

# Needs analysis report

## Deliverable D2.1

Project Coordinator: **JA Europe**  
Beneficiary in charge: **MPG Human Age Institute Foundation**  
Due date: **31/07/2024**  
Consortium review finalised: **24/07/2024**  
Date of issue: **30/07/2024**

Dissemination level: **Sensitive**

Reference WP:  
**2 Identification of employability micro-credential needs and establishment of strategic partnerships**

Reference Task  
**Task D2.1 - Needs analysis report**

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## The EMPASS Consortium

The EMPASS project is implemented by the following Consortium of Partners:

No	Partner	Acronym	Country
1	Junior Achievement Europe	JA Europe	Belgium
2	Junior Achievement Spain	JA Spain	Spain
3	Zurich Insurance Group	Zurich	Spain
4	Institut Escola del Treball de Barcelona	Escola del Treball	Spain
5	Junior Achievement Greece	JA Greece	Greece
6	The Small Enterprises' Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen, and Merchants	IME GSEVEE	Greece
7	The Labour Institute of GSEE	IN.E.	Greece
8	Junior Achievement Romania	JA Romania	Romania
9	Ascendia S.A.	Ascendia	Romania
10	Colegiul Economic Virgil Madgearu	CEVM	Romania
11	I-DS Coaching & Consulting	IDS	Republic of North Macedonia
12	Experis ManpowerGroup SL	Experis MPG	Spain
13	Accenture SA	Accenture	Belgium

No	Associated Partner	Acronym	Country
1	Fundatia Worldskills Romania	Worldskills	Romania

## About the EMPASS Project

EMPASS is a 36-month project financed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency under the Erasmus+ Forward Looking Programme. It aims to develop an employability micro-credential programme for the scarce soft skills in the labour market in order to address youth unemployment and to speed up the achievement of the European Education Area (EEA).

In close collaboration with industry/employability partners and TVET institutions, EMPASS will drive a soft skill needs analysis in Greece, Romania, and Spain in order to develop and test an innovative training programme able to teach and certify the most needed soft skills for entry level workers. The employability micro-credential EMPASS will be a support for employers to assess the skill level of potential employees, and it will also aid TVET institutions to ensure work readiness of their students.

In the framework of the project, the micro-credential programme will be piloted with 1,500 students in Greece, Romania, and Spain before being finalised for scale-up and Europe-wide distribution.

## Scope of this Deliverable

Work Package 2 of the EMPASS project aims to identify employability micro-credentials needs and to establish strategic partnerships. In the first place, we wanted to perform a skill needs analysis (desk and field research), mainly but not exclusively focused on the 3 testing countries and, on the other hand, to establish relationships with employment and education actors, as a basis for development of recognizable employability micro-credentials (memorandums of understanding).

Specifically, this deliverable (D 2.1) presents the most demanded soft skills in the world of employment for TVET profiles (16-25 years old), setting out the conclusions reached after carrying out the research study. This is followed by details of how it was carried out: objectives, methodology, results obtained, and final conclusions.

# 1. Justification

## 1.1 Objectives and timing

The main objectives of this research are:

- To conduct an academic review in order to find the most relevant studies and articles on the mismatch of youth profiles with respect to what companies demand.
- To collect information on regional needs to identify the soft skills most in demand and to reduce the mismatch in the supply and demand of skills in Europe, involving employment agents in research, schools, and students.
- Perform an analysis of the information collected to respond to the market’s specific needs, as a prerequisite to develop the assessment of micro-credentials of employability.

The preparation of this report has been the result of carrying out, over 6 months, different tasks and activities (detailed below), thus we will explain the steps followed until the data analysed therein were extracted:

Task	Activities	Duration
Documentary research on each regional ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field research and meetings</li> <li>• Data contribution from all partners</li> </ul>	M1-M4
Data collection (companies, schools, and students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of surveys (companies, schools, and students)</li> <li>• Meetings with all partners for feedback and validation</li> <li>• Launching surveys to companies, schools, and students for gathering their responses</li> </ul>	M3-M5
Completion of needs analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing of surveys</li> <li>• Collection of results to draw conclusions</li> <li>• Preparation of the needs analysis report</li> </ul>	M5-M6

## 1.2 Methodology

### 1.2.1 Methods

The survey has been the method used to collect data for this study, with the aim of knowing which soft skills are most in demand in the current labour market. This study collects qualitative and quantitative data, as it uses data collection methods with numerical measurement as well as open-ended questions (Remenyi, 2012).

Surveys were the chosen method of assessment because they can provide a more accurate and impartial understanding of the problem we are trying to solve. They have been distributed electronically, as the most effective method both for collection of data and for its subsequent dump and analysis, and we have also relied on professional social networks, such as LinkedIn, to obtain a greater number of responses. The use of surveys in this context helps to transform feedback into measurable results and to organize opinions with the aim of conducting an in-depth analysis; it should be noted that surveys are a good option for conducting large-scale research, and that their scalability is one of the advantages most exploited by researchers and companies.

To this end, different industry/employment actors have been involved in the collection of information, as well as educational institutions and students, to identify the needs for employability micro-credential. The 3 surveys (companies, schools, and students) have been developed by the consortium of companies and educational organizations responsible for the implementation of EMPASS to find out which soft skills are most in demand by employers for TVET profiles (16-25 years-old). At all times, responses have been processed electronically and respecting personal privacy.

Below we detail the characteristics of each of the surveys carried out according to the agent involved:

- Survey for companies: it consisted of 19 questions, which can be viewed at this link: [https://humanageinstitute.org/\\_empass/questionnaire-for-companies/index\\_es.php](https://humanageinstitute.org/_empass/questionnaire-for-companies/index_es.php)
- Survey for schools: it consisted of 17 questions, which can be viewed at this link: [https://humanageinstitute.org/\\_empass/questionnaire-for-schools/index\\_es.php](https://humanageinstitute.org/_empass/questionnaire-for-schools/index_es.php)
- Survey for students: it consisted of 19 questions, which can be viewed at this link: [https://humanageinstitute.org/\\_empass/questionnaire-for-students/index\\_es.php](https://humanageinstitute.org/_empass/questionnaire-for-students/index_es.php)

Although, depending on the survey, the questions were adapted to each group, they always refer to the same set of competences: *Interpersonal* (Active Listening, Assertiveness, Communication, Conflict Management, Customer Orientation, Emotional intelligence, Ethics, Leadership, Negotiation, Respect, Teamwork), *Personal effectiveness* (Autonomy, Continuous learning, Creativity, Crisis Management, Critical Thinking, Flexibility, Organization and Planning, Proactivity, Investigation, Responsibility, Time Management), and *Action and results* (Goal Achievement, Attention to Detail, Deal Closing, Commitment, Decision-making, Innovation, Problem Resolution, Productivity, Profitability, Quality, Strategic Vision). In addition, respondents were allowed to add free-form comment responses.

### 1.2.2 Academic support

We have used up-to-date academic literature, as well as recent studies of companies in the sector, to prepare the survey and its contents. These are detailed below.

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### Webography

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- European Skills Panorama: Which 21st century skills are most in demand? <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/es/blog/panorama-europeo-de-las-competencias-cuales-son-las-competencias-del-siglo-xxi-mas-demandadas>
- Vocational education and training in Europe. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/spain-u2>

## 2. Analysis of data

### 2.1 Results obtained

In total, we have collected the following results, which can be seen in the table in terms of response rate:

	COMPANIES	SCHOOLS	STUDENTS
SPAIN	124	86	412
GREECE	105	52	166
ROMANIA	24	108	208
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>786</b>

After analysing and debugging the responses, that is, after performing a process of data cleaning to draw conclusions and work with them, we were left with a total of 250 business surveys, 244 educational centres, and 673 students.

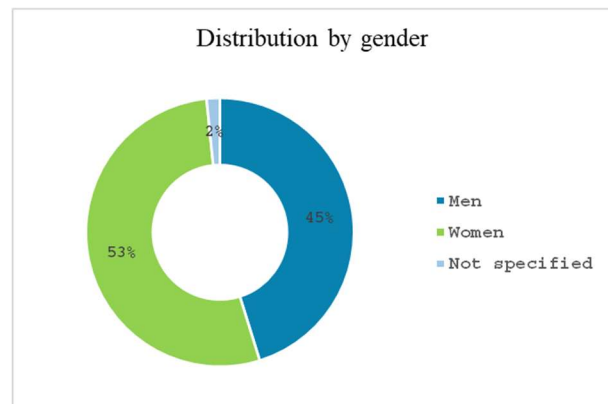
A detailed breakdown of each participant group is given below in order to get an overview of the responses in this order: companies, schools, and students.

#### 2.1.1 Companies results

As mentioned above, companies from Greece, Romania, and Spain participated. We will now describe the sample: specifically, 250 people were surveyed, of whom 59.2% were managers, 29.2% middle managers, and 11.6% technicians, respectively; of these, 53% are women and 45% men, and 2% chose not to comment on their gender. The average age of all of them is 47.15 years (standard deviation [SD] = 10.04, indicating that the data are spread over a larger range of values with respect to the mean).

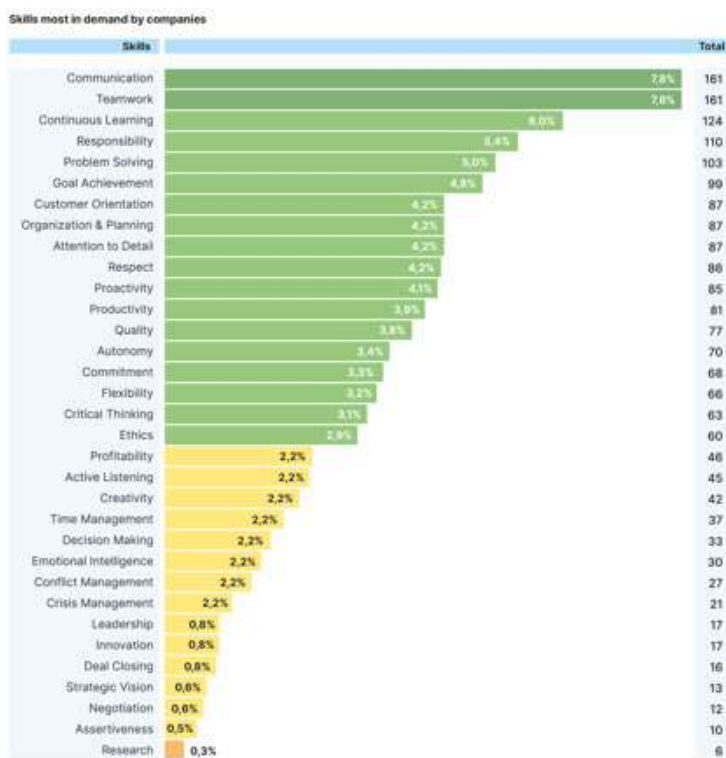
As it can be seen, the 10 most demanded competences represent 54% of the answers, and the 5 most demanded competences represent 32% of the answers. If we look at the ‘top 10’ ranking, we see that the soft skills most in demand are in this order Communication and Teamwork (both with 7.8% of the total responses), Continuous Learning (6%), Responsibility (5.4%), Problem Solving (5%), Goal Achievement (4.8%), Customer Orientation, Organization and Planning, Attention to Detail, and Respect (all with 4.2%).

If we differentiate by country, we find the following data for the 6 most in-demand soft skills:



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- Greece: Communication (7.9%), Teamwork (7.3%), Responsibility (6.4%), Continuous Learning (5.4%), Problem Solving and Quality (5.1%).
- Romania: Teamwork and Communication (7.8%), Goal Achievement (7%), Continuous Learning (6.8%), Responsibility (6%) and Proactivity (5.8%).
- Spain: Teamwork (9.1%), Communication (7.7%), Continuous Learning (7.1%), Commitment (6.7%), Proactivity and Problem Solving (6.5%).



By type of competencies, we see that the top 10 is well balanced between the Interpersonal, Personal effectiveness and Action and results groups, although Interpersonal leads the top 1 and 2, followed by Personal effectiveness and Action and results. Among the top 20, 35% of the competencies most sought after by employers are related to Action and results, 35% to Personal effectiveness and 30% to Interpersonal Skills. In other words, while Communication and Teamwork (Interpersonal) may be considered as obvious for companies, in the definition of the ‘best possible candidate’ – considering 20 competences – Interpersonal is in the top 1 and 2, but overall it is not the most demanded, but the Action and results, and Personal effectiveness groups win.

In addition, as a further detail, some companies have added other important competencies in demand that were not included in the list, as can be seen in the word cloud images below, divided into the groups to which they belong, i.e. interpersonal, action and results and personal effectiveness.

## Other skills: INTERPERSONAL

7 responses



## Other skills: ACTION AND RESULTS

4 responses



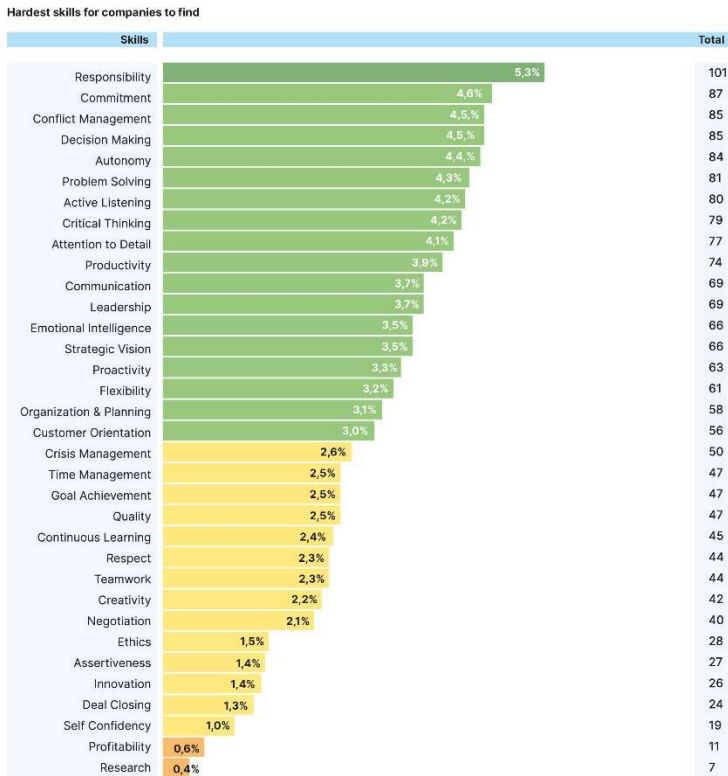
## Other skills: PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

63 responses



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As for the soft skills that are hardest to find, the top 10 skills selected by companies represent 51.4% of the total responses, and the top 5 skills represent 23.3% of the ranking: Responsibility (5.3% of the total responses), Commitment (4.6%), Conflict Management and Decision-making (4.5%), and Autonomy (4.4%).



And when we differentiate by country, we have the following data:

- Greece: Responsibility (5.6%), Decision-making (5.2%), Active Listening and Problem Solving (4.7%), Productivity (4.5%), Conflict Management (4.5%).
- Romania: Autonomy (5.3%), Responsibility (4.8%), Communication (4.5%), Continuous Learning (4.3%), and Customer Orientation, Attention to Detail, Goal Achievement, Decision-making and Strategic Vision (at 4%).
- Spain: Commitment (7.7%), Autonomy (6.3%), Proactivity and Conflict Management (5.6%), Responsibility and Emotional Intelligence (5.2%).

Finally, when grouped by type, in the top 10 we see that 50% of the most difficult competences to find are related to the skill group of Action and results. They are followed by Personal effectiveness (30%) and Interpersonal (20%). The number 1 of the most demanded skills, Responsibility, belongs to the Personal effectiveness group. In the top 20, 40% of the soft skills that are hardest to find are related to Personal effectiveness, followed by Action and results (30%) and Interpersonal (30%).

In short, companies demand action and results-oriented professionals with a mix of interpersonal skills. In the case of defining 20 crucial skills in their top-of-mind professionals, companies will ultimately include Personal effectiveness skills.

### 2.1.2 Schools results

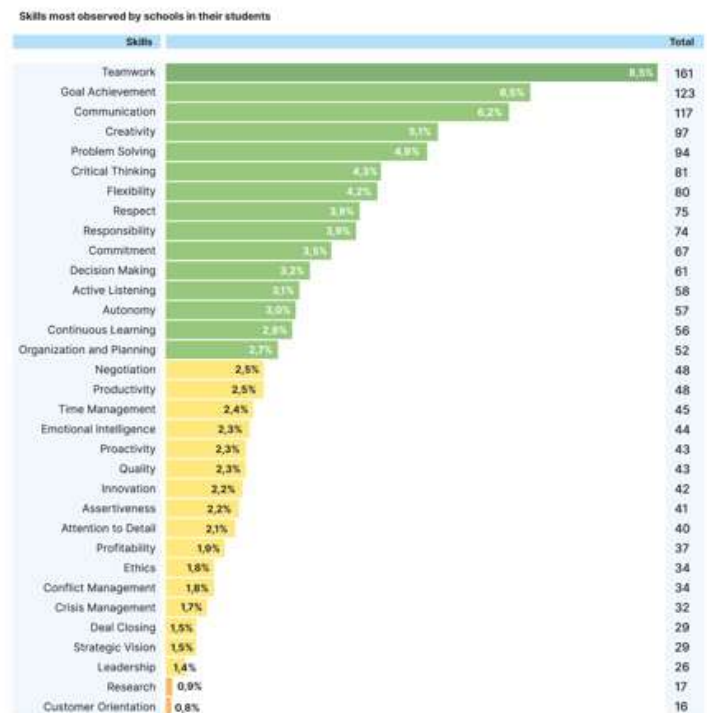
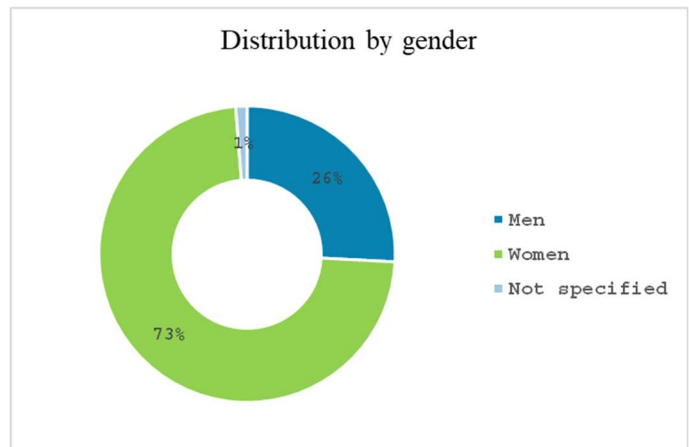
Schools in Greece, Romania, and Spain also participated and the sample is described below. Specifically, 244 responses to the survey were obtained, of which, in terms of jobs, 8.61% were headmasters, 5.74% deputy headmasters, 2.46% head of studies, 4.5% guidance counsellors, and 78.69% teachers, respectively. Of these, 73% were female and 26% male, and 1% chose not to indicate their gender. The mean age is 48.66 years (standard deviation [SD] = 10.42, which indicates that the data spread over a wider range of values with respect to the mean).

If we talk about the skills most observed by schools in their students, the top 10 represent 51% of the responses; and the top 5 competences, 31.2% of the responses of the total ranking, namely Teamwork (8.5%), Goal Achievement (6.5%), Communication (6.2%), followed by Creativity (5.1%) and Problem Solving (4.9%).

Breaking down the results by country, we find the following information:

- Greece: Teamwork (7.9%), Communication (6.5%), Goal Achievement (5.5%), Commitment (5.2%), Respect (5%).
- Romania: Teamwork (8.7%), Communication (7.7%), Creativity (5.9%), Goal Achievement (7.2%), Problem Solving (5.5%).
- Spain: Teamwork (8.5%), Respect (6.2%), Goal Achievement (6%), Problem Solving (4.5%), Commitment (4.3%).

By type of skills, in the top 10, 30% of the most available competences in schools are related to Action and results, followed by Personal effectiveness (40%) and Interpersonal (30%). While in the top 20, 55% of the most available skills are related to Personal effectiveness, followed by Interpersonal (30%) and Action and results (25%). Schools emphasise Personal effectiveness skills among students, who are less proficient in Action and results, while maintaining a relevant percentage of Interpersonal skills.



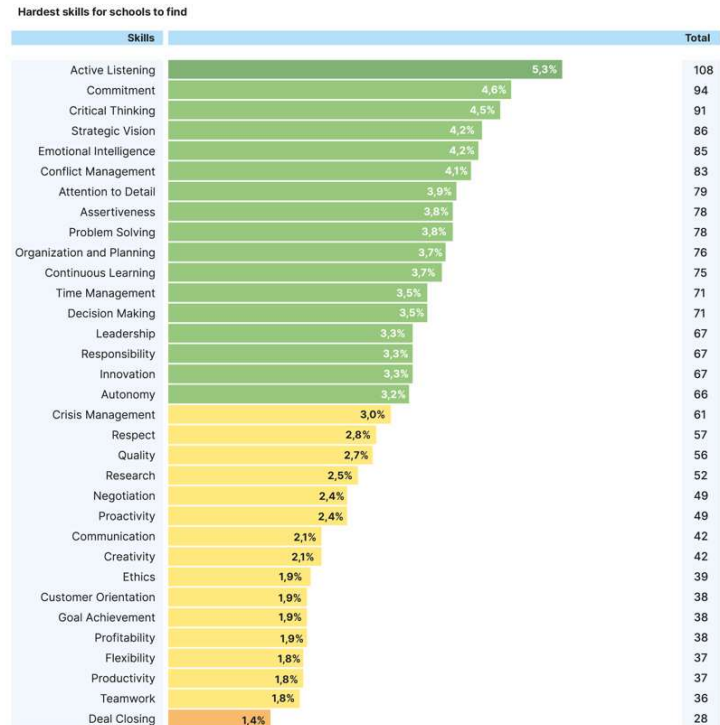


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In schools, the top 20 most difficult skills to find among their students accounted for 74.3%, and the top 10 competences for 42% of the responses. The top 5 skills (22.8%) of the total ranking responses would be Active Listening (5.3%), Commitment (4.6%), Critical Thinking (4.5%), and Strategic Vision and Emotional Intelligence (4.2% each). Now let's see what happens if we divide by country:

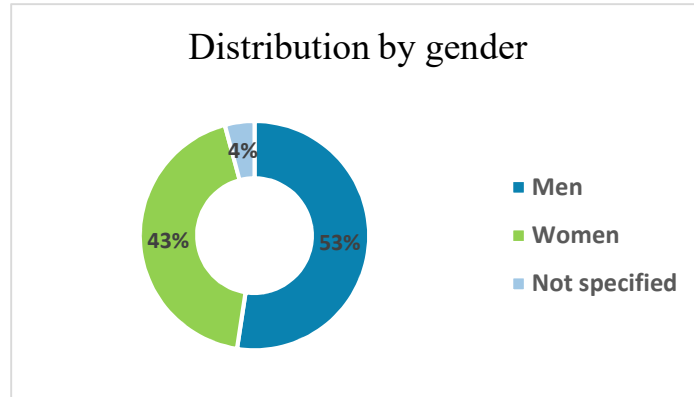
- Greece: Problem Solving (5.5%), Assertiveness (5%), Leadership (4.7%), Crisis Management (4.7%), Critical Thinking (4.5%), Organization and Planning (4.5%), Innovation (4.5%).
- Romania: Continuous Learning (4.9%), Conflict Management (4.8%), Active Listening (4.7%), Commitment (4.4%), Strategic Vision (4.4%),
- Spain: Active Listening (6.7%), Commitment (6.2%), Critical Thinking (5.6%), Autonomy (4.6%), Emotional Intelligence (4.6%).

By skill type, among the top 10, 40% of the hardest-to-find competencies are related to Action and results and Interpersonal; Personal effectiveness accounts for 20%. If we broaden the ranking among the top 20, 40% of the hardest-to-find skills are related to Action and results orientation, while 30% are equally related to Interpersonal and Personal effectiveness. Schools strongly emphasise the need for students with action and results skills that are well balanced with interpersonal skills. Skills related to personal effectiveness appear most frequently in the bottom 10 of the table.



### 2.1.3 Student results

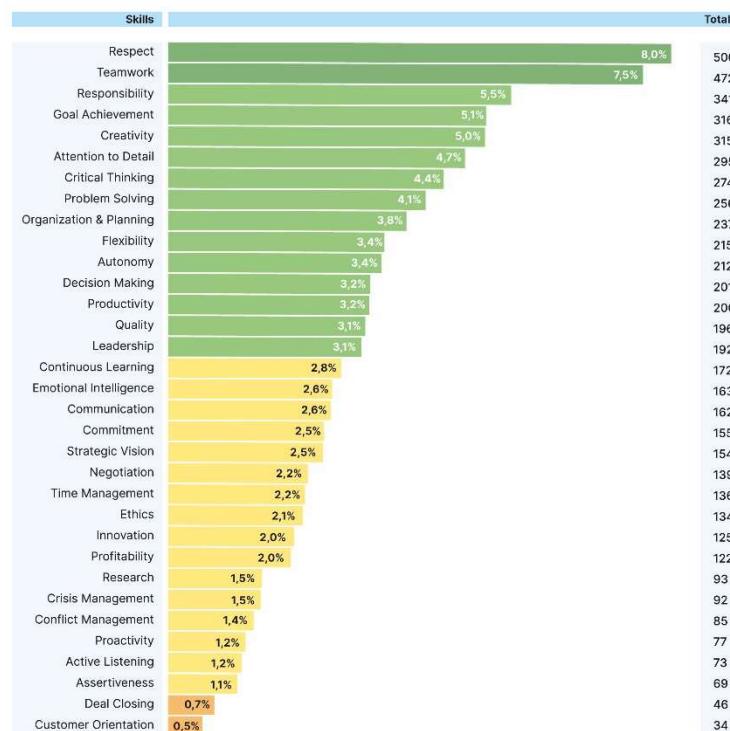
As mentioned above, students from Greece, Romania, and Spain also participated in the survey. Specifically, we received a total of 673 responses from students aged 16-25 (TVET). Of these, 52.45% were male and 42.39% female, and 4.16% chose not to comment on their gender. The mean age of all respondents is 18.5 years (standard deviation [SD] = 1.88, indicates that the data points are very close to the mean). On the other hand, 91.79% of the students belonged to public schools, 4.48% to private schools and 3.73% to charter schools. Moreover, 37.76% of them live in large cities, 32.84% in the capital city, 17.31% in cities with more than 5,000 inhabitants and 12.09% in towns with less than 5,000 inhabitants.



We will focus next on what students think about the skills in which they excel. The top 10 skills account for 51.9% of the responses and the top 5 skills account for 31.1% of the responses in the overall ranking: Respect (8%), Teamwork (7.5%), Responsibility (5.5%), followed by Goal Achievement (5.1%) and Creativity (5%). When breaking it down by country, we get the following data:

- Greece: Critical Thinking (6.7%), Problem Solving (5.4%), Creativity and Goal Achievement (5.1%), Respect (5%).
- Romania: Attention to Detail (6.8%), Goal Achievement (6.5%), Respect (6.7%), Responsibility (5.6%), Creativity (5.4%).
- Spain: Teamwork (10.6%), Respect (9.9%), Responsibility (5.5%), Autonomy (4.9%), Creativity (4.8%).

Skills that students believe they excel in





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According to the students, by type of skill, 10.40% of the most relevant skills are related to Action and results, followed by Personal effectiveness (30%) and Interpersonal (30%). In the top 20, 40% of the most relevant skills are related to Action and results, followed by Interpersonal (30%) and Personal effectiveness (30%).

Thus, students consider themselves well equipped with Personal effectiveness and Action and Outcomes skills, and well balanced among the different types of competences.

The top 10 skills that students think companies demand represent 42.1% of responses and the first 5 skills, 23.3% of responses. According to their total classification: Teamwork (5.5% of the total), Communication (4.9%), Responsibility (4.4%), Goal Achievement (4.4%), and Respect (4.1%). By country, we get:

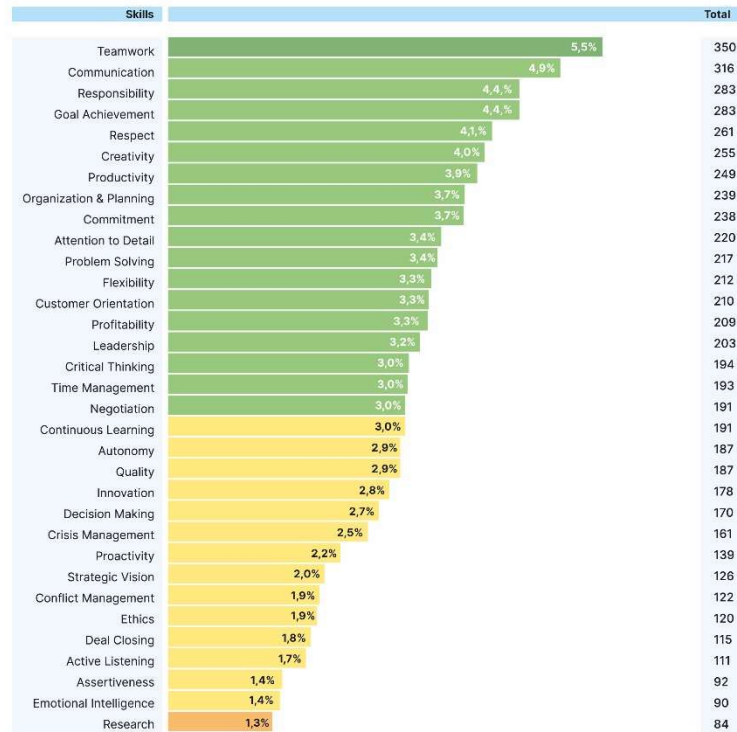
- Greece: Profitability and Efficiency (6.1%), Teamwork (5.7%), Responsibility (5.6%), Critical Thinking (5%).
- Romania: Communication (6.4%), Goal Achievement (5.7%), Responsibility (5.1%), Teamwork (5.3%), Creativity (4.9%).
- Spain: Teamwork (5.5%), Communication (5.1%), Commitment (4.9%), Productivity (4.5%) and Respect (4.2%).

When differentiating by skill type, in the top 10, 40% of the most relevant skills –according to students – are related to Action and results, and Personal effectiveness (40%) alike. However, interpersonal people only weigh 20%. If we go to the top 20, 50% of the most demanded skills are related to Personal effectiveness, with Action and results and Interpersonal skills at the same 25% of relevance.

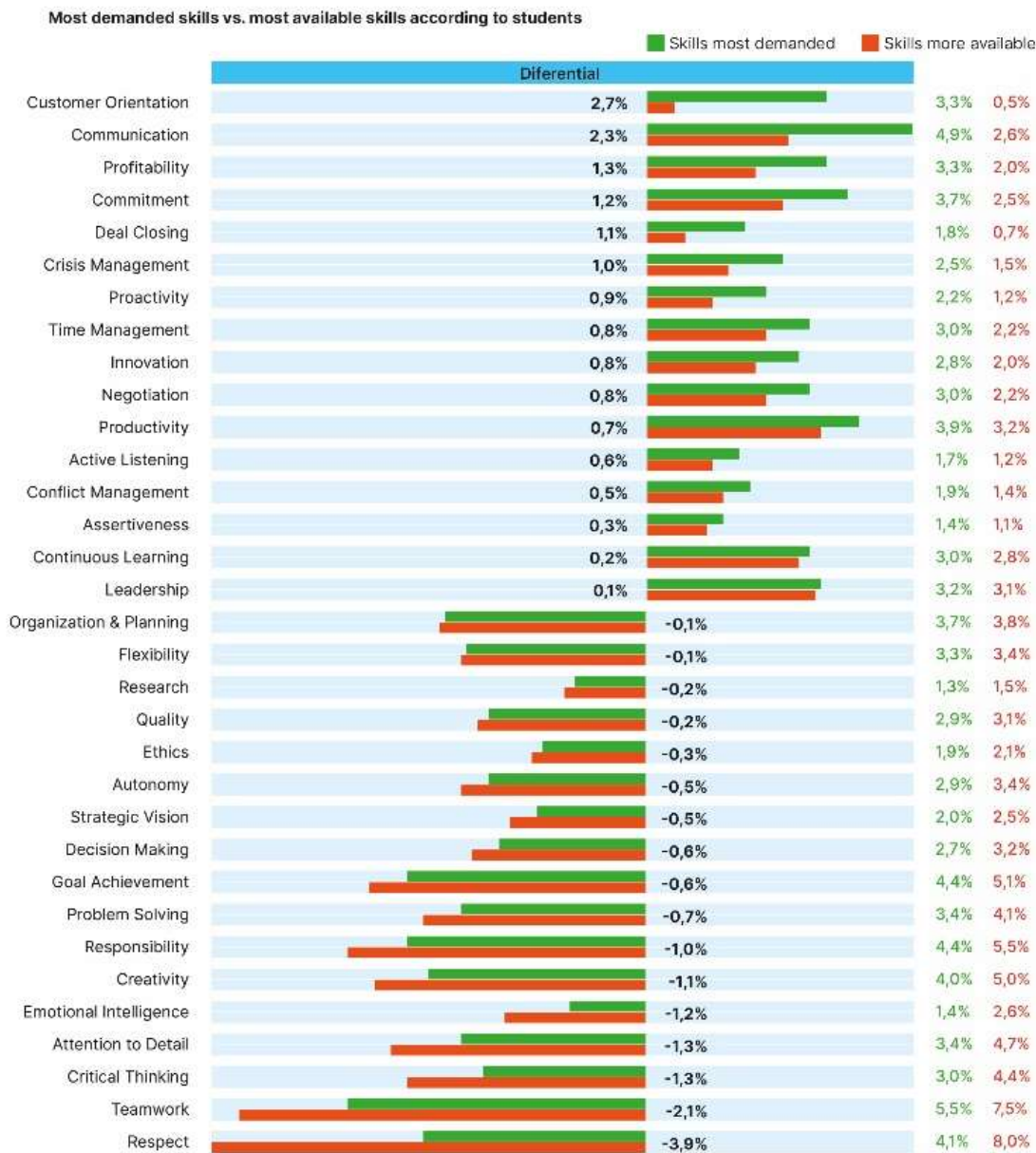
Students consider that companies require well-qualified professionals in the skills group of action and results and personal effectiveness, while those trained in interpersonal skills are not so professional.

Finally, if we compare the skills most demanded by companies and those highlighted by students, according to the students' perception, they are more skilled in Respect, Teamwork, Critical Thinking, Attention to Detail, as well as Emotional Intelligence and Creativity, which are currently in demand in the market.

Most relevant skills - according to students



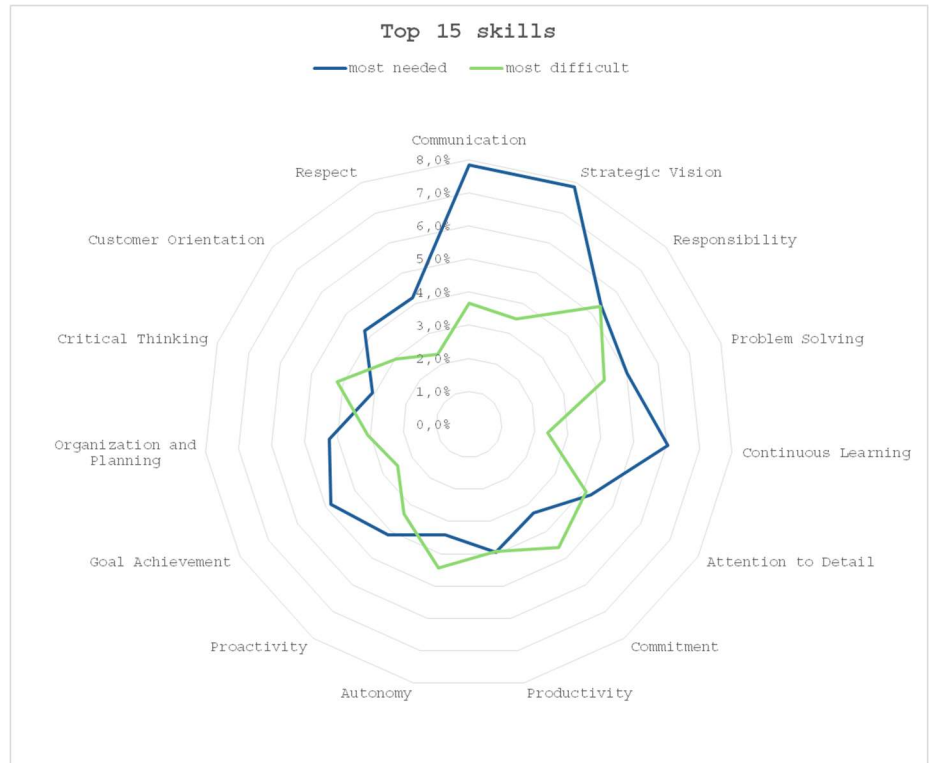
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On the contrary, students understand that there is a path for improvement in Customer Orientation, Communication, Profitability, Commitment, Deal Closing and Crisis Management – since they consider that these skills are not as represented today in what the labour market demands.

## 2.2 Needs identified

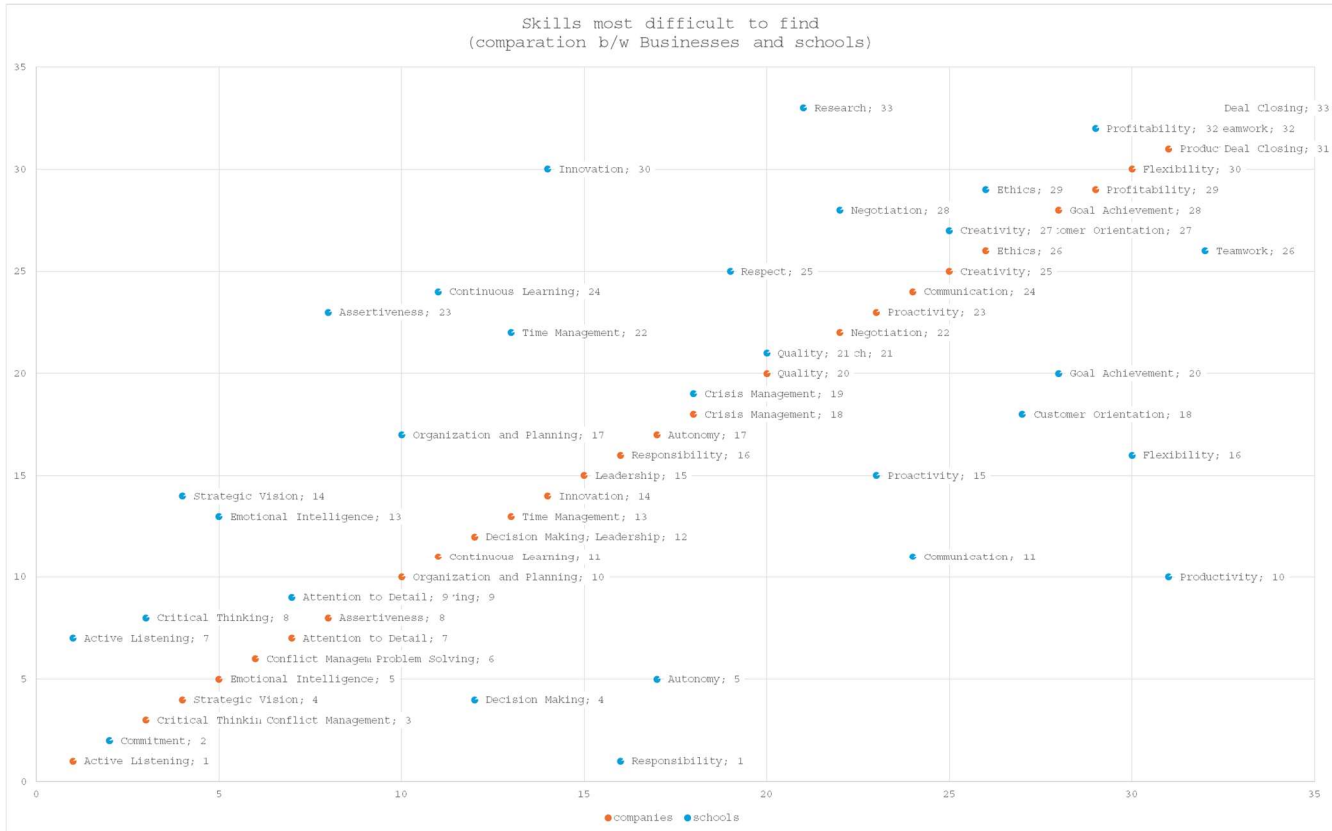
By comparing the 20 most necessary and most difficult to find skills, according to the companies interviewed, we can easily see which skills are needed but not so difficult to find (Continuous Learning, Goal Achievement, and Productivity) and which are critical for companies (as they are the most needed and hard to find), such as: Communication, Strategic Vision, and Responsibility or Problem Solving. Therefore, and in that sense, we have created the *Critical Skills Ranking* for the analysed area, as shown in the graph.



## 3. Conclusions

To conclude, we will make 2 comparisons, the first between companies and educational centres, and the second among the three actors involved: companies, educational centres and students.

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It turns out that companies and schools share a similar view. The first 10 or even 15 skills more difficult to find: Commitment is actually the 2<sup>nd</sup> most difficult skill to find for both; Creativity, Quality, Deal Closing, Ethics and/or Profitability as well as Attention to Detail and Conflict Management, Organization and Planning and Leadership are prioritized in +/- 3 positions – therefore, companies and schools think alike in all of them. Innovation, on the contrary, is placed in position 14 for companies, while schools place it in position 30; something similar happens with Productivity (31 for companies, 10 for schools).

Comparing school and company replies, we could identify a difference between the availability of skills in schools and the intensity of demand from companies. Hypothetically, that estimate could provide a reservoir of skills in schools and, in addition, a list of ‘deficient skills’ that need further development at the educational level. This will be further assessed and analysed in the development phase of our project’s to-be-developed micro-credential.

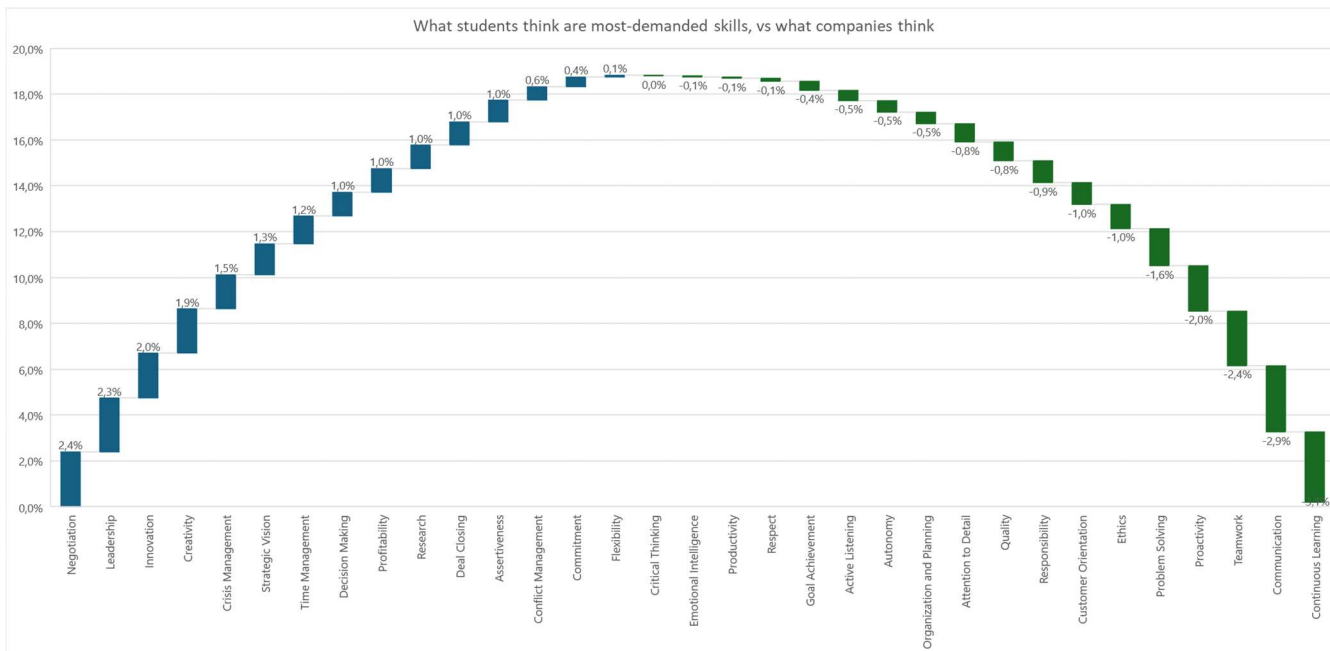
The most available competencies in schools are, ordered from 1 to 5: Creativity, Negotiation, Assertiveness, Goal Achievement and Decision-making. Skills that schools believe to be more lacking with regard to the current demand of companies are: Customer Orientation, Continuous Learning, Attention to Detail, Proactivity and Communication.

According to the perception of the students, they are more proficient in Respect, Teamwork, Critical Thinking and Attention to Detail, as well as in Emotional Intelligence and Creativity, than the market demands today. On

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the contrary, students understand that there is a path for improvement in Customer Orientation, Communication, Profitability, Commitment, Deal Closure and Crisis Management.

Comparing the skills that students think are most in demand, versus what businesses and schools declare, they agree on 63% of them (+/-1 points). The biggest differences lay on Negotiation and Leadership (which are not the most requested by companies according to what students think) and Continuous Learning, Communication and Teamwork (which are more demanded by companies than students think).



Based on this analysis, which has taken into account the feedback from all stakeholders, i.e. companies, schools and students, as well as their needs, we believe that the micro-credential programme should focus on the following 10 competences:

Top	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Skill	Communication	Commitment	Continuous Learning	Conflict Management	Problem Solving	Organisation and Planning	Goal Achievement	Teamwork	Customer Orientation	Attention to Detail

## Document History

	Date	Name	Event
1	18/07/2024	Ángela Perriáñez Picón, MPG	Advanced draft
2	18/07/2024	MPG-Accenture-JA Europe team members	structural review meeting
3	19/07/2024	Ángela Perriáñez Picón, MPG	First full draft
4	19/07/2024	Maxi Torau, JA Europe	Circulated to Consortium/Steering Committee
5	24/07/2024	Joanna Andrzejewska, JA Europe	Review
6	24/07/2024	James Aglionby, Accenture	Review and additional information asked
7	26/07/2024	Ángela Perriáñez, Sonia Garrido, Gala Díaz; Human Age Institute	Language and design review, additional information included
8	30/07/2024	Ángela Perriáñez Picón, MPG	Final document and submission to Coordinator
9	30/07/2024	Maxi Torau, JA Europe	Submission

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