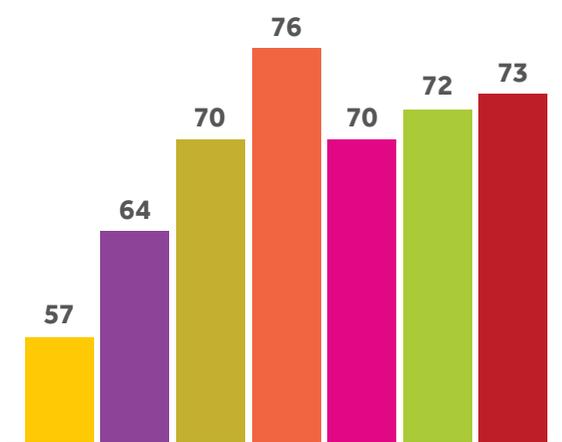Q. How confident are you in your own / your students' / your employees' proficiency in the above skills?

Senior management rate themselves higher in confidence on teamwork and collaboration (86/100), communication (86/100), problem solving (85/100) etc. than the level expressed by the other key groups/cohorts in the hiring/skilling landscape
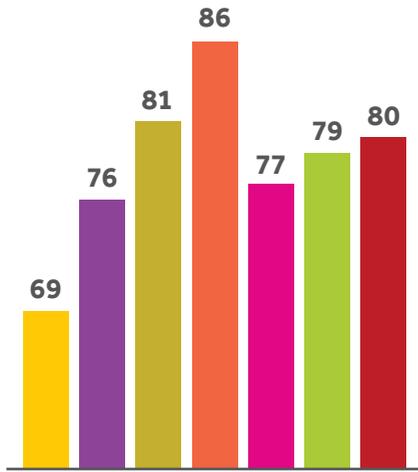
Communication (written, verbal, presentation)
- 69, 76, 81, 86, 77, 79, 80
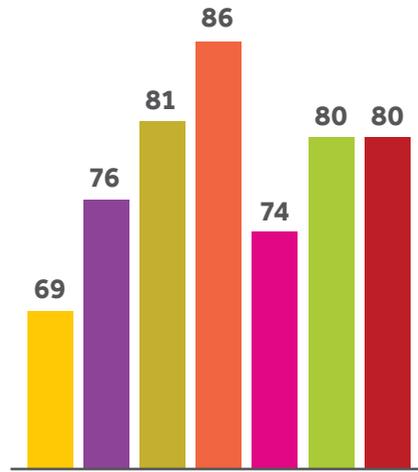
Teamwork and collaboration
- 69, 76, 81, 86, 74, 80, 80
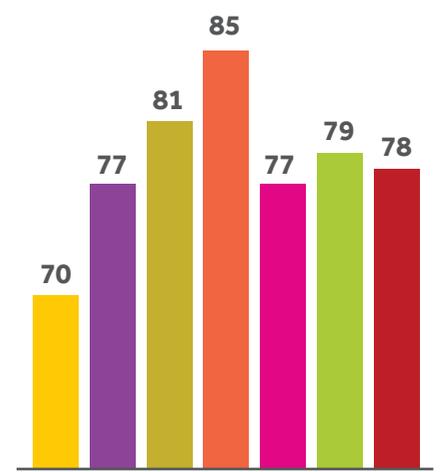
Problem-solving and critical thinking
- 70, 77, 81, 85, 77, 79, 78
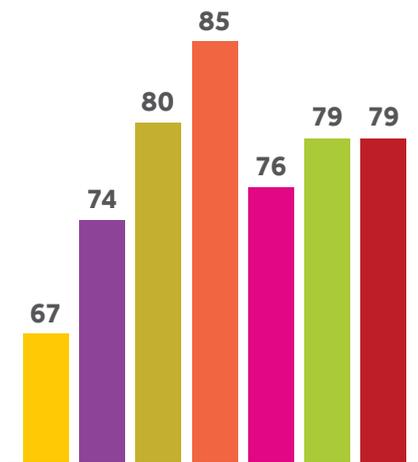
Leadership, Team management and decision-making
- 67, 74, 80, 85, 76, 79, 79
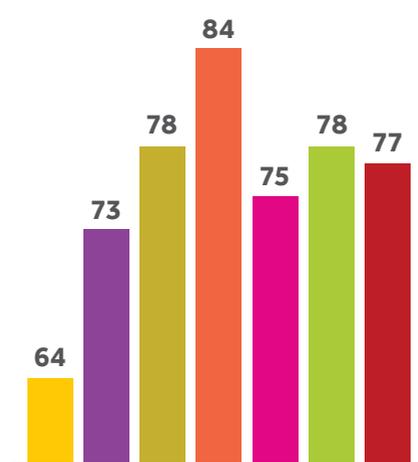
Networking and relationship building
- 64, 73, 78, 84, 75, 78, 77

Legend
- ● Student
- ● Early Jobbers
- ● Mid Management
- ● Senior Professionals
- ● Academia Heads
- ● CXO/Senior Leadership
- ● Recruiters

Overall Base-3500

Career Readiness

Students and Employees

Q. How optimistic are you about your career growth in the next 3 to 5 years?

- **Students are less optimistic about career growth.** Only **35%** are very optimistic about the next 3–5 years, compared with **50%** of employed respondents.

- **Students also report lower skill confidence.** Students score **57/100** on readiness for the next career step, while the most experienced cohort scores **82/100**.

Students
n=700

- 35%
- 30%
- 24%
- 7%
- 4%

Early Jobbers
n=700

- 53%
- 30%
- 12%
- 4%
- 2%

Mid Management
n=700

- 52%
- 30%
- 13%
- 3%
- 1%

Senior Management
n=700

- 57%
- 28%
- 9%
- 4%
- 1%
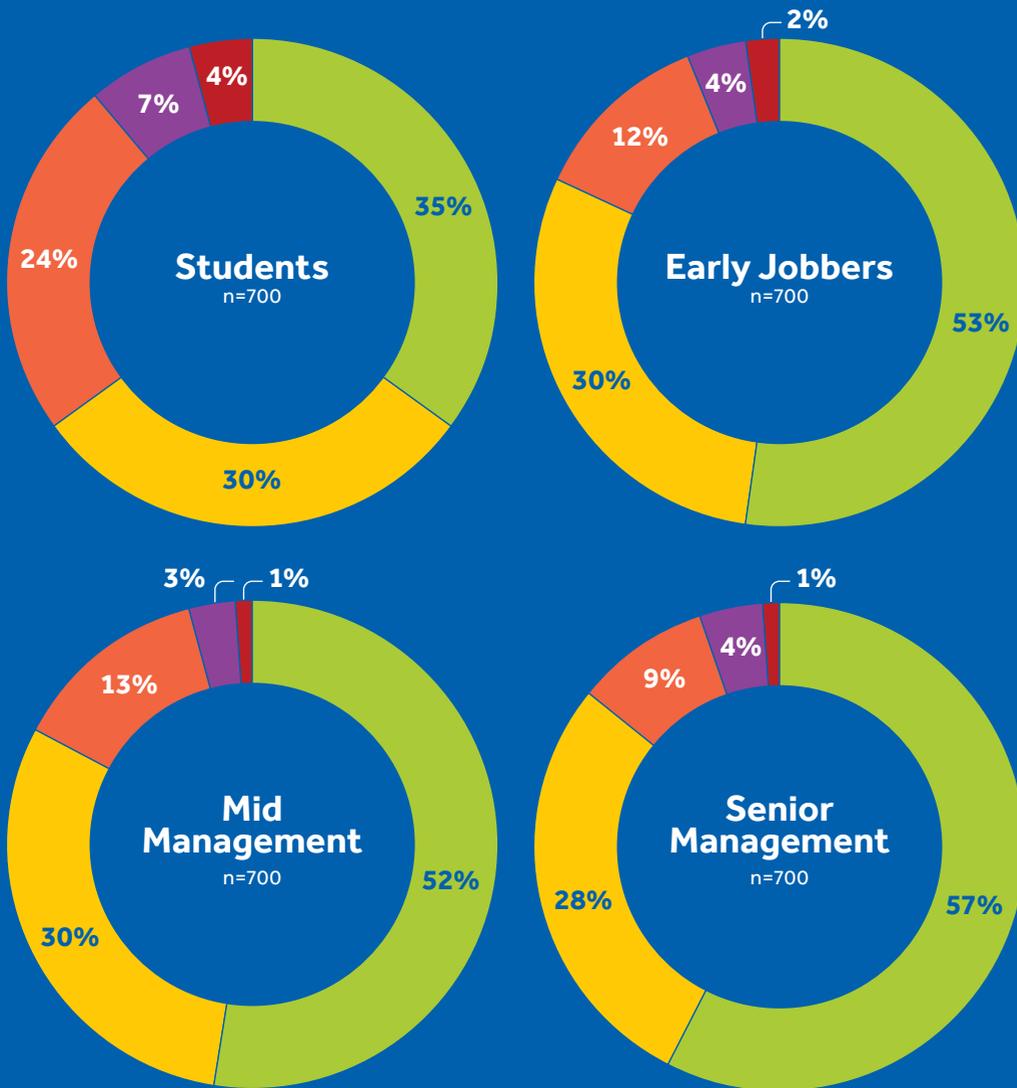
Legends

Very optimistic
I expect significant growth and advancement

Somewhat optimistic
I expect moderate progress in my career

Neutral
I'm unsure about how my career will progress

Somewhat pessimistic
I have concerns about my career growth

Very pessimistic
I don't see much opportunity for growth ahead

Score on current skill adequacy for next career step out of 100:

Q. How confident are you that your current skills are sufficient for your next career step?

	Score
Students	57
Early Jobbers	68
Mid management	75
Senior management	82

CXOs/ Senior Leadership and Recruiters

Q. How confident are you that your organization will be able to access the skilled talent it needs over the next 3–5 years, and what factors most influence your confidence level?

- 86% of recruiters, CXOs/Senior leadership are confident about finding good talent in the next 3-5 years- 49% are very confident, the rest express tempered confidence as they think talent will be available, but with effort

- The topmost factor influencing their confidence is internal reskilling and upskilling capacity (26%) followed by academic-industry partnerships (24%)

Confidence in getting skilled talent (n=600)

Somewhat confident: talent will be available but with effort

Somewhat doubtful: significant challenges expected

| 49% | 37% | 11% | 3% |

Very confident: talent will be readily available

Neutral: uncertain about availability
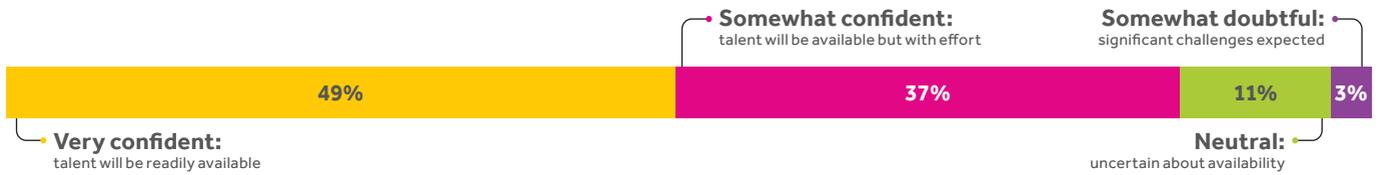
Reason for confidence in getting skilled talent (n=600)

Academic: industry partnerships

Global mobility/migration and access to international talent

| 26% | 24% | 19% | 17% | 13% |

Internal reskilling and upskilling capacity

Competition for talent within the industry

Effectiveness of government skilling initiatives

Academia Heads

Q. How confident are you that graduates will possess the skills employers demand over the next 3–5 years, and what factors most influence your confidence level?

- 83% of academia heads are confident about finding good talent in the next 3-5 years

- The topmost factor influencing their confidence is student motivation and adaptability levels (35%) followed by faculty expertise and training (22%)

Confidence in students/graduates n=100

Very confident 51%, Somewhat confident 32%, Neutral 12%, Somewhat doubtful 3%, Very doubtful 2%

Reason for confidence in students/graduates n=100

Student motivation and adaptability levels 35%, Faculty expertise and training 22%, Industry partnerships and internships 18%, Alignment of curriculum with industry needs 14%, Government/sectoral skilling initiatives 11%

- **Very confident** graduates are well-prepared
- **Somewhat doubtful** significant gaps expected
- **Somewhat confident** most graduates will be prepared, with some gaps
- **Very doubtful** major misalignment anticipated
- **Neutral** uncertain about alignment with industry needs?

- **Student motivation and adaptability levels**
- **Alignment of curriculum with industry needs**
- **Faculty expertise and training**
- **Government/sectoral skilling initiatives**
- **Industry partnerships and internships**

Hiring & Placement Trends

Talent Demand Trends

Talent Level-Wise Demand

Q. Of your annual hires, what proportion are entry-level vs. experienced? Among experienced candidates, which level does your organization primarily hire?

- **Hiring favours balance**. **46%** hire a mix of entry-level and experienced talent; **29%** prioritise entry-level vs **20%** lateral hires.
- **Mid-career leads demand. 6–15 years** experience is most recruited **(47%)**, followed by early-career **(37%)**.

Mostly entry-level- fresh graduates/ campus hires — **29%**

Balanced entry/ experienced hires — **46%**

Mostly experienced/ lateral hires — **20%**

Varies significantly year to year/can't say — **4%**

3%

13%

37%

47%

- **Early-career professionals** (1–5 years' experience)
- **Senior leadership hires**
- **Mid-career professionals** (6–15 years' experience)
- **Varies significantly year to year/can't say**
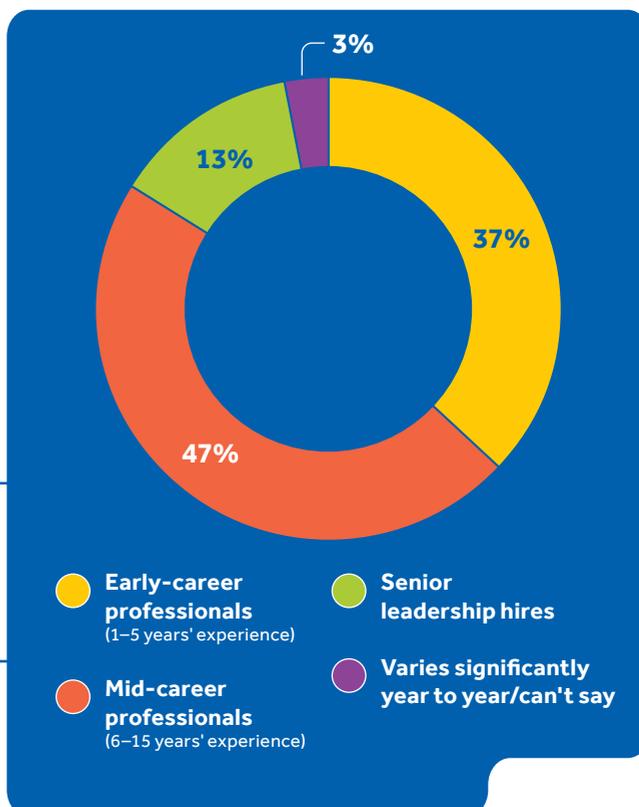
Talent Shortage

Q. Which talent segments do you expect to face the greatest shortages in?

Mid-career professionals however is also mentioned more often as the segment with the highest shortage by recruiters (38% mention it as the segment with the highest shortage) than among CXO/senior leaders (27% mention it as the segment with the highest shortage)

- **Among CXO/ Senior leadership**
- **Among Recruiters**

Segment	Among CXO/ Senior leadership	Among Recruiters
Entry-level / fresh graduates	25%	23%
Mid-career professionals (5–15 years' experience)	27%	38%
Senior leadership	23%	24%
Digital/technology specialists	15%	10%
Industry-specific technical roles	9%	5%
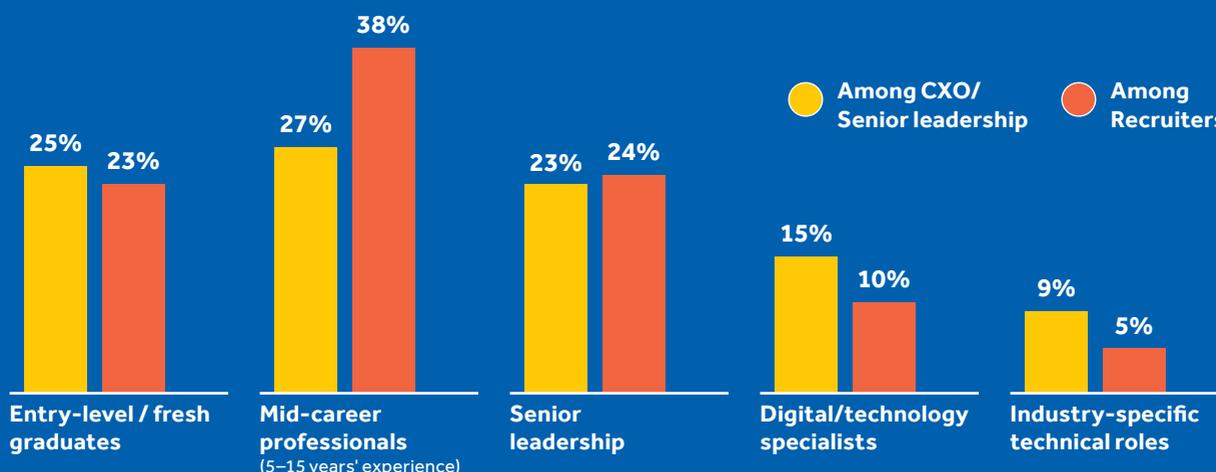
Talent Supply Trends

Interviewing Patterns Among Potential Recruitees

Q. How many job interviews have you attended in the last 12 months?

Giving multiple job interviews most common among early jobbers with 12% mentioning they gave more than 10 interviews in the last year. 32% of mid-management and 31% of senior management mentioned they did not attend any interviews in the last 1 year.

No. of interviews	Students	Early Jobbers	Mid Management	Senior Management	No. of interviews	Students	Early Jobbers	Mid Management	Senior Management
None	43%	17%	32%	31%	6	4%	6%	3%	6%
1	9%	9%	7%	7%	7	3%	5%	3%	4%
2	10%	12%	13%	12%	8	3%	4%	6%	6%
3	8%	12%	11%	7%	9	2%	3%	3%	4%
4	8%	11%	6%	6%	10	2%	4%	3%	4%
5	4%	6%	6%	7%	more than 10	4%	12%	7%	7%

Openness to Change Among Potential Recruitees

Q. How willing are you to switch sectors or roles for better growth opportunities? How open are you to relocating for better job opportunities, including opportunities outside India?

- **40%** are very willing to switch sectors; openness is lower among students **(26%)**, with **27%** undecided.
- **40%** are very open to opportunities in other cities or regions, led by senior management **(48%)**. Among those open to relocation, **55%** are willing to move abroad permanently.

Switching sectors/ roles for opportunities

42% · 26% · 19% · 8% · 5%

- 26% of students are very willing
- Neutral is 27% among students,

Very willing
I am actively exploring such opportunities
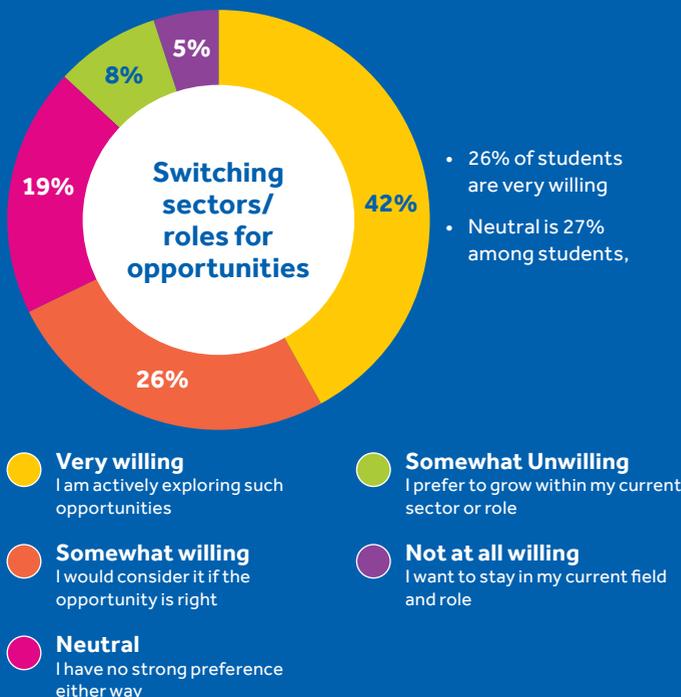
Somewhat Unwilling
I prefer to grow within my current sector or role

Somewhat willing
I would consider it if the opportunity is right

Not at all willing
I want to stay in my current field and role

Neutral
I have no strong preference either way

Switching locations for opportunities

40% · 28% · 18% · 8% · 5%

- Very open is 48% among Senior management

Among those very open/ somewhat open:

- 55%- Permanent relocation
- 32%- Only temporarily (more notable among students-46%)
- 13%- Not open to leaving India

Very open
I am actively looking for opportunities in other cities or regions

Somewhat reluctant
I prefer to stay in my current location unless absolutely necessary

Somewhat open
I would consider relocating if the opportunity is compelling

Not at all open
I am not willing to relocate for work

Neutral
I have no strong preference either way

Workforce Mobility

Q. Which of the following is your preferred work mode? To what extent is your organization open to remote work arrangements across roles?
To what extent does your organizations leverage gig workers or contract-based talent?

Hybrid/fully remote more popular preferences among students (62% students prefer it most) than other cohorts.

While 2 out of 3 (68%) early jobbers say they currently work onsite rather than hybrid or remote, (49%) mention that working onsite is their most preferred work mode.

Talent-side preferences

- 10%
- 38%
- 51%
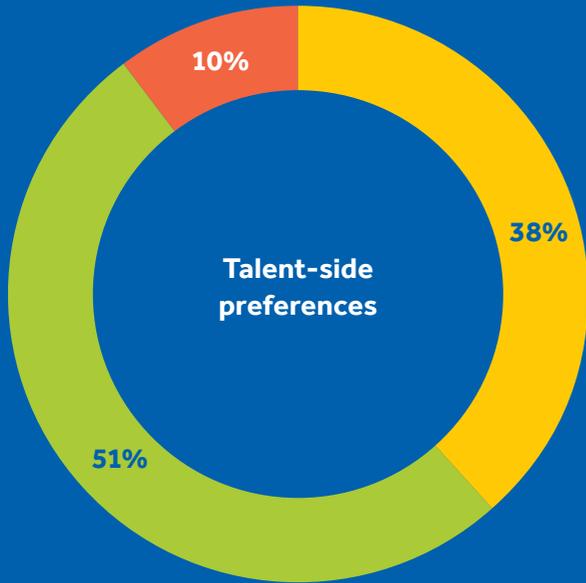
- Prefer Onsite/ Work from Office is 49% among early jobbers
- 68% of early jobbers say they currently work onsite/ work from office- this is higher than 62% among mid-management and 55% among senior management
- Hybrid currently a more popular way of working among Senior management (41%) than middle management (31%) and early jobbers (23%)
- Prefer Hybrid is 62% among students, Prefer Fully remote is 17% among students

● Onsite / Work from office

● Hybrid (Mix of work from home and office)

● Fully Remote / Work from home

Demand-side openness to remote work

- 5%
- 13%
- 38%
- 38%
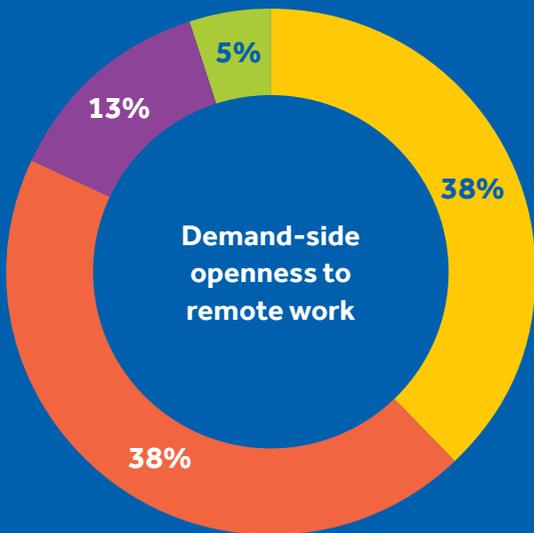
No, we require on-site presence is more common (11%) among CXO/senior leadership than recruiters (6%)

- ● Yes, fully open across most roles
- ● Yes, selectively for certain roles/functions
- ● Limited — only in exceptional cases
- ● No, we require on-site presence

Demand-side openness to Gig workers

- 7%
- 16%
- 38%
- 39%
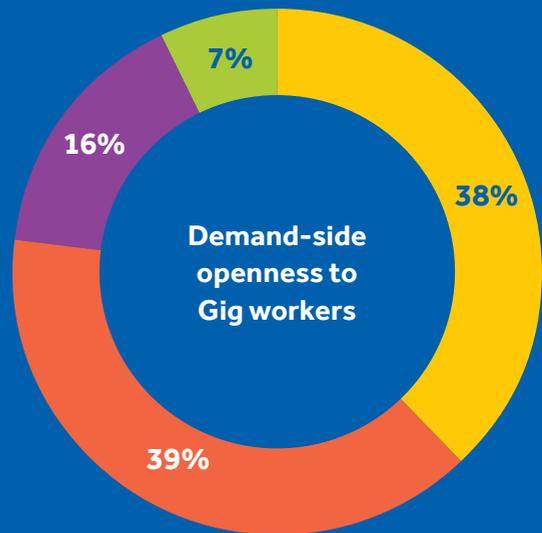
No, we rely exclusively on full-time employees is more common (11%) among CXO/senior leadership than recruiters (6%)

- ● Yes, actively leveraging gig talent
- ● Yes, but only for niche/specialized skills
- ● Limited — occasional use only
- ● No, we rely exclusively on full-time employees

AI – Impact, Preparedness and Planning

A moderate impact of AI on workforce roles in their organizations/institution over the next 3-5 years is mentioned by 40% of employers/academic heads.

1 in 3 (34%) academic heads mention they have begun preparations to integrate AI/digital skills into the curriculum

Impact of AI in recruiting and academic organizations

Q. What level of impact do you anticipate AI and automation will have on workforce roles in your organization/ those your students enter over the next 3–5 years?

Minimal impact most roles will remain unchanged	19%
Moderate impact some roles will evolve, but few will be displaced	40%
Significant impact many roles will be redefined or displaced	23%
Transformational impact workforce structure will fundamentally change	14%
Unsure / Too early to say	3%
Net: Top 2 Box	59%
Net: Bottom 2 Box	18%
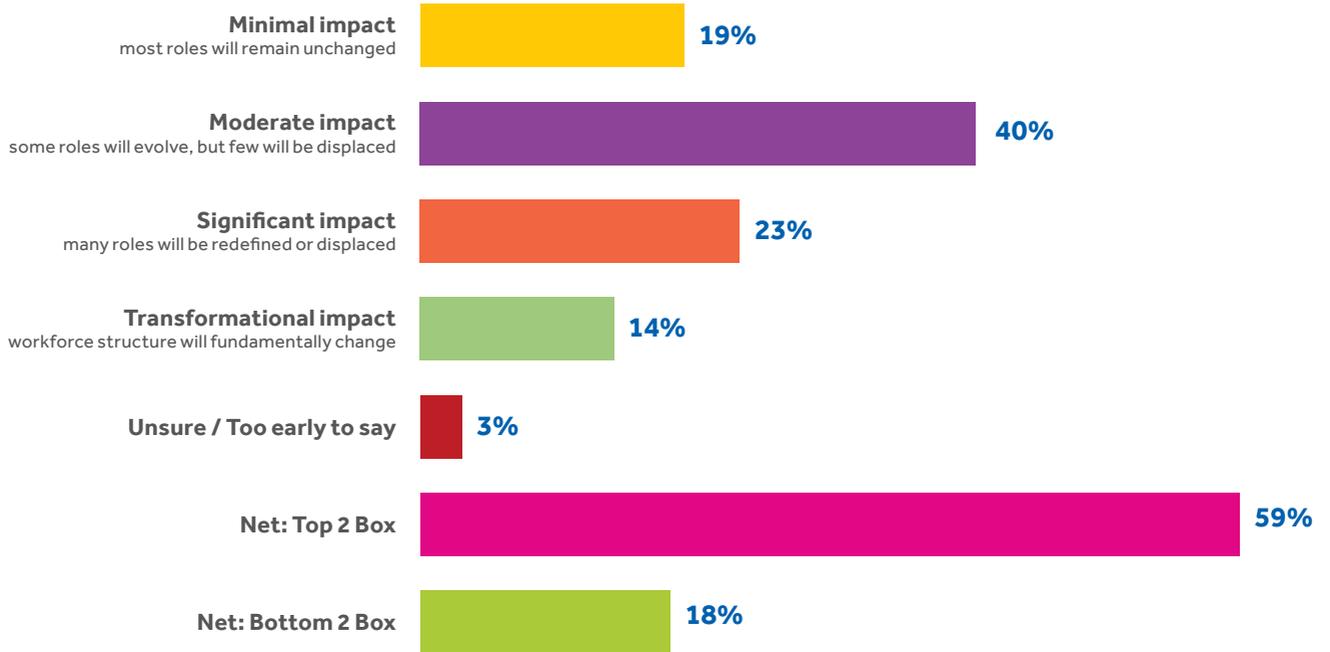
Preparation for AI in Higher Education Organizations

Q. How is your institution preparing students/faculty for the impact of AI/automation?

Minimal impact most roles will remain unchanged	19%
Moderate impact some roles will evolve, but few will be displaced	40%
Significant impact many roles will be redefined or displaced	23%
Transformational impact workforce structure will fundamentally change	14%
Unsure / Too early to say	3%
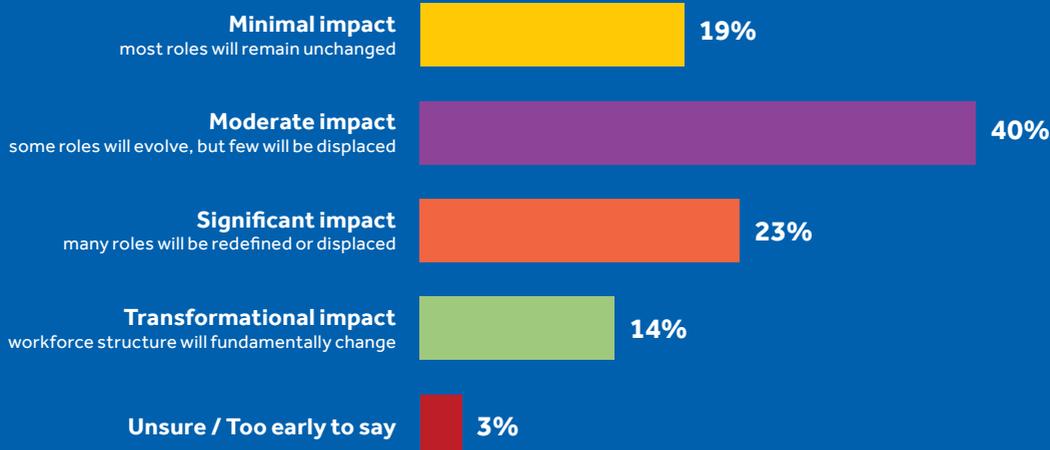
AI and Workforce Planning in Recruiting Organizations

Q. How do you view the role of AI/automation in workforce planning?

AI's role in workforce planning is seen as primarily for cost-saving/ productivity/ efficiency by 51% of CXOs/ Senior Leadership and recruiters

3%

23%

21%

28%

25%

51% of CXOs/ Senior Leadership and recruiters see AI's role in workforce planning as primarily for cost-saving/ productivity/ efficiency

46% of CXOs/ Senior Leadership and recruiters see AI's role in workforce planning as primarily innovation/ disruption
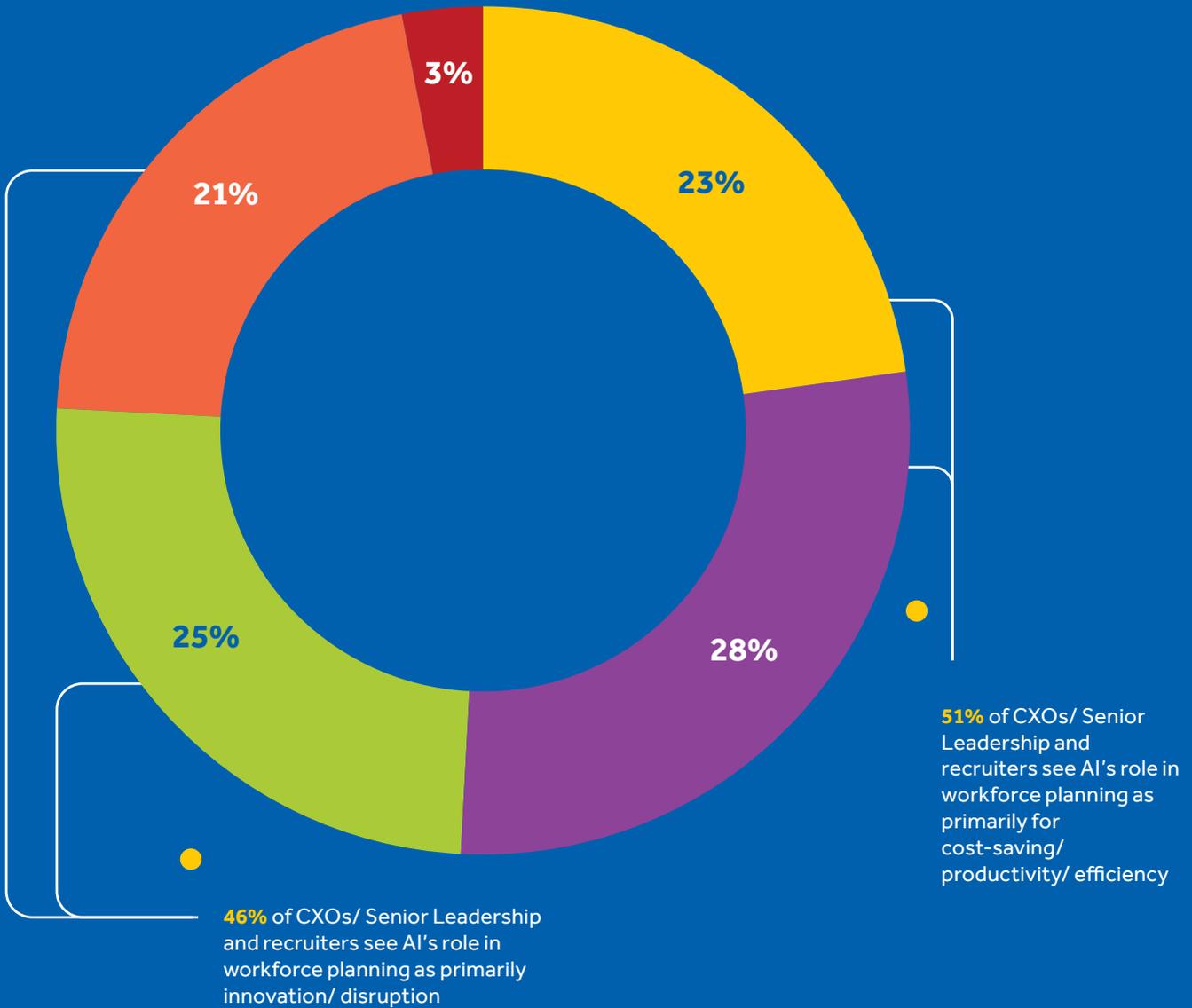
- ● **Primarily as a cost-saving tool**
- ● **As an enabler of productivity and efficiency**
- ● **As an enabler of productivity and efficiency**
- ● **As an enabler of productivity and efficiency**
- ● **Primarily as a cost-saving tool**

Upskilling Initiatives & Learning Behaviour

Learning Needs

Critical Skill Requirements in the Next 3–5 Years (Talent Supply-Side Views)

Q. Which of the following skills do you believe will be most critical in the next 3–5 years? (Student, Early Jobbers, Mid Management, Senior Management)

- **Digital and data skills** rank among the top three priorities across students and employees.
- **Project management and organisational skills** are prioritised more by mid and senior management **(28%)** than by students **(21%)** and early jobbers **(22%)**.
- **Remote work and virtual collaboration skills** are cited more frequently by early jobbers **(20%)** than other cohorts.

	Student	Early Jobbers	Mid Management	Senior Management
Digital & Data skills	30%	29%	33%	30%
Technical/Domain-specific skills	24%	30%	26%	28%
Power and Influence skills	29%	25%	29%	26%
Entrepreneurial & Career skills	26%	23%	20%	23%
Green & Sustainability awareness	19%	18%	17%	15%
Adaptability & continuous learning	28%	25%	28%	23%
Client-facing or customer service skills	19%	23%	22%	24%
Project management organizational	21%	22%	28%	28%
Legal & Regulatory Awareness	17%	19%	18%	15%
Cultural Intelligence & DEI Awareness	19%	20%	15%	19%
Digital Marketing & Brand Building	20%	19%	22%	24%
Innovation & Design Thinking	31%	25%	28%	29%
Remote Work & Virtual Collaboration	13%	20%	15%	15%

Critical Skill Requirements in the Next 3-5 years (Talent Demand Side Views)

Q. Which of the following skills do you believe will be most critical in the next 3–5 years? (Academic Heads, CXO/Senior Leadership, Recruiters)

Digital and data skills (36% have it in their top 3) and innovation, design thinking (32% have it in their top 3) are among the top skills needed by students as per academia heads in the next 3-5 years

Power and influence skills (29% have it in their top 3) and Adaptability and learning (28% have it in their top 3) are among the top skills needed by employees as per CXO/Senior leadership in the next 3-5 years

Project Management/Organizational skills (30% have it in their top 3) and Technical/domain specific skills (29% have it in their top 3) are among the top skills needed by employees as per recruiters in the next 3-5 years

	Academic Heads	CXO/Senior Leadership	Recruiters
Digital & Data skills	36%	25%	28%
Technical/Domain-specific skills	27%	24%	29%
Power and Influence skills	26%	29%	23%
Entrepreneurial & Career skills	26%	25%	22%
Green & Sustainability awareness	15%	21%	15%
Adaptability & continuous learning	27%	28%	24%
Client-facing or customer service skills	22%	21%	26%
Project management organizational	27%	22%	30%
Legal & Regulatory Awareness	16%	20%	19%
Cultural Intelligence & DEI Awareness	16%	22%	21%
Digital Marketing & Brand Building	18%	21%	26%
Innovation & Design Thinking	32%	27%	24%
Remote Work & Virtual Collaboration	15%	16%	13%

Credentials That Will Matter in the Next 3-5 years

Q. In your opinion, which of the following credentials or qualifications do you (Recruiters, CXO / Senior Leadership) / employers (Employees, Students) value the most when hiring or promoting candidates? Please rank the top three credentials, where Rank 1 indicates the most valuable credential.

Portfolio of work is the most common credential both among employees/students as well as employers- recruiters/CXO/Senior leadership with 45% having it among their top 3 credentials.

On-the-job experience (43% have it in their top 3) and college/university degrees (31% have it in their top 3) considered critical more often by employees/students than by employers (32% have on the job experience in their top 3, 21% have college or university degree in their top 3). On the other hand- micro-credentials, industry certifications, apprenticeship experience, bootcamp certificates are valued more often among employers than employees/students

Credential	Employers- Recruiters/CXO & Senior Leadership	Employees/Students
Portfolio of work – Demonstrated output such as design, writing, etc.	44%	45%
Micro-credentials (e.g., Google Career Certificates, Coursera etc.)	38%	29%
Online course completions from learning website e.g. Udemy, edX,etc.	35%	34%
On-the-job experience	32%	43%
Soft skills endorsements	32%	33%
Referrals or recommendations – Endorsements from previous employers, etc.	30%	30%
Industry certifications	28%	24%
Apprenticeship experience	24%	20%
College or university degrees	21%	31%
Bootcamp certificates	15%	12%

Soft skill endorsements as a top 3 credential more common among CXO/Senior leadership (41%) than recruiters (28%)

Bootcamp certificates more common top 3 among recruiters (18%) than CXO/Senior leadership (10%)

Soft skill endorsements (39%), College/university degree (38%) as a top 3 credential more common among students than other employee cohorts

🟡 **Employers- Recruiters/ CXO & Senior Leadership**   🟢 **Employees/ Students**   ☐ **Highlights show significantly higher than comparison to other cohort at 95% CI**

Understanding of, and Ability to act on, Green Initiatives and Sustainability

Q. How would you rate your (Employees, Students) / your employees' and students' (Recruiters, CXO / Senior Leadership) understanding and ability to act on green initiatives and sustainability practices at work?

Talent Supply Side Trends

- 45% — I have strong knowledge of sustainability and feel well-equipped to apply it in my role
- 32% — I have some understanding and can contribute in basic ways
- 13% — I am aware of sustainability concepts but unsure how to apply them at work
- 6% — I have limited knowledge and would need support or training to contribute
- 4% — I am not familiar with sustainability practices relevant to my job

Talent Demand Side Trends

- They have strong knowledge of sustainability and feel well-equipped to apply it in my role
- They have some understanding and can contribute in basic ways
- They are aware of sustainability concepts but unsure how to apply them at work
- They have limited knowledge and would need support or training to contribute
- They are not familiar with sustainability practices relevant to my job

- 46%
- 29%
- 15%
- 8%
- 2%

Overview of Time Commitments Towards Upskilling

47% employees/students indicate 2-5 hours per week in upskilling is acceptable- i.e., something they are willing to dedicate to. A similar situation is observed among employers/ academics tp- they think 2-5 hours is as a desirable range of hours for their employees/ students.

Employers- Recruiters/ CXO & Senior Leadership

Q. How many hours per week do you think your employees should dedicate to upskilling?

- 9%
- 49%
- 32%
- 10%

Academic Heads

Q. How many hours per week do you think your students should spend upskilling beyond core curriculum to be job ready?

- 17%
- 48%
- 28%
- 8%

Employees/ Students

Q. How many hours per week are you willing to dedicate to training and upskilling?

- 17%
- 47%
- 28%
- 8%

Early jobbers more likely to say they are willing to devote less time to learn than other student/employee cohorts- 22% of them say less than 2 hours a week, 53% say 2- 5 hours per week

Senior leadership by contrast likelier to say they are willing to devote more time to learn than other student/employee cohorts- 34% of them say 6-10 hours a week, 13% say more than 10 hours a week

Time to be spent upskilling

- ● Less than 2 hours per week
- ● 2 – 5 hours per week
- ● 6 – 10 hours per week
- ● More than 10 hours per week

Approach to Learning & Development - Talent Supply Side

Types of Upskilling Programmes Used

Q. In the past 12 months, have you taken any formal training or upskilling program? If yes, what was the format of the training or upskilling program you attended?

Employer sponsored training programs more common among Mid-management (43%) and Senior Management (46%) than early jobbers (35%)

Self-funded training programs more common among senior management (40%) than Mid-management (34%) and Early jobbers (31%)⯑Offline training sessions more common among students (40%) who have taken part in additional programs/internships than among employees who have taken some training program/internship

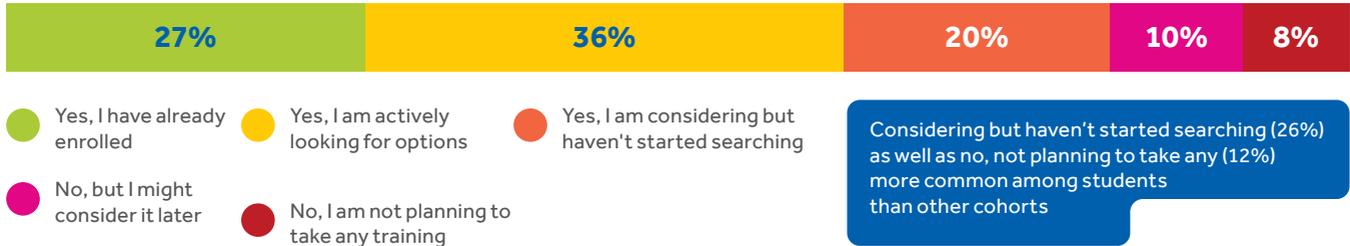|	Students	Early Jobbers	Mid Management	Senior Management
Yes, I took a free training program	28%	36%	36%	33%
Yes, I took a self-funded training program	21%	31%	34%	40%
Yes, I participated in an apprenticeship/internship	29%	-	-	-
Yes, I took an employer-sponsored training program	-	35%	43%	46%
No, I did not take any formal training or upskilling program	36%	14%	16%	14%
Among those who took part in a program/ internship				
Online - Live sessions	43%	57%	54%	62%
Online - Pre-recorded sessions	40%	43%	44%	44%
Offline / In-person classroom sessions	40%	26%	32%	30%
Hybrid — Combination of online and offline sessions	11%	10%	21%	23%

🟧 **Less common than other 3 groups at 95%CI**

🟦 **More common than other 3 groups at 95% CI**

Preferred Formats for Upskilling Programmes

The most common type of training formats preferred/considered by employees/students for upskilling or gaining new knowledge are online courses (42%) followed by on-the-job learning (37%), workshops/masterclasses (35%) and podcasts/YouTube (33%) 36% say they are actively looking for learning options and 27% say they are already enrolled in an upskilling course
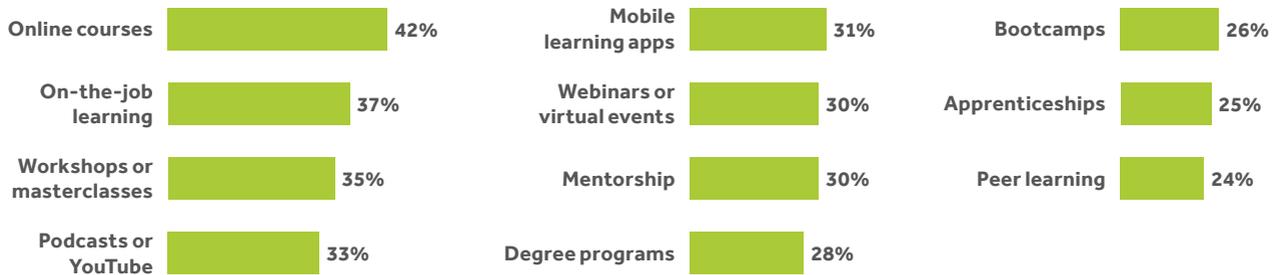
Formal training- Planning in next 12 months?

Q. Do you plan to take any formal training or upskilling programme in the next 12 months?

27%	36%	20%	10%	8%

- Yes, I have already enrolled
- Yes, I am actively looking for options
- Yes, I am considering but haven't started searching
- No, but I might consider it later
- No, I am not planning to take any training

> Considering but haven't started searching (26%) as well as no, not planning to take any (12%) more common among students than other cohorts

Type of training formats preferred/considered

Q. Which learning formats do you prefer when it comes to upskilling or gaining new knowledge?

Format	%		Format	%		Format	%
Online courses	42%		Mobile learning apps	31%		Bootcamps	26%
On-the-job learning	37%		Webinars or virtual events	30%		Apprenticeships	25%
Workshops or masterclasses	35%		Mentorship	30%		Peer learning	24%
Podcasts or YouTube	33%		Degree programs	28%			

> Degre programs (32%), Apprenticeships (28%) more popular among students than early jobbers and middle management

> Peer learning more popular among senior management (30%) than other student/ employee cohorts

Access & Awareness Challenges

Q. What challenges or barriers makes it difficult for you to pursue formal training or upskilling?

Clarity/help in identifying formal training programs available/relevant for oneself is a more commonly indicated challenge among students, early jobbers (25%) than among Mid-management (20%) and Senior management (19%)

	Students	Early Jobbers	Mid Management	Senior Management
Training programs are too expensive	31%	29%	37%	35%
I don't have enough time due to work, studies, or personal commitments	32%	34%	33%	31%
I'm unsure about the credibility or usefulness of available programs	26%	25%	29%	28%
My family or social environment doesn't support it	20%	22%	23%	26%
I don't know what programs are available or relevant to me	26%	25%	20%	19%
I'm unsure if I can succeed in a training program	18%	20%	20%	16%
I don't feel motivated or interested in upskilling right now	17%	18%	17%	18%
I don't think upskilling is necessary for my current goals	13%	17%	15%	15%

■ Less common than other 3 groups at 95%CI   ■ More common than other 3 groups at 95% CI

Views on Paid Upskilling Programmes

Q. How willing are you to pay for upskilling program, particularly if they offer clear career value?

52% of senior management say they are very willing to actively seek out paid programmed if they offer value Students may be more inclined to free options than other cohorts

	Students	Early Jobbers	Mid Management	Senior Management
Very willing – I actively seek out paid programmes if they offer value	24%	42%	45%	52%
Somewhat willing – I would consider paying if the programme is high quality or career-relevant	33%	33%	33%	29%
Neutral – I'm open to both free and paid options	28%	17%	16%	13%
Not very willing – I prefer free options unless absolutely necessary	8%	5%	4%	4%
Not at all willing – I only consider free programmes	6%	3%	2%	2%

■ Less common than other 3 groups at 95%CI   ■ More common than other 3 groups at 95% CI

Q. What challenges or barriers make it difficult for you to pursue formal training or upskilling?

While fees/cost and lack of awareness of available program are leading barriers faced, language of instruction may be worth addressing for senior management as such issues are mentioned by 30% of them than student/employee cohorts.

	Students	Early Jobbers	Mid Management	Senior Management
Language of instruction (e.g., English-only content)	18%	24%	22%	30%
High cost / unaffordable fees	41%	37%	40%	38%
Lack of internet or digital device	17%	19%	19%	21%
No nearby training center	24%	24%	24%	23%
Lack of awareness about available programs	37%	35%	37%	36%
Family or social restrictions	22%	26%	27%	30%
Recognition of certificate by employers	20%	25%	27%	30%
Restrictions due to my gendert	15%	16%	17%	18%
Limitations due to the city I live in	25%	25%	31%	31%

■ Less common than other 3 groups at 95%CI   ■ More common than other 3 groups at 95% CI

Approach to Learning & Development - Talent Demand Side and Academia

Budget Allocation Trends - Demand Side

Q. What is your organization's average annual Learning & Development (L&D) spend per employee? How would you describe your organization's investment in L&D per employee compared to last year?

50% of employers mention they spend on average Rs 15K or more per employee. 69% indicate budgets have increased since last year and 49% say the budgets have been consistently increasing YoY

L&D Spend
(n=600)

- 6%
- 14%
- 23%
- 28%
- 22%
- 7%

● Less than Rs. 2,000   ● Rs. 15,001 – Rs. 30,000

● Rs. 2,001 – Rs. 5,000   ● More than Rs. 30,000

● Rs. 5,001 – Rs. 15,000   ● Not tracked / Don't know

L&D Budget trends
(n=600)

- 1%
- 14%
- 49%
- 36%

● Consistently increasing year-on-year   ● Stable, with no major changes

● Fluctuating (increasing some years, decreasing others)   ● Consistently decreasing year-on-year
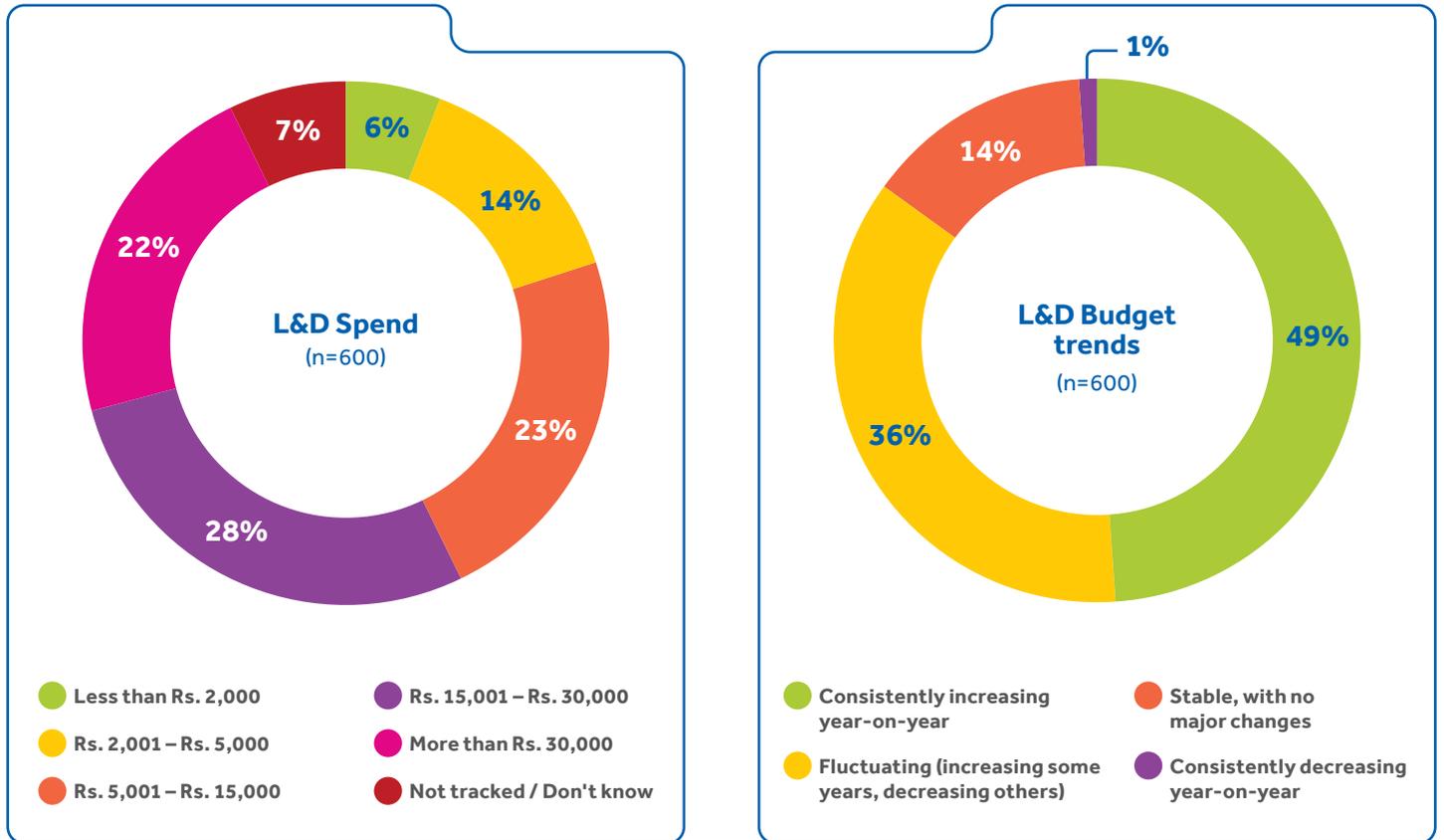
Type of training formats preferred/considered

Q. How has your organization's L&D budget changed over the past 2–3 years?

Significantly increased	27%
Slightly increased	42%
Remained stable	19%
Slightly decreased	4%
Significantly decreased	2%
Not applicable / Not tracked	6%
Net: Top 2 Box	69%
Net: Bottom 2 Box	6%
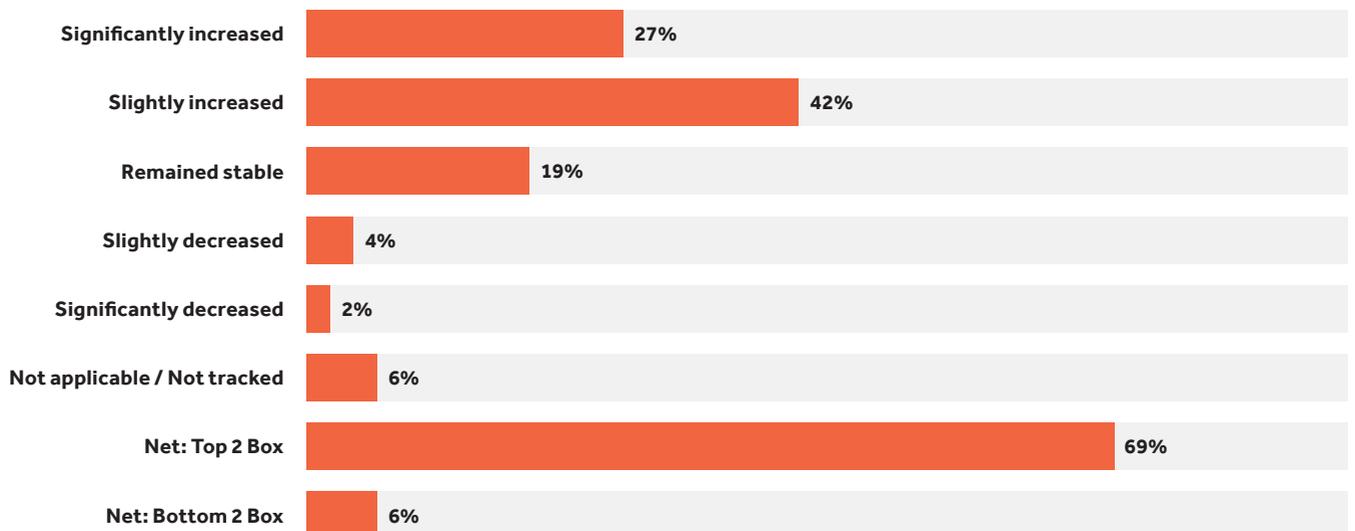
Budget Allocation Drivers - Demand Side

Q. What are the key drivers of your organization's training and skilling budget allocation?

59% acknowledge business growth and expansion as an influence on the training/skilling budget. Also, 55% acknowledge a strategic focus on digital transformation as an influence. 52% employers say the budget is flexible, varying by role/level

Influences on L&D Budget

Influence	%
Business growth and expansion	59%
Cost optimization / budget constraints	48%
Regulatory or compliance requirements	48%
Strategic focus on digital transformation	55%

L&D Budgeting

- 28% Fixed budget per employee annually
- 52% Flexible, based on role/level
- 13% Project-based or ad-hoc allocation
- 7% No formal budget allocation
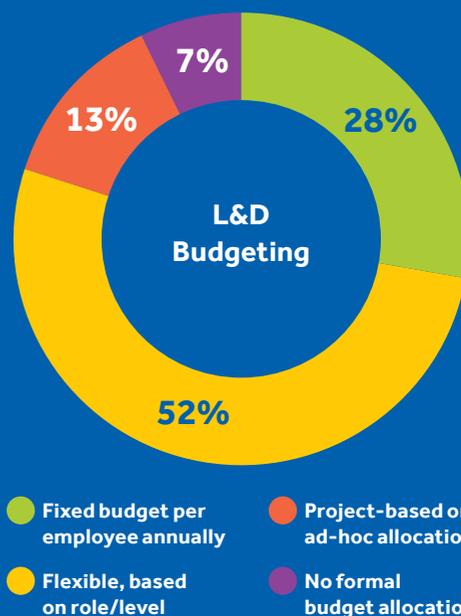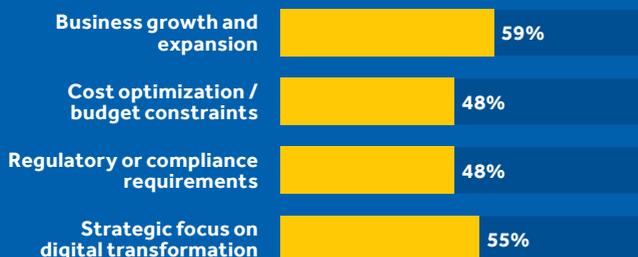
Profile of L&D Programme Beneficiaries - Demand Side

Q. Which employee/faculty segments are most consistently included in L&D programs? What % of employee segments are included in L&D programs?

- **Mid-level professionals** are the primary L&D beneficiaries **(41%)**, ahead of entry-level **(29%)** and senior leaders **(17%)**.
- **L&D reach is limited**. **62%** of employers cover less than half their workforce.
- **Technical skills dominate**. **73%** focus on technical skills vs **56%** on soft skills.

L&D program segment users

- 29% Entry-level / new hires
- 41% Mid-level professionals
- 17% Senior leadership
- 14% All levels equally

L&D Inclusion

- 20% Under 25%
- 42% 25-49%
- 27% 50%-74%
- 11% Above 75%
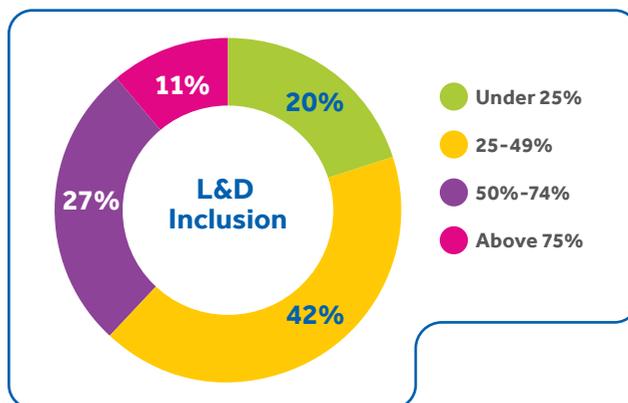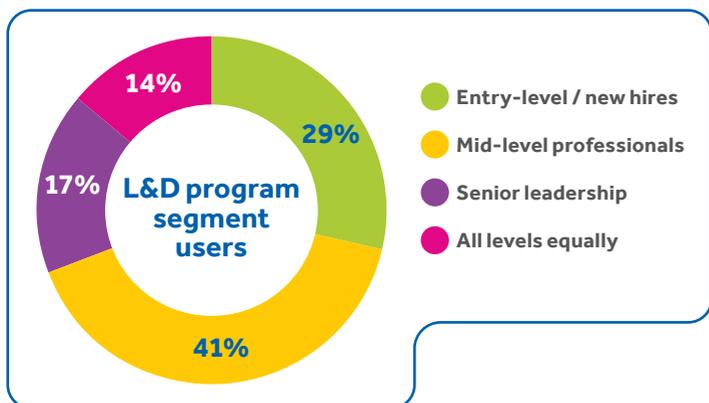
Type of training formats preferred/considered

Q. Which types of training does your organization currently provide to employees?

Training Type	%
Technical / functional skills	73%
Digital skills (AI, data, cloud, cybersecurity, etc.)	59%
Leadership & managerial development	54%
Compliance & regulatory training	46%
Soft skills (communication, teamwork etc.)	56%
Industry-specific certifications	42%
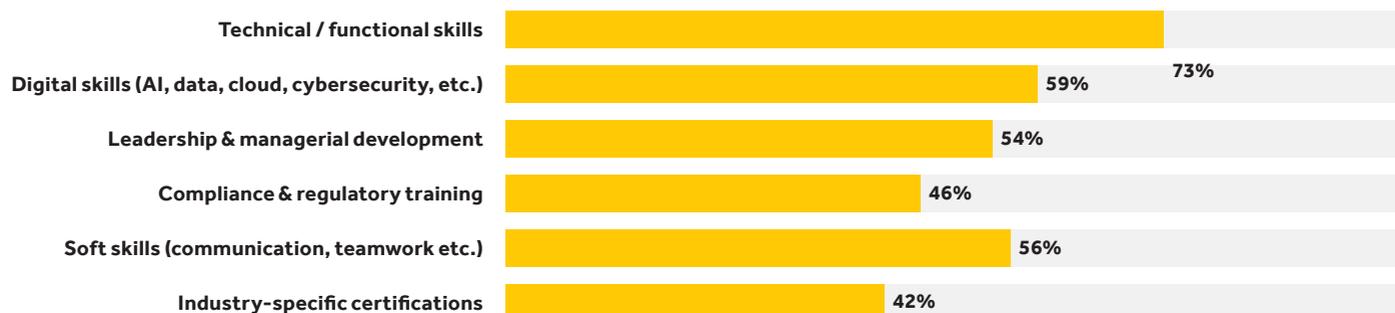
Primary mode of Administration of L&D / Skilling initiatives – Demand and Academia Side

40% of academic heads say they mostly prepare students for evolving demands via focus on reskilling/upskilling via curriculum updates, 35% encourage external certifications an industry-led programs.

While 38% employers say they balance mix of reskilling and external hiring, 37% employers singularly prioritize hiring externally with required skills while 23% focus singularly on reskilling and redeploy existing employees

Primary mode of Administration of L&D initiatives – Demand Side
Q. When facing new skill requirements, what is your organization's primary approach?

Hire externally with required skills   **No defined approach yet**

| 23% | 37% | 38% | 3% |

Reskill and redeploy existing employees   **Balanced mix of reskilling and external hiring**
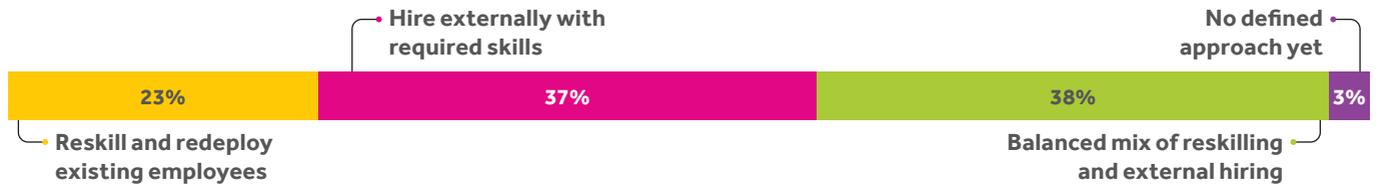
Primary mode of administration of skilling initiatives – Academia Side
Q. How does your institution prepare students for evolving skill demands in industry?

Encourage external certifications and industry-led programs   **Limited focus currently**

| 40% | 35% | 20% | 6% |

Focus on reskilling/upskilling current students through curriculum updates   **Balanced approach (curriculum + external partnerships)**
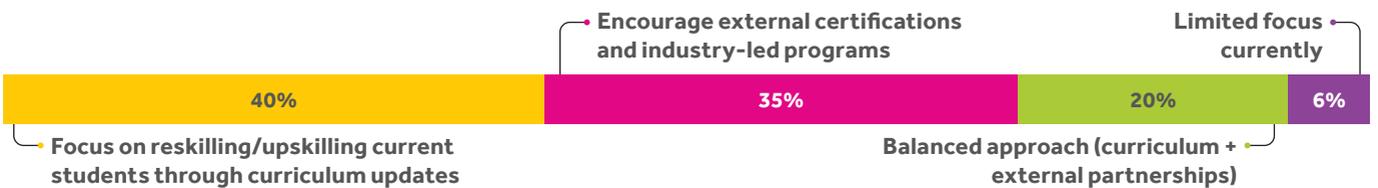
Preferred L&D Administration Modes – Demand Side Overview
Q. Which delivery models for training are most used in your institution/organization?

Online/digital platforms notably more popular among recruiters (39%) than Academia (22%) while classroom-based workshops notably popular among Academia heads (53%)

36% 26% 23% 16%

	Academia Heads	CXO – Senior Leadership	Recruiters
Sample size	100	200	400
Online / digital platforms	22%	37%	39%
Classroom-based workshops	53%	17%	23%
Blended learning (mix of online and offline)	25%	28%	20%
Industry-led bootcamps or seminars	0%	19%	18%

Highlight show significant changes in comparison to other cohorts at 95% CI
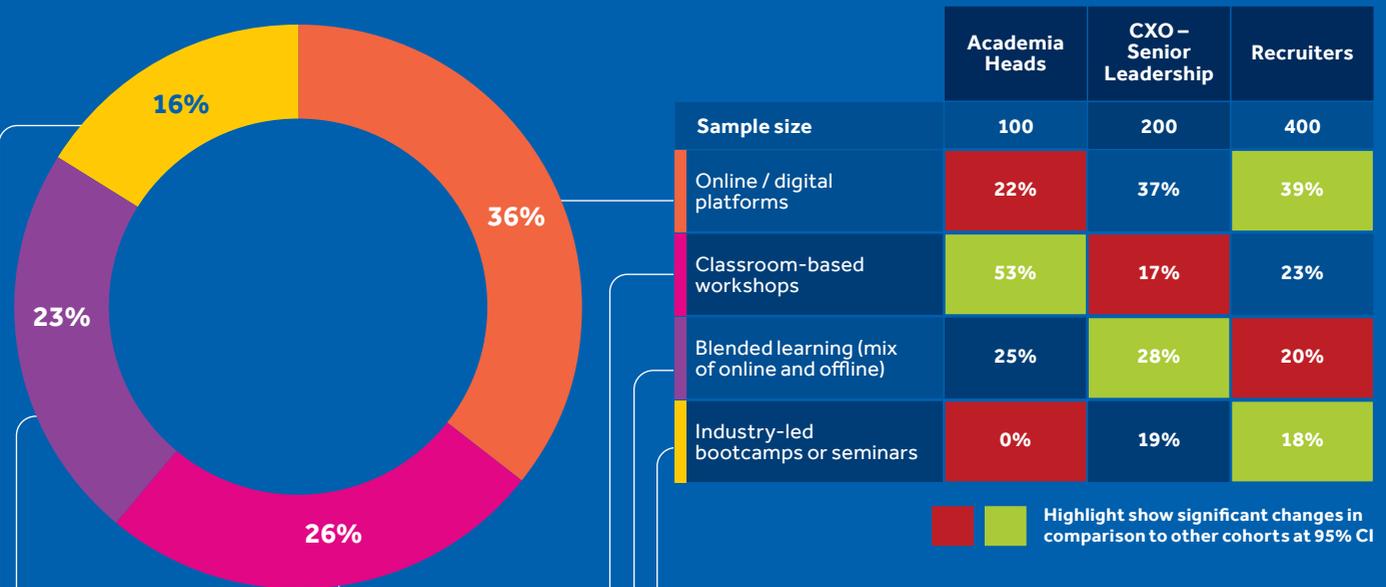
L&D Service Provider Partnerships – An overview

Private/ academic institutions partnerships are the most popular (40% of employers mention partnering with them). Scalable partnerships with EdTech leads as the kind of partnership which is the most commonly valued in the next 3-5 years (38% of employers). Costing efficiency (38%) and access to cutting edge skills (32%) are among the key benefits sought

Q. Does your organization currently partner with any external entities for employee skilling and training?

Partner with external entities

- 39%
- 26%
- 13%
- 13%
- 11%

- 🟡 **Yes, with private training providers/EdTech platforms**
- 🟠 **Yes, with universities/academic institutions**
- 🟣 **No formal partnerships**
- 🟢 **Yes, with government skilling programs**
- 🟪 **Yes, with industry associations/ professional bodies**
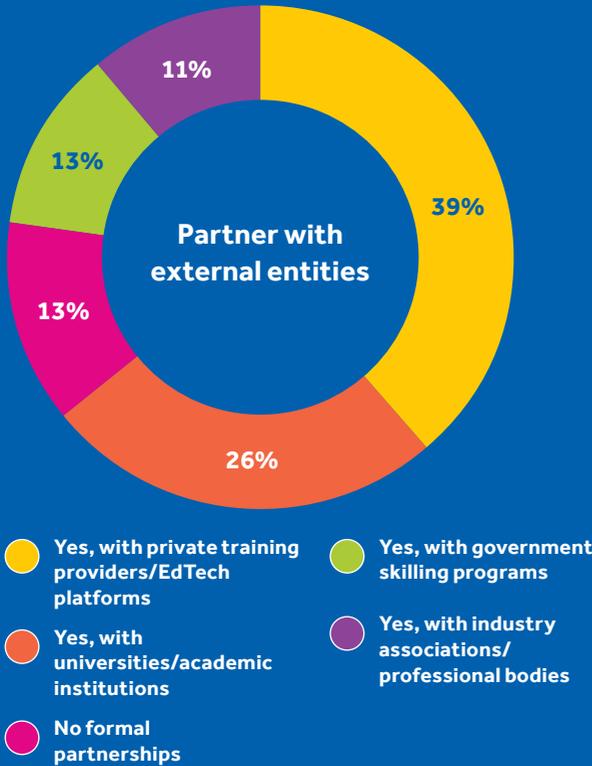
Q. Which type of external partnership will be most valuable for your organization in the next 3–5 years?

External partnership valued

- 38%
- 27%
- 14%
- 13%
- 8%

- 🟡 **Scalable partnerships with EdTech/training providers**
- 🟠 **Deep collaborations with universities (curriculum co-design, research tie-ups)**
- 🟣 **Government-led skilling initiatives and subsidies**
- 🟢 **Industry consortiums for shared training standards**
- 🟪 **None — we plan to remain self-reliant**
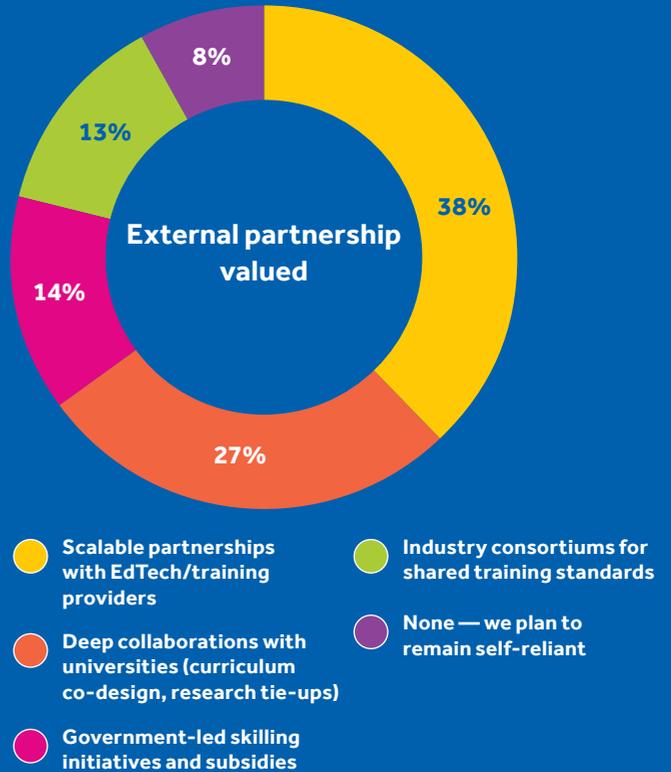
Q. What is the primary benefit you seek from external skilling partnerships?

Benefit sought from external partnership

- 38%
- 32%
- 21%
- 8%

- 🟡 **Cost efficiency and scalability**
- 🟣 **Access to cutting-edge skills and certifications**
- 🟠 **Access to diverse talent pipelines**
- 🟢 **Compliance with government/ industry mandates**
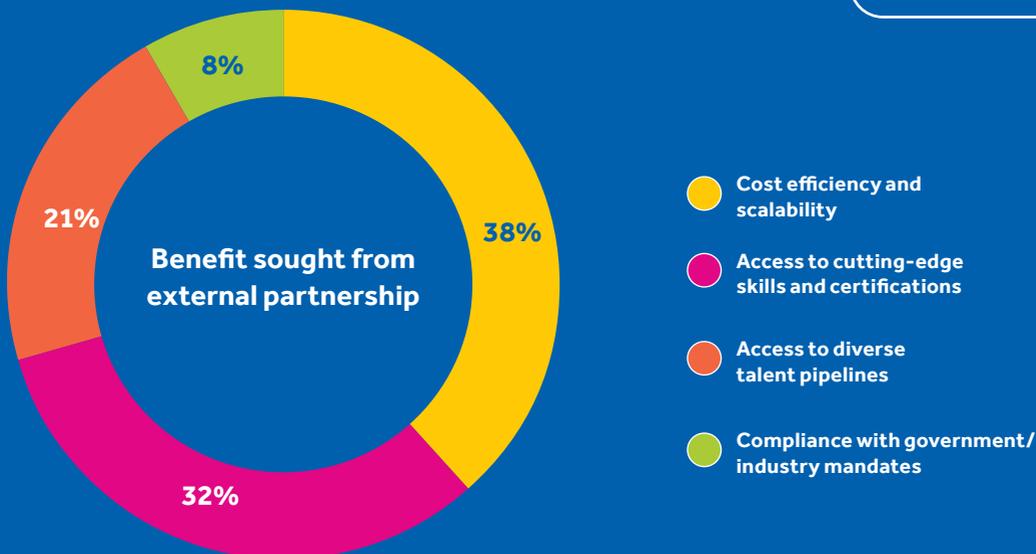
L&D Service Provider Partnerships – Demand Side Challenges
Q. Which challenge has the most significant impact on your skilling initiatives?

Provider quality is the key aspect with the most significant impact (41%) on skilling initiatives at organizations, ahead of other aspects cost (24%) and retention (22%)

Cost	Retention	Provider Quality	None of these	ROI Measurement
24%	22%	41%	11%	2%

Internship Programmes – A Demand Side Overview
Q. Does your organization currently offer apprenticeship or internship opportunities? What is the primary objective of your apprenticeship/internship programs?

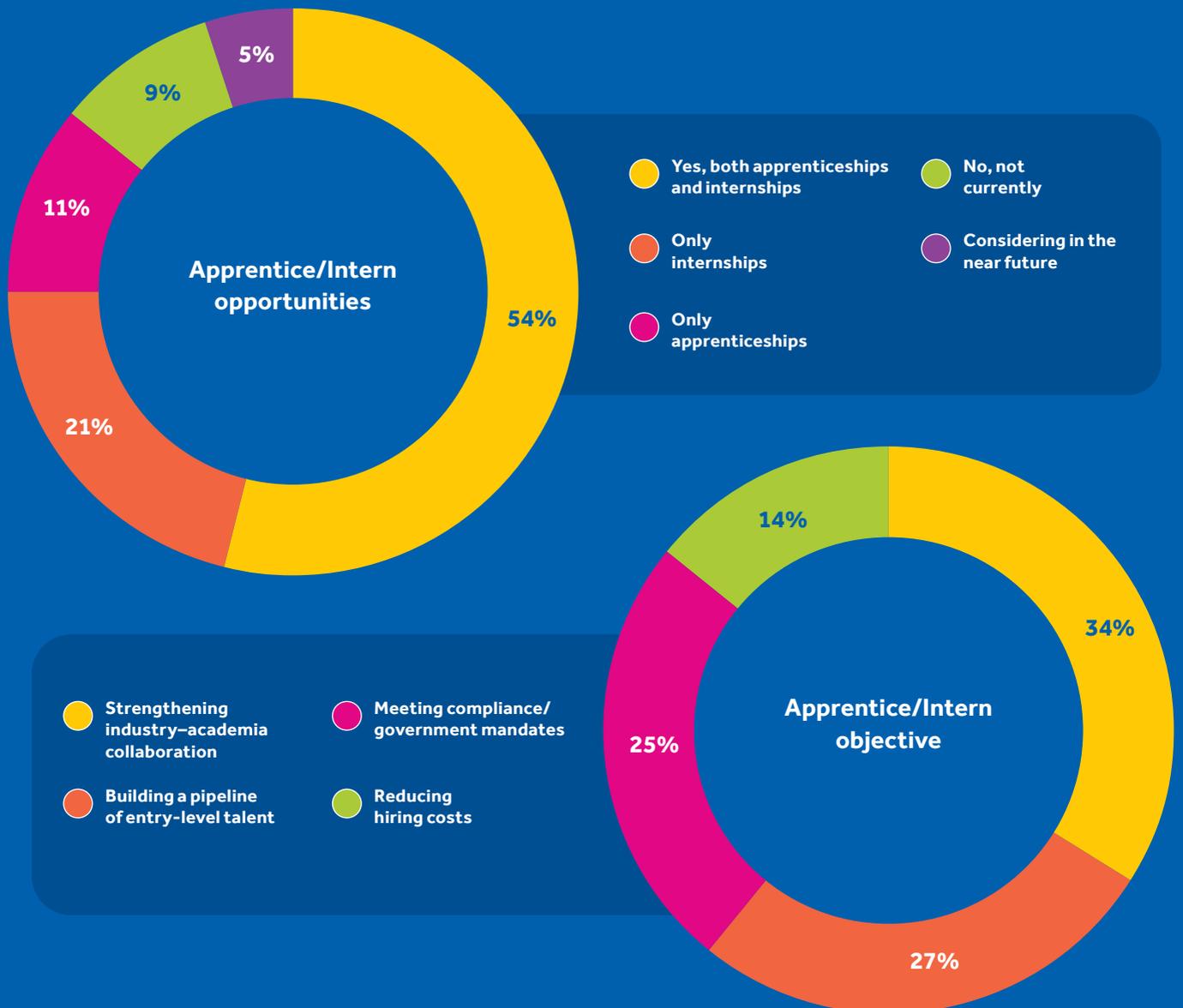Beyond partnerships with providers, apprentice/internships are offered by a 54% of employers, with the primary objective among those offering these being strengthening industry-academia collaboration (34%)

Apprentice/Intern opportunities

- 54%
- 21%
- 11%
- 9%
- 5%

Legend:
- Yes, both apprenticeships and internships
- Only internships
- Only apprenticeships
- No, not currently
- Considering in the near future

Apprentice/Intern objective

- 34%
- 27%
- 25%
- 14%

Legend:
- Strengthening industry–academia collaboration
- Building a pipeline of entry-level talent
- Meeting compliance/government mandates
- Reducing hiring costs

L&D Funding Mechanisms and Government Linkages – Demand Side

The government support most sought by employers is access to certified training providers and standardized curricula (35%), ahead of funding subsidies/tax incentives for training (21%) and simplified compliance, reporting requirements (20%) etc.

86% are open (or very open) to co-funding- in turn, most of those who are open/very open to co-funding want to do so with just one other partner: either the government or the receiver of training (student/employee), not both

Q. What type of government policy support would most benefit your organization's skilling initiatives?

**Govt. policy support sought**

9% / 21% / 35% / 20% / 14%
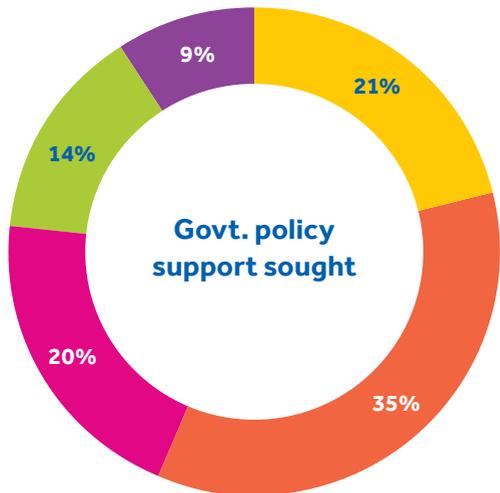
- Funding subsidies or tax incentives for training
- Access to certified training providers and standardized curricula
- Simplified compliance and reporting requirements
- Public–private partnerships for workforce skilling
- Support for apprenticeship/ internship programs

Q. How open is your organization to co-funding skilling or training programs in partnership with employees/students or government bodies (e.g., NSDC, NAPS, Skill India, AICTE, etc.)?

Openness to co-funding

3% / 4% / 40% / 36% / 17%
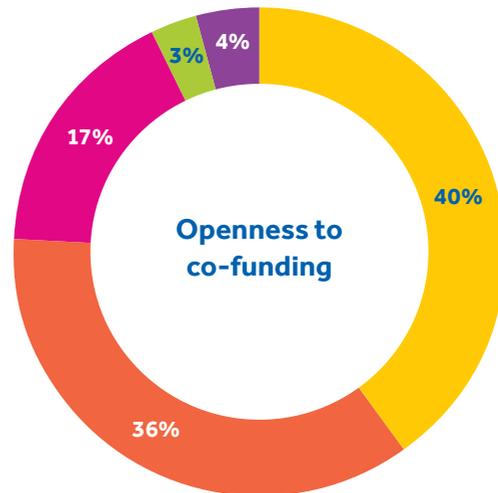
- Very open: we actively pursue co-funded models
- Open: we are exploring or selectively participate
- Neutral: depends on the program or cost
- Reluctant: prefer fully funded internal programs
- Not open: we do not want to co-fund training

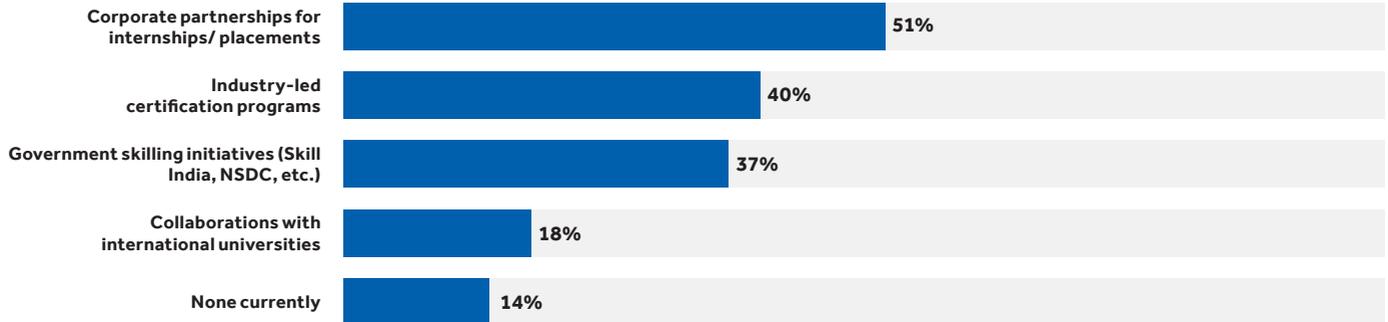Q. Which model of co-funding do you prefer?

Among those very open/open: Preferred co-funding approach

16% / 44% / 40%
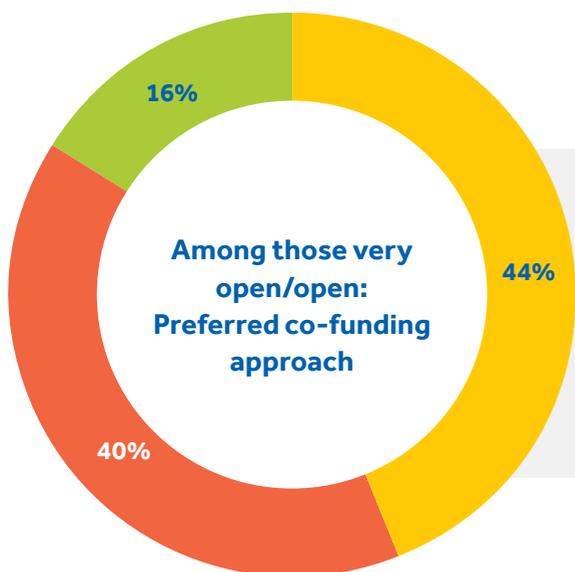
- Cost-sharing with employees/students
- Cost-sharing with government schemes
- Tri-party models (employee + employer + government)
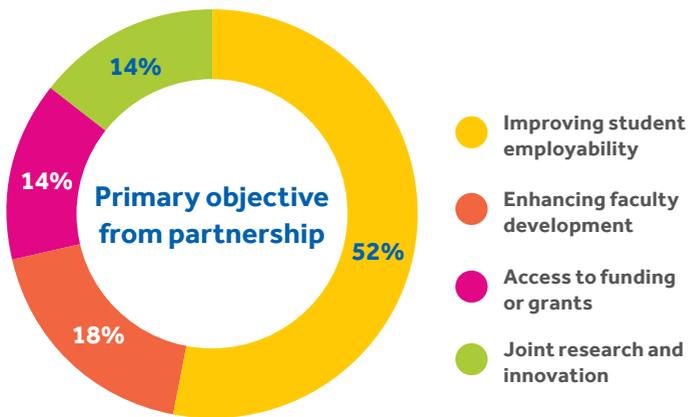
Corporate Partnerships - Academia Overview

51% academic heads mention they have corporate partnerships– the most common objective to improve employability (52%), However 73% of academic heads say that less than 50% of all students take up apprentice/internships.

Partner institution for students/faculty

Q. Which types of partnerships does your institution currently maintain to enhance student/faculty skilling?

Corporate partnerships for internships/ placements	51%
Industry-led certification programs	40%
Government skilling initiatives (Skill India, NSDC, etc.)	37%
Collaborations with international universities	18%
None currently	14%

Q. What is the primary objective of these partnerships?

Primary objective from partnership

- 52% Improving student employability
- 18% Enhancing faculty development
- 14% Access to funding or grants
- 14% Joint research and innovation

Q. What proportion of your students typically participate in internships or apprenticeships before graduation?

Apprentice/ Intern participation

- 29% Less than 25%
- 44% 25-50%
- 16% 50-75%
- 12% More than 75%
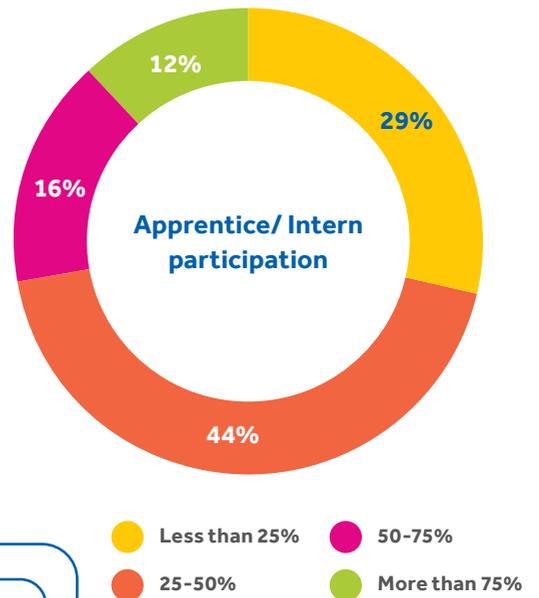
Q. What is the primary benefit of internships/apprenticeships for your students?

Apprentice/Intern primary benefit

- 40% Improved employability and job readiness
- 25% Exposure to industry practices
- 18% Building professional networks
- 16% Meeting curriculum/ credit requirements
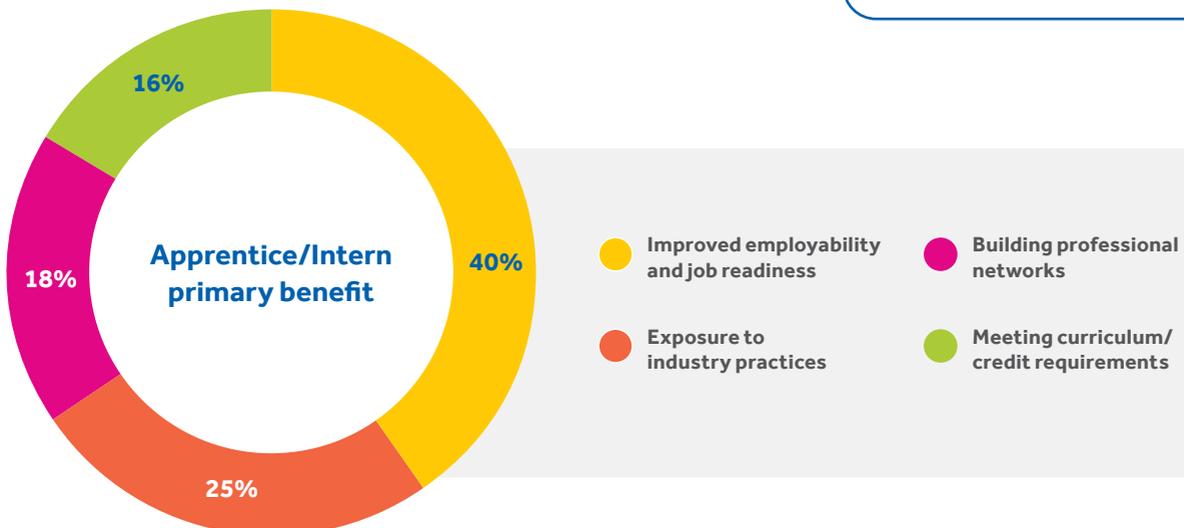
Challenges in expanding skilling initiatives – Academia Overview

The most common constraint mentioned by academia heads in expanding skilling initiative is student engagement (22%)
Funding and alignment with a national-skills-framework are tied (36% each) as the most beneficial government support for their institution's skilling and employability initiatives

Challenge expanding skilling initiative
Q. What are the primary challenges your institution faces in expanding skilling initiatives?

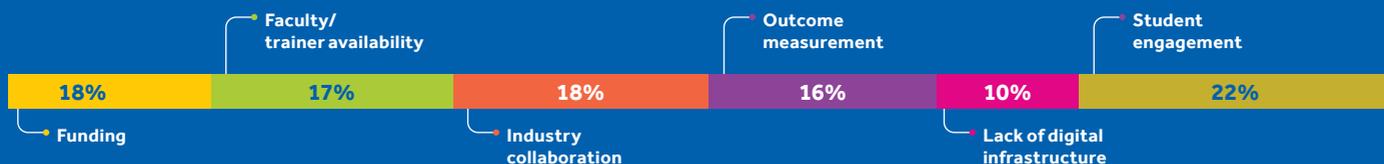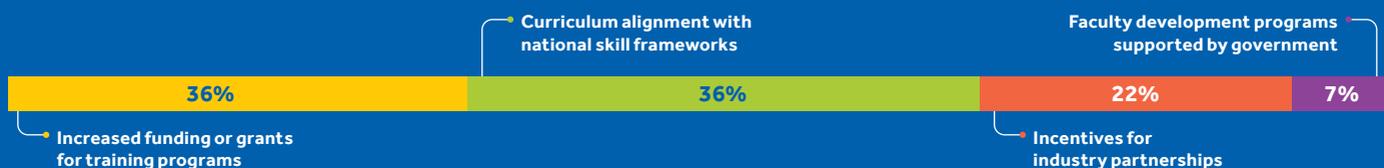**Faculty/ trainer availability** · **Outcome measurement** · **Student engagement**

| 18% | 17% | 18% | 16% | 10% | 22% |

Funding · **Industry collaboration** · **Lack of digital infrastructure**

Govt policy support- academia
Q. What type of government policy support would most benefit your institution's skilling and employability initiatives?

Curriculum alignment with national skill frameworks · **Faculty development programs supported by government**

| 36% | 36% | 22% | 7% |

Increased funding or grants for training programs · **Incentives for industry partnerships**
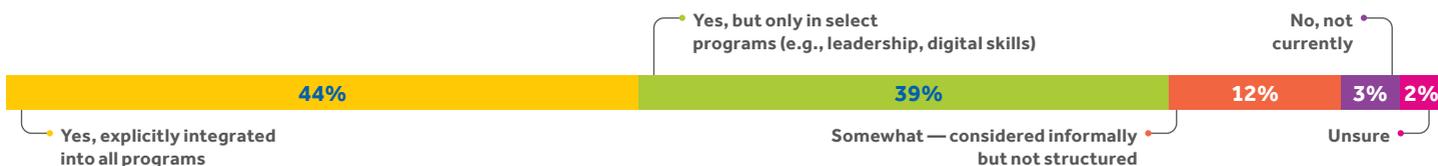
D&I in L&D and Skilling Initiatives – Demand Side and Academia

In terms of diversity and inclusion goals- 44% of employers say they are explicitly integrated into all programs
The groups most targeted by employers are early-career/1st generation graduates (53%) followed by women professionals (48%)
In academia, the group most supported through D&I linked initiative are students from rural/underserved backgrounds (54%) followed by 1st generation learners (49%)

D&I in L&D initiatives – A Demand Side Overview

D&I link in skilling
Q. Are diversity and inclusion (D&I) goals explicitly linked to your organization's skilling and development programs?

Yes, but only in select programs (e.g., leadership, digital skills) · **No, not currently**

| 44% | 39% | 12% | 3% | 2% |

Yes, explicitly integrated into all programs · **Somewhat — considered informally but not structured** · **Unsure**

Groups targeted for D&I
Q. Which groups are most targeted for D&I-linked skilling initiatives? (Select all that apply)

Women professionals	48%
Persons with disabilities	37%
Underrepresented communities (e.g., socio-economic, ethnic)	41%

LGBTQ+ employees	18%
Early-career / first-generation graduates	53%
None of the above	7%

D&I in Academia

Groups supported through D&I
Q. Which groups are most supported through D&I-linked skilling initiatives at your institution?

| Women students/faculty | 43% |
| Students from rural/underserved backgrounds | 54% |

| Persons with disabilities | 41% |
| First-generation learners | 59% |

Showcasing L&D Programmes and their Impact - Demand Side and Academia

Showcasing L&D Programmes and their Impact – Demand Side Overview
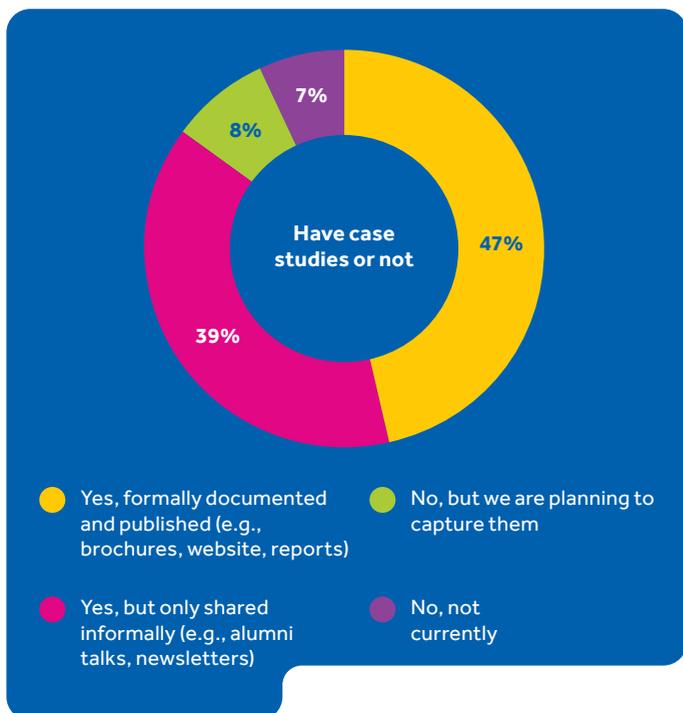
54% employers say they have formally documented case studies relating to skilling/workforce development.
A majority of those who have case studies, formal or informal, mention the use cases are internal communication and employee engagement (64%) and employer branding/talent attraction (51%). The most common case study type are campus-to-corporate case studies (72%) followed by case studies of women returning to work (57%)

Have case studies or not
Q. Does your organization have documented case studies related to skilling or workforce development?

Yes, but only informally captured (e.g., testimonials, anecdotes)
No, not at this time

| 54% | 33% | 8% | 5% |

Yes, formally documented and shared internally/externally
No, but we are planning to develop them

Using case studies
Q. How are these success stories most often used?

| Employer branding / talent attraction | 51% |
| Internal communication and employee engagement | 64% |

| Reporting to leadership or stakeholders | 46% |
| Shared with government/ industry bodies | 45% |

Types of case studies
Q. What types of case studies are most common in your organization?

| Campus-to-corporate transitions | 72% |
| Women returning to work | 57% |

| Rural youth skilling | 44% |
| Others | 4% |

Showcasing L&D Programmes and their Impact – Academia Side Overview
Q. Does your institution have documented case studies of students/faculty benefiting from skilling initiatives? How are these success stories most often used?

86% academic heads too mention having case studies- with common use cases being internal motivation and recognition (47%) and attracting new students/faculty (44%) and showcasing student employability outcomes (43%)
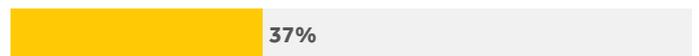
Have case studies or not

47%
39%
8%
7%

- Yes, formally documented and published (e.g., brochures, website, reports)
- No, but we are planning to capture them
- Yes, but only shared informally (e.g., alumni talks, newsletters)
- No, not currently

Using success stories

Showcasing student employability outcomes
43%

Strengthening industry partnerships
37%

Attracting new students/faculty
44%

Securing grants or government support
34%
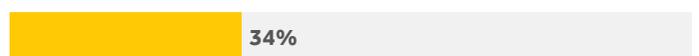
Internal motivation and recognition
47%

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