NAIRTL
National Academy for Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning
Acadamh Náisiúnta um Chomhtháthú Taighde, Teagaisc agus Foghlama

National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning

Investigating graduate competences

This document presents the views of a broad spectrum of stakeholders regarding the importance of equipping learners with various global generic competences and how best to integrate these into the curriculum. Nearly 2700 survey responses were gathered from employers and the higher education sector. The responses from the higher education sector were drawn from a representative sample of staff and students from both universities and institutes of technology with responses gathered from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds.

The integration of global generic competences into the curriculum is a challenge for many teaching professionals. The National Academy for Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (NAIRTL) and the Bologna Working Group are working to develop national guidelines in this area. The current survey is one of a number of initiatives feeding into this objective.

The results of the survey form the basis of a NAIRTL workshop at the CELT conference at NUI Galway on June 11th-12th. In addition, the Bologna Working Group are organising a one day Symposium in University College Cork on September 30th 2009 entitled "Integrating generic competences into your curriculum".

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for participating in this national survey. Please contact us if you have any comments relating to the issues raised in this report.

Best wishes,

Dr Stephen Cassidy
Chair of the Bologna Working Group,
June 2009

Survey results

NDP National Development Plan 2007 - 2013
HEA Higher Education Authority An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas

Method

The survey was sent to staff and learners in 38 higher education institutes and to employers via inclusion of a link to the survey in two IBEC newsletters. Over the course of two months a total of 2677 responses were gathered. Some 962 (36%) responses came from HEI staff members; 1402 responses came from learners (52%); while 235 responses were from the public and private employer sector (9%).

The lists of generic competences were ranked according to the perceptions of the respondents of their importance. These rankings were then analysed to determine whether different views emerged depending on the source of the response e.g. employment sector or type of higher education institute.

Within the sample, almost half of the respondents are affiliated to a university (48%), more than a quarter are affiliated with an institute of technology (28%), and 15% are affiliated with an educational college (including pontifical colleges).

The responses were also analysed according to the disciplinary background of the respondent. Half of the respondents are involved in the Humanities and Social Sciences, while close to a third are involved in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, and an eighth of the total respondents associated with medical and Health sciences.

The lists of generic competences were ranked in relation to perceptions of importance and the rankings were then interrogated according to whether differences emerged depending on type of employment sector, disciplinary background, or type of higher education institute.

Key findings

The NAIRTL survey asked staff and students in 38 Higher Education Institutes and employers to rank three categories of competences as to which they consider to be the most important for graduate students to be equipped with.

The responses were filtered according to response source (academic responses versus private and public sector or University versus Institute of Technology) and the disciplinary background (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths versus Humanities and Social Sciences).

Section 1: Knowledge, understanding & application

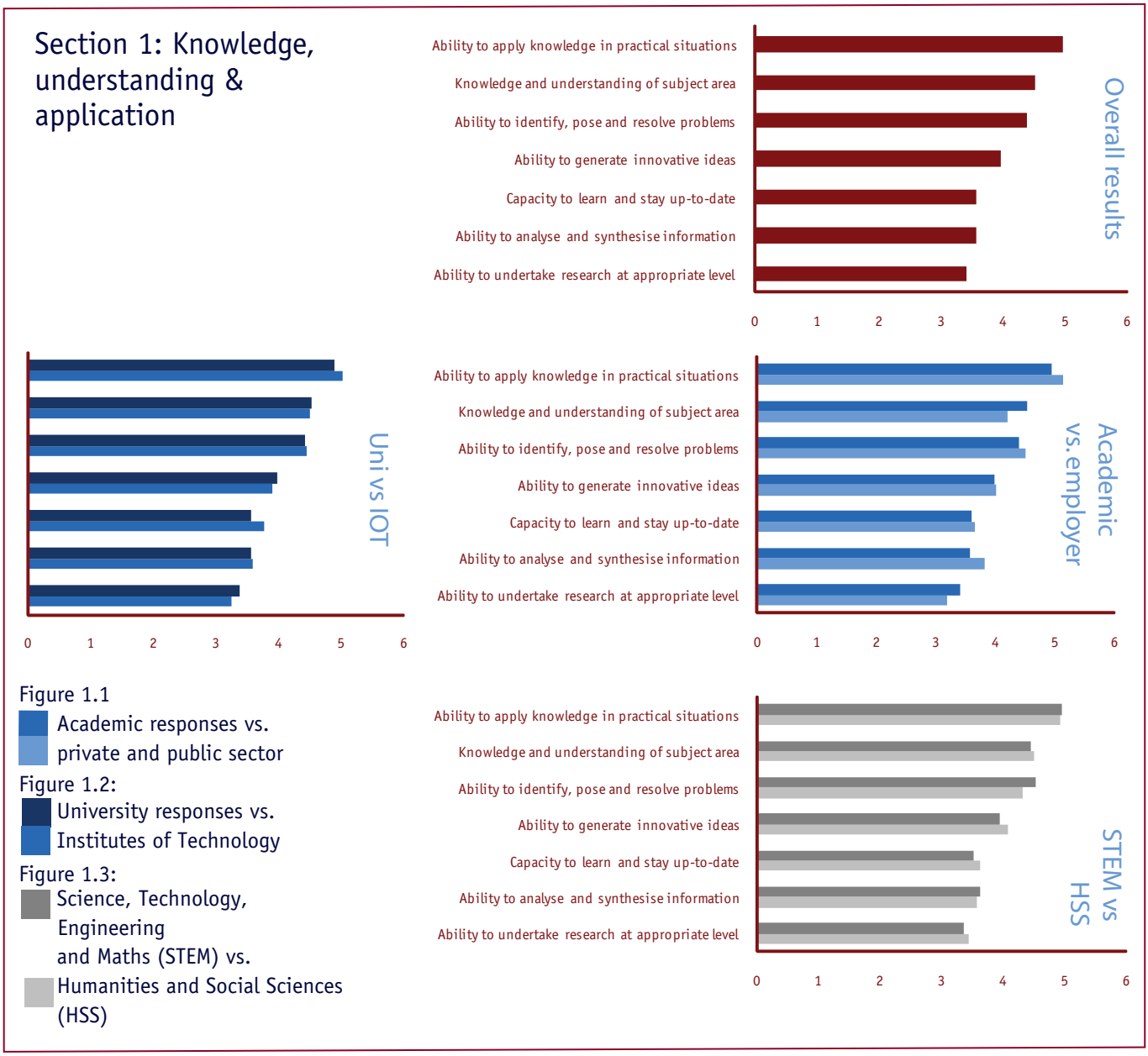
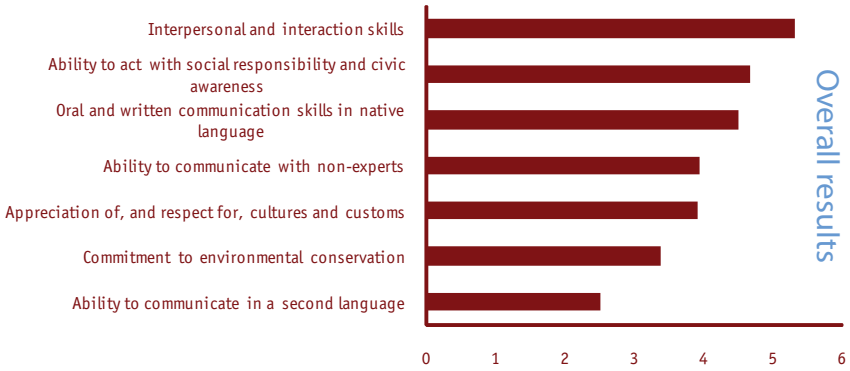


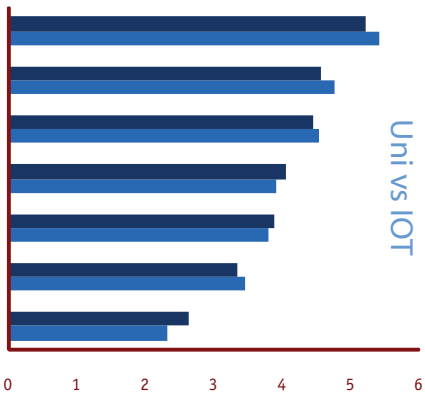
Figure 1.1
Academic responses vs. private and public sector

Figure 1.2:
University responses vs. Institutes of Technology

Figure 1.3:
Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) vs. Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS)

Section 2: Communication, cultural awareness & social responsibility





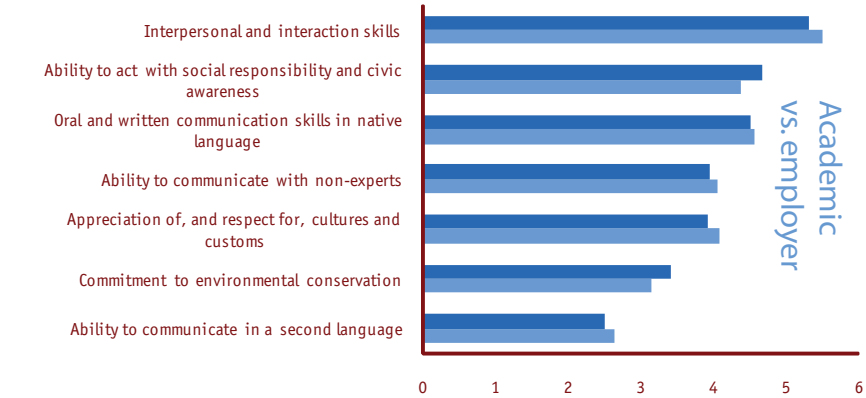
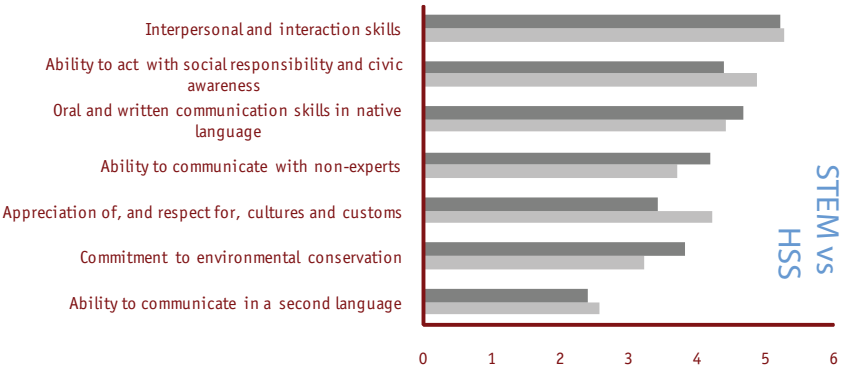


Figure 2.1
Academic responses vs. private and public sector

Figure 2.2:
University responses vs. Institutes of Technology

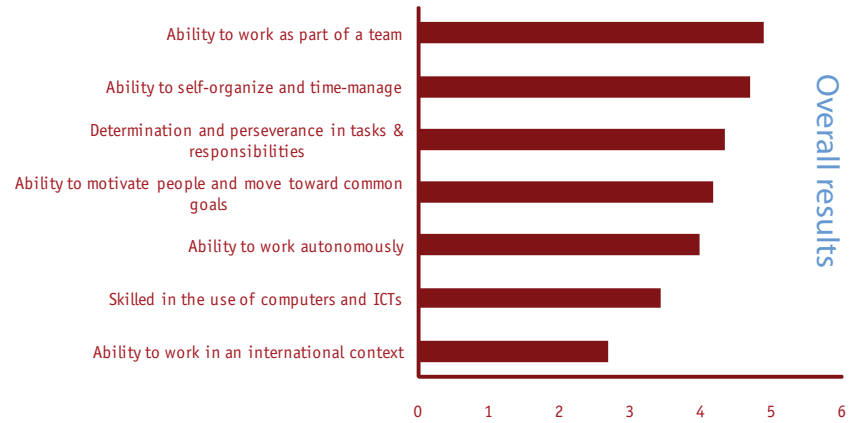
Figure 2.3:
Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) vs. Humanities and Social Sciences

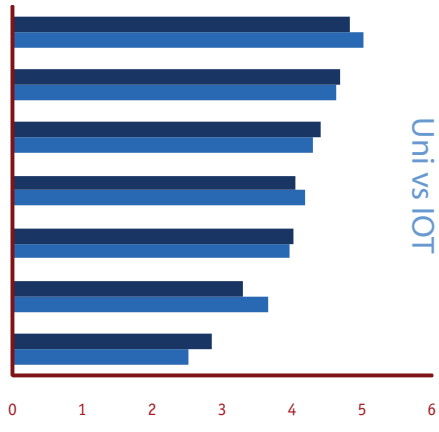


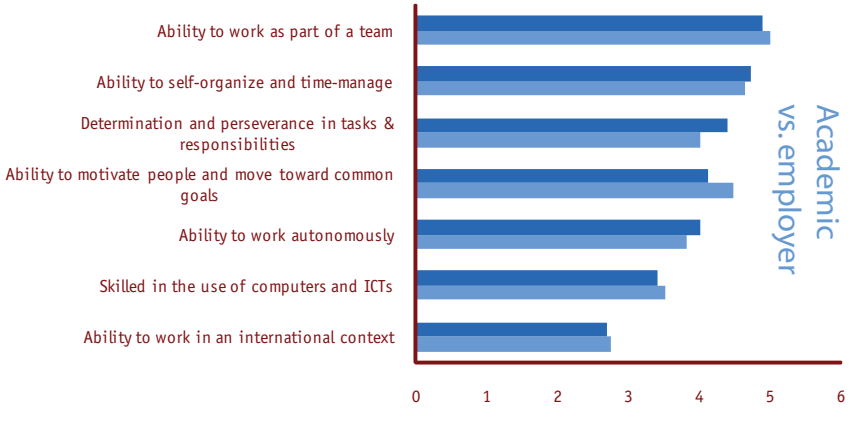
Section 3: Skill set

Figure 3.1
Academic responses vs. private and public sector

Figure 3.2:
University responses vs. Institutes of Technology

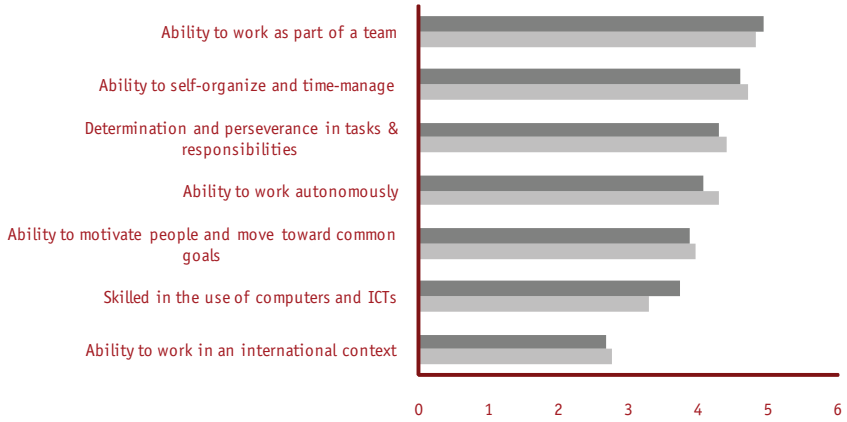




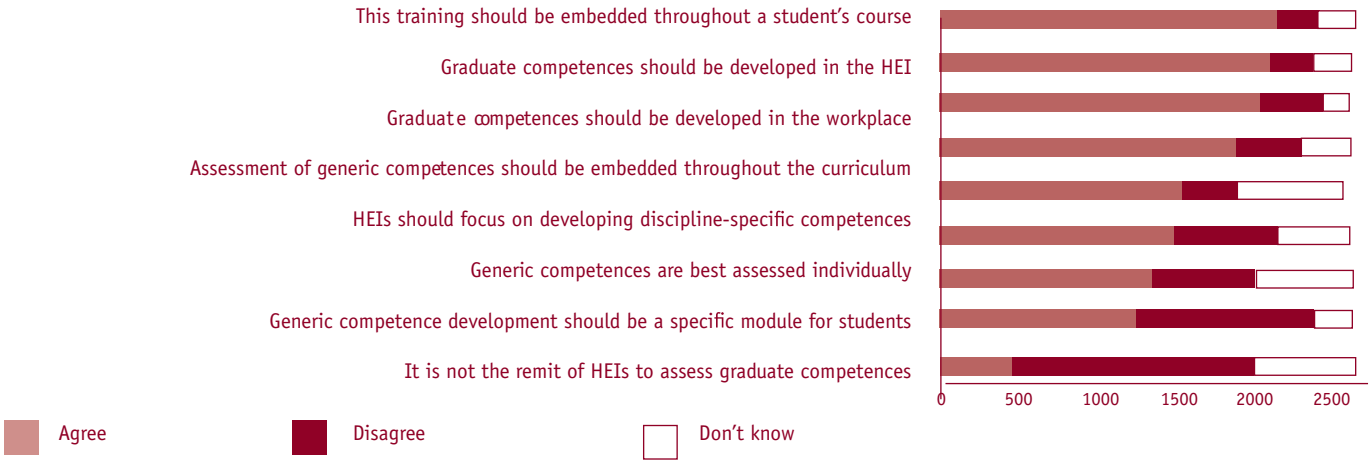


Section 3: Skill set continued

Figure 3.3:
Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) vs.
Humanities and Social Sciences



Section 4: Strategies for the development of student competences



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Download report from: http://www.nairtl.ie/competences

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Sample breakdown

All Hallows College	19	Mater Dei Institute of Education	25
Athlone Institute of Technology	35	Milltown Institute	5
Carlow College	10	National College of Art and Design	25
C of I College of Education	3	National College of Ireland	68
Coláiste Mhuire Marino	2	NUI Galway	62
Cork Institute of Technology	30	NUI Maynooth	60
Dublin City University	272	RCSI	3
Dublin Institute of Technology	105	Shannon Coll. of Hotel Management	2
Dundalk Institute of Technology	17	St. Angela's College, Sligo	37
Dún Laoghaire IADT	28	St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra	121
Froebel College of Education	13	St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (Pontifical Uni.)	4
Galway–Mayo IT	17	St. Patrick's College, Thurles	21
ITT, Blanchardstown	80	Tipperary Institute	44
ITT, Carlow	2	University College Cork	96
ITT, Sligo	193	University College Dublin	658
ITT, Tallaght	23	University of Dublin, Trinity College	54
ITT, Tralee	56	University of Limerick	75
Letterkenny IT	49	Waterford Institute of Technology	73
Limerick IT	51		
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	22		