



# Embedding employability skills and knowledge in the curricula

Professor Iraj Hashi

University of Dubrovnik, Croatia

Emeritus Professor, Staffordshire University, United Kingdom

*Beirut, 23 September 2020*

ELEGANT

Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Graduate Employability  
Through University-Enterprise Cooperation



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# Skill gap is a worldwide problem

- Skill Gap, or what graduates lack when they enter the world of work, is now well established across the world.
- Many studies in developed and developing countries have confirmed this gap.
- ELEGANT project aims to respond to this gap.

# the ELEGANT project's approach

Skill gap is addressed through:

- Curriculum development
- Embedding employability skills in the curricula
- Internships for students at partner companies
- Involving company managers in the teaching process, esp in Projects.

# Employability skills: current trends

- An increased interest in the development and embedding of Employability Skills within Universities
- Employability Skills should demonstrate to stakeholders such as employers what are the core learning outcomes of a university education

# Employability Skills (or Graduate Attributes): what are they?

Graduate attributes are commonly understood as an articulation of

*“...the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.”* (Bowden et al 2000)

Bowden, J., Hart, G., King, B., Trigwell, K. & Watts, O. (2000) *Generic Capabilities of ATN University Graduates*. <http://www.clt.uts.edu.au/ATN.grad.cap.project.index.html>

# Employability Skills:

## **Discipline Expert**

Have an understanding of the forefront of knowledge in their chosen field

## **Professional**

Be prepared to be work-ready and employable and understand the importance of being enterprising and entrepreneurial

## **Reflective and Critical Learner**

Have the ability to carry out inquiry based learning and critical analysis

Be a problem solver and creator of opportunities

## **Global Citizen**

Have an understanding of global issues and of their place in a globalised economy

## **Communication and Teamwork**

Be an effective communicator and presenter and able to interact appropriately with a range of colleagues

Have developed the skills of independence of thought and (when appropriate) social interaction through teamwork

## **Lifelong Learner**

Be technologically, digitally and information literate

Be able to apply Staffordshire Graduate attributes to a range of life experiences to facilitate life-long learning and life-long success.

## **Being entrepreneurial**

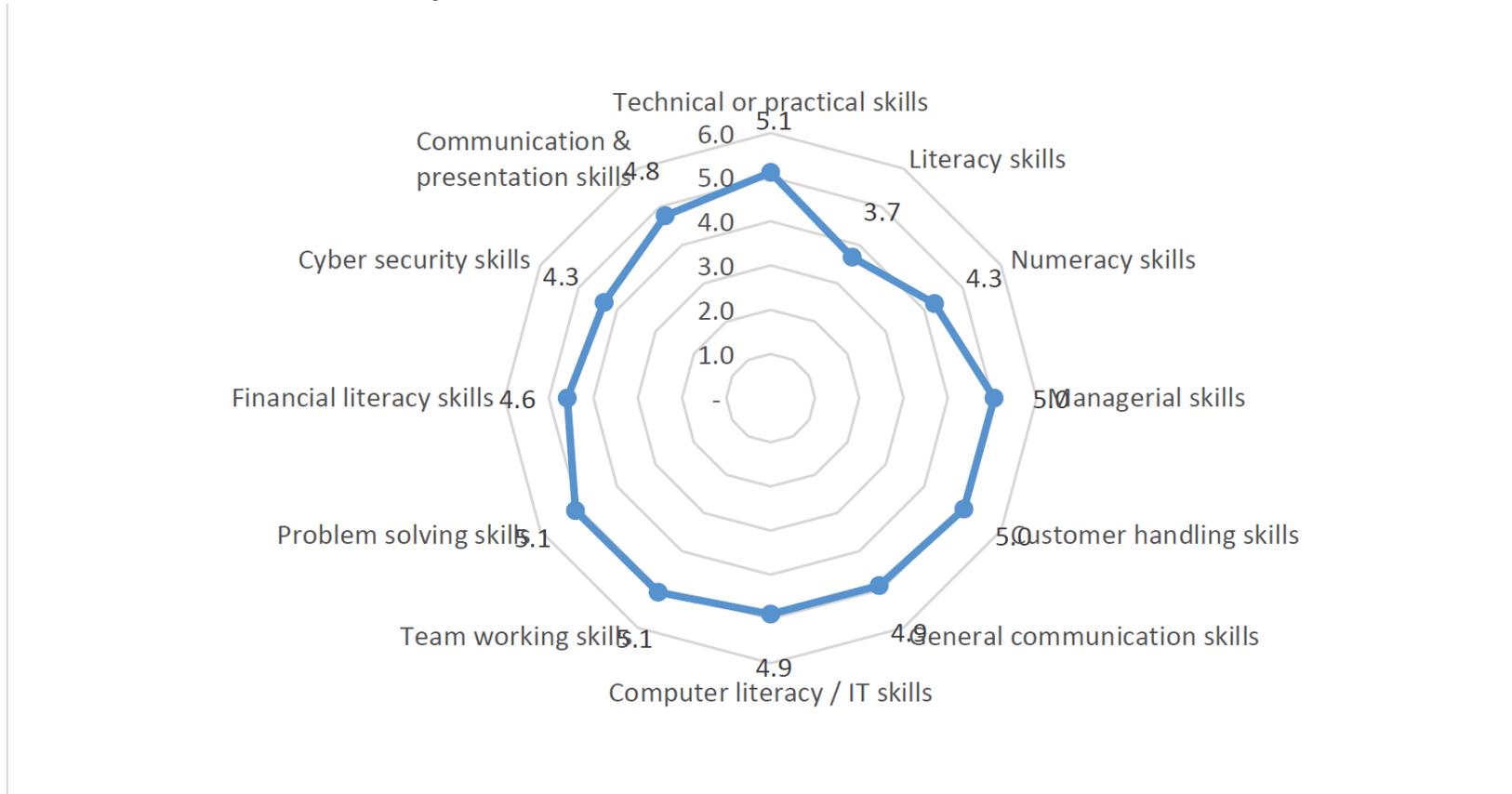
# Assessment of Employability Skills:

- It is increasingly recognised that there is a need to demonstrate achievement of Employability Skills because
  - Employers value these skills and often seek information on these achievements from applicants
  - Governments expect evidence of the achievement of Employability Skills because of links made with the knowledge economy, innovation and national well-being
- If Employability Skills are not assessed they will not be taken seriously by students or teachers
- Assessment of these skills supports students and teachers in their monitoring and development

# Lessons Learnt: Employability Skills (not soft)

- Presidents and Deans need to be on board to support their staff in implementing the change to engage with employability skills
- Staff need training to appreciate the importance of the employability skills
- The staff perceptions of teaching these skills need to change
  - *Important but not my role to deliver them*
  - *They are not relevant to my discipline*
- Employability skills need to be embedded in all courses of a programme; not a single 'employability module' or 'soft skills'. It won't be taken seriously

# Figure 5. Challenges encountered in filling vacancies (1–never, 7-always)



Source: Riinvest Survey (2016)

Any questions?

Thank you for your attention