

Widening Access and Employability

What is the Employability Skills Gap and does it impact Progression?

Can you boost Progression by using Assessment to drive Engagement?

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Who are upReach?

A social mobility charity founded in 2012 to support undergraduates from less advantaged backgrounds into professional graduate employment.

- *We work in partnership to create the conditions for undergraduates from less-advantaged backgrounds to access and sustain top graduate jobs.*
- *After starting with a cohort of **39** students in 2012, our Rise and Aim programmes currently support over **800 students**, with plans to grow to **2,000** by 2020-21.*
- *upReach provides an **intensive programme** of careers support including exclusive Insight Days, Mentoring, Work Experience and Internships with partner employers, skills workshops, comprehensive application support and one-to-one support.*

What do we mean by Employability?

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employability

noun [U] • UK  /ɪmˌplɔɪˈbɪləti/ US  HR

★ the skills and abilities that allow you to be employed:

Employability skills have been **defined** as: "A set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and to be successful in their chosen occupations".
Peter Knight & Mantz Yorke (HEFCE/DfES ESECT group)

Employability Skills - University of Kent

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/skillsintro.htm>



Graduate Employability Framework (GEF)

Hard to reach a consensus:

- Employers value different factors
- Different names for the same thing

upReach created the GEF in 2015 in partnership with top graduate employers including McKinsey.

- GEF = Top 10 factors that typical graduate employers look for.
- Revised in 2017 following consultation with Advisory Board



Baseline Assessment using the GEF

All university students have free access to ***getEmployable.org***:

- Free Baseline Assessment, called a Personal Employability Report (PER), with a link to their Careers Service

upReach Associates:

- Use their Baseline Assessment to plan which career-related activities they need to engage in.





How employable are you?

In just 10 minutes, find out your Employability Score and what you need to focus on to secure a top job.



Find out more

In collaboration with leading graduate employers, we have built the Graduate Employability Framework (GEF).



What is a PER?

The free Personal Employability Report (PER) includes your Score, Strengths and Development Priorities.

The average student is 71% employable. How do you compare?

In collaboration with leading graduate employers, we have developed a tool to help you better understand your strengths and development needs, helping you increase your chances of securing that dream job.

Our Graduate Employability Framework sets out ten core strengths that prestigious employers look for in potential hires.

The getEmployable survey assesses you against each of these areas - from resilience and teamwork to work experience and leadership, assigning a level from 1 to 5 for each. [Complete the 10 minute survey now!](#)

I'm 25%
How about
you?



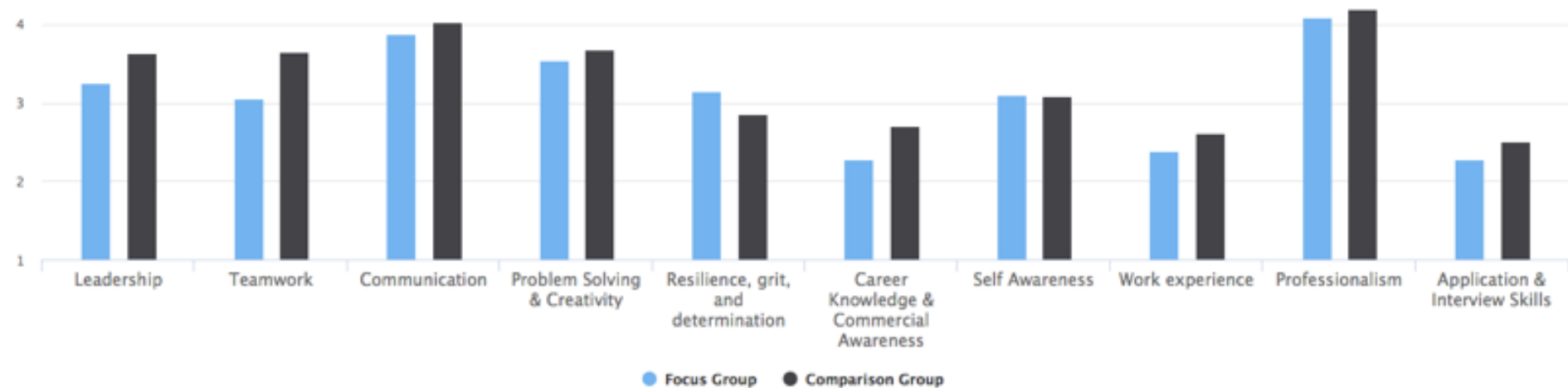
What factors influence Baseline Employability?

Evidence for the Employability Skills Gap

- Over 2,000 students have so far completed an Assessment using *getEmployable*
- Disadvantaged students typically are “less employable”
 - Those from private schools have higher scores for work experience, career knowledge, leadership and teamwork, than those from state schools (but less self awareness!)
 - Similar gaps exist between those from higher performing state schools (deciles 9-10 for GCSE results) to those from lower performing state schools (deciles 1-2)
 - Focusing on answers to individual questions helps to explain the gaps

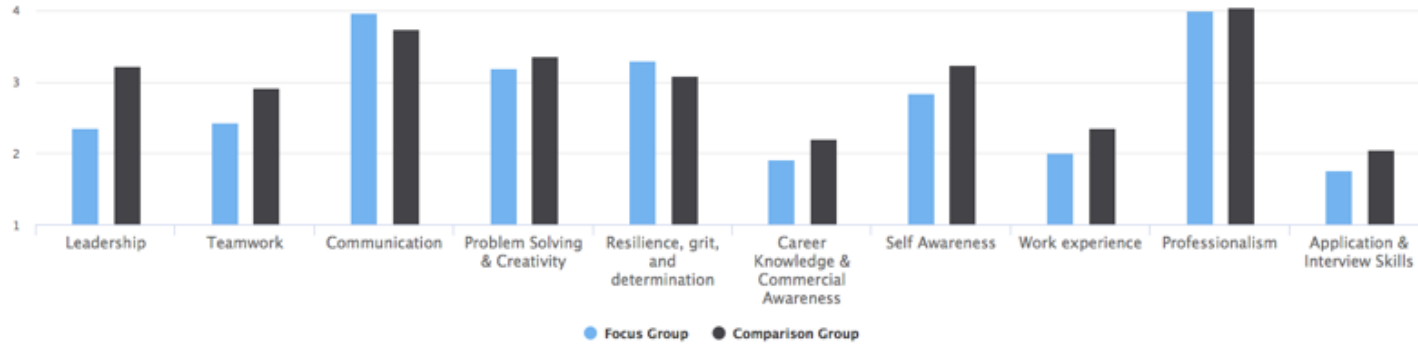
Evidence for the Employability Skills Gap

Comparing the employability of students from private schools to state schools

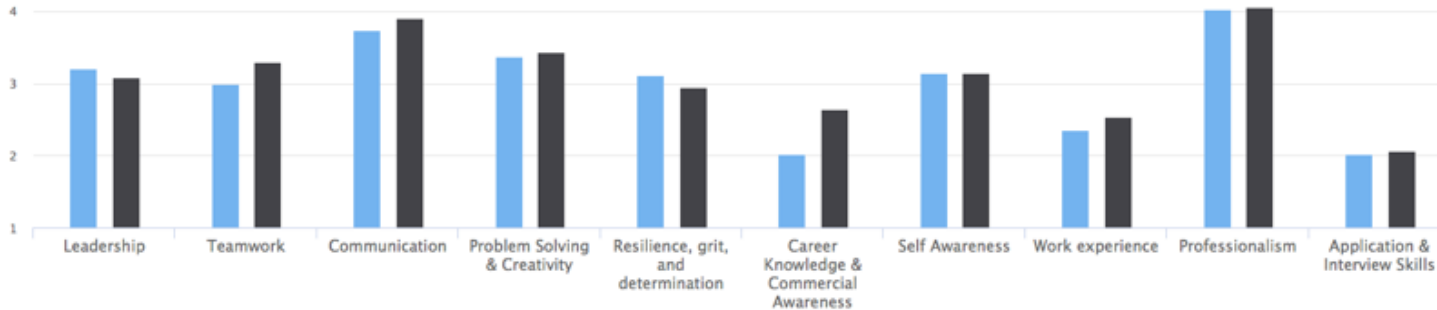


Evidence for the Employability Skills Gap

Bottom quintile state schools vs top quintile state schools



Low income households vs high income households



Evidence for the Employability Skills Gap

- *Have you been able to secure any useful work experience through your connections?'*

	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM
My family have helped me secure useful work experience.	11%	28%
Friends of my family have helped me secure useful work experience.	5%	17%
The family of some of my friends at school have helped me secure useful work experience.	3%	5%
I used my own initiative to secure useful work experience, without help from school, family or friends.	51%	45%
The most useful work experience I got was secured through school.	18%	12%
None of these.	29%	21%

Evidence for the Employability Skills Gap

- Focus on upReach eligibility:

	Have you ever had work experience in a professional environment - for example, in an office, solicitors or accountants?		Have you ever had any work experience, shadowing or Insight days in a professional setting for a firm with a Graduate Scheme?		Have you ever had any full-time paid work such as an internship or placement at a professional firm such as a bank, consulting, accountancy or law firm?	
	Eligible	Ineligible	Eligible	Ineligible	Eligible	Ineligible
None	32%	25%	68%	70%	82%	71%
Over 2 months	12%	26%	2%	8%	6%)	18%

Does the Employability Skills Gap close at University?

Evidence for the Progression Gap

- TEF data show a difference in graduate outcomes for those from disadvantaged backgrounds at most universities
- Individual universities show larger differences between POLAR3 Q1 and Q5.

How can Universities close the Progression Gap

- Additional support to close the gap before it drives outcomes?

How can universities evidence the impact of interventions?

- Compare...
 - Outputs, (e.g. participation in mentoring or a skills workshop)
 - Outcomes, (e.g. progression to graduate jobs, average salary)
 - **AND** Changes in Employability

Between a Control Group - and those completing the intervention

- Easy in principle, harder in practice... e.g. incomplete samples, self-selection bias