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Preparing students' entry into the business world. The case of European University Cyprus

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary - Background Investigation

Imagine yourself in the driver's seat, of a personnel director who has to pick the best candidate for the job. The selection has been narrowed down to two well qualified candidates. Helen, a 3.0 graduate with leadership experience in various campus organizations, a few volunteer experiences demonstrating her commitment to others, a semester of international education in England, a number of related summer jobs, a campus job doing research for a professor and a semester internship in the field in which she desires to work in the future. George, on the other hand is a 3.5 graduate with the same major but with no other qualifications. Who would you choose?

Marlen Philippou (Politis 2006, p.79), coordinator of Smart Options (University Counselors) highlights that companies are currently looking for applicants with something beyond just an excellent academic record. *"Education today is extended not only to excellent academic records but also to candidates who possess skills with which they can really make a difference"*. As she further supports, *"skills like these can be the ticket in the market place"*.

Due to fierce competition, companies nowadays seek candidates with certain skills and competencies, basically people who can make a difference. As Marlen Philippou suggests, students with excellent academic records abound today, but those who can truly make the difference are only a few. *"At college, students are supposed to learn how to rely on themselves to solve any kind of problem, to handle pressure and additionally, to meet their deadlines. Students who really develop skills*

like these can be truly competitive candidates for companies today." At the end of the day a student must graduate with not only a degree but also the valuable skills and competencies sought by firms.

A recent article (Anon, 2003) states that employers generally want as many guarantees as possible that they are hiring a person who can do the job. Of course no employer can get a guarantee as to whether a newcomer can actually do the job, and this is why organizations usually give new employees a probationary period of 6 months to a year to ensure that they are suitable. The best assurance, however, is to hire people with a track record of relevant and practical experiences, someone who has learned and been tested on the job competencies. In many situations, a person with a lower grade point average but with more experience will win out over a candidate with a higher one. If it is obvious that people with experience are more employable, then why doesn't everyone obtain as much experience as possible? There is probably not a simple answer to this question. For some students, it is due to a lack of awareness or encouragement while for others it is the absence of defined goals or the motivation to seek out these experiences. Most students live busy, complicated lives, and the path of least resistance, or perhaps procrastination, leads some to return to previous jobs or accept ones they haven't spent much time and effort obtaining. On the contrary, a different job would pay more, especially once a candidate has salable skills.

In his journal Wilson (2006, p.33) reveals that as the Fall recruiting season of 2006 and 2007 was upon them, it appeared that the market would favor graduates who were properly prepared to enter their chosen professions. Based on all indications, the high demand for entry-level talent at the time required a pro-active approach on the employers' part in order for them to meet hiring targets both quantitatively and

qualitatively. To take a closer look at what employers were looking for and how students should optimize their opportunities, Wilson's team have asked a selected group of employers to give input on four key points:

1. Specific skills, traits, and qualities they look for in on-campus interviews.

2. Advice on how students should prepare for on-campus interviews.

3. The challenges or obstacles employers face in reaching their on-campus recruitment goal.

4. Their individual comments and observations to help students prepare to enter the job market.

According to Wilson (2006, p.33), it generally appeared that most organizations did not specifically look for very high GPAs but for candidates who demonstrated strong character traits, particularly integrity, leadership, flexibility and a strong work ethic. They also seek applicants who had business acumen and specific skills to multi-task, problem-solve and complete projects. Interviews with employers who typically engage in recruiting reveal that firms and organizations usually look for qualities such as integrity, honesty and reliability; they seek employees who show responsibility as well as the ability to work in teams. These traits, though rare to find in candidates, make them more productive and efficient within the work place. It stands to reason that this is true for all organizations in every country.

A related research project was carried out by the UK government's Library and Information Commission with the results published in the report "Skills and knowledge management". The project explored the roles and skills required for the effective implementation of *knowledge*

management and involved in-depth case studies, expert interviews and consultation with 500 organizations actively involved in implementing knowledge management initiatives. Based on a presentation given at the Special Libraries Association annual conference in Philadelphia on the subject, Oxbrow (2000) explains that knowledge is in people's heads and managing it is an impossible task. What is possible, and what knowledge management embodies, ***is stimulating and managing an environment in which knowledge is created, shared, harnessed and used for the benefit of the organization, its people and its customers***. If an organization buys into the importance of creating such an environment, then it must support the new roles and skills required within the organization to enable success.

Sandy Leitch, a former chief executive of Zurich Financial Services and Chairman of the National Employment Panel, was appointed by the government to lead an independent review of skills. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Education and Skills commissioned the Leitch Review to identify the UK's optimal skills mix in 2020 to maximize economic growth, productivity, and social justice as well as to consider the policy implications of achieving the level of change required. Aiming to reflect the views of employers, providers and learners, the review received feedback from different key stakeholders, such as government departments, agencies and education and training providers with permits to improve UK's skills, academia and business. The Review (2006, p1) argues that the world continues to change and the global environment will become even harsher in the near future. By the year 2020, the UK's comparative position will not improve significantly, despite the substantial investment and the plans already in place. The UK must become a world leader in skills so that it creates wealth and reduces social deprivation. The review

recommends a radical change across the skills spectrum and even though the study focuses on adults, it suggests that action be taken for14-19 year olds.

The Review (2006, p13) notes that history tells us that no one can predict with any accuracy future occupational needs but that skill demands will increase at every single level. Better skills will be needed at higher levels to drive leadership, management and innovation, as these are key drives of productivity growth. Intermediate skills will need to be improved to implement investment and innovation and basic skills will be essential for people to be able to adapt to change. People lacking basic skills will be most at risk of exclusion in a global economy.

Other thinkers of the past have concentrated on how skills should be improved. Pauk (1997) notes that in order to improve skills and competences, we should invest time, manage stress, learn to concentrate, learn responsibility and organize ourselves. Additionally, we must improve our self-esteem and even our sleep, be time-efficient, develop good eating habits, get some exercise, and learn to relax sometimes; in short, we have to take control of our lives.

1.2 <u>Statement of the problem</u>

An organization of strong commitment to higher education and excellence in teaching, research and service, EUC transitioned from a private college to a university in 2007. According to the European University Bulletin (2008-09, p.8), the educational purpose of the university is to create an academic and social environment which challenges, guides and supports students to develop and achieve their personal and professional goals. Students are pressed to develop as independent, effective, active, rational and creative thinkers who

appreciate and respect social, moral and ethical values. Over the years, the university has introduced many ways to develop its teaching methods, to pass students skills and competencies in the most efficient manner. For instance, according to the University's Bulletin (2008-09, p.9), its synergy with Laureate International Universities, a foreign organization with shares in universities worldwide, further enlarged and engaged the context of the new university structure. In other words, this affiliation gave students the opportunity for further exploration of extended knowledge and courses that are not available in Cyprus. Furthermore, the university has raised its standards by adding modern, developed auditoriums and state of the art computing, library and athletic facilities. Employing the latest technology, the university has introduced new labs, like the Focus Group Lab and the Exercise Physiology Center.

To this end, the academic programs of the University are characterized by an integrated general education curriculum with strong academic and career concentrations. Additionally, the graduate programs offer students the opportunity to extend and deepen knowledge of specialized disciplines and secure wider training for enhanced occupational competency. This previously mentioned development had as a consequence the dramatic increase in student numbers.

The University's Bulleting (2008-09, p9) notes that the university understands its special role as an intellectual and social resource. In this role, the University through its faculty, students, facilities, and services, assumes major responsibility for the enrichment of the quality of the society and the economic development of the country.

To raise the value of skills and competencies, practitioners' apparent quality and satisfaction must be measured but most importantly managed. However, first a question springs to mind: "What exactly do we mean when we refer to skills and competencies? Are these the specific

abilities that students can gain only through interaction, trial and error or problem solving? And how can we pass skills like these onto students? Based on this, the project under investigation was a necessity.

The aim of the project is to investigate the requirements of the business sector in light of the skills and competencies students should have in order to be recruited. In addition, the project aims to identify methods and/or techniques that European University Cyprus can utilize in order to ensure the even more effective and efficient indroduction of these skills and competencies to students. Finally, the project proposes ways to offer, practical experience prior to students' graduation and boost their chances of employment.

More specifically, the "Problem" investigated involves the review of the various business sectors in Cyprus in addition to the business programs offered at EUC. In this fashion, the study intends to measure the importance of the skills and competencies sought by the business world, revealing ways through which students can develop such skills. Furthermore, the study aims to identify and recommend specific, practical, non-academic but effective methods so that students obtain the best possible applied knowledge, more practically prepared for entering the workplace.

In general the objectives of the study are:

- Explore and define skills, competencies and practical experience, as seen through the international literature.

- Evaluate the importance of the above skills and competencies.
- Identify the most important skills and competencies for a successful career in the business world.

- Measure the degree of students' possession of the above skills and competencies

- Identify and validate the gap that exists between what the business world is looking for and what students perceive they posses in terms of skills and competencies.

- Identify and recommend specific methods that Universities can utilize to minimize that gab.

1.3 <u>Importance of the Work</u>

1.3.1 <u>Target Audience</u>

In line with the objectives set, this project is expected to have a significant impact upon the university and to have value to others.

The project targets European University students, managers and directors of different organizations in the market, from whom views and opinions were derived. The audience, though, to which the findings of the project will be of value is first the ***university*** itself*,* the actual **business world** (all companies and organizations that make up the Cyprus labor force); both future and existing ***students*** and their *families* and finally all the players in the Cyprus ***economy*** as well. Results can be of value to other tertiary institutions in Cyprus, in the case of course that those results are communicated to these institutions. Since the project targets European University alone, the value that the results will have on other institutions will not be discussed.

The usefulness of the project on each of these parties has already begun to be crucial, particularly at the classroom level.

1.3.2 <u>Usefulness on the target audience</u>

If we consider the fact that a significant number of students who receive an education use it to get into business, then we simply conclude that business and education are interlinked. A few thousand students graduate each year from universities and they need to find jobs. Sometimes, however, they find themselves lacking important *skills and competencies* just because of the inefficiency of education programs to provide them with such skills. According to Icenogle et al (1997), "Recently, business schools have been criticized for failing to provide students with the competencies and skills required in the new workplace.

Research indicates that management faculty is not utilizing tools like these to develop the management curriculum. In general, schools are failing to help students develop needed competencies and skills, hence a number of problems exist".   The fact that the business world is currently quite different than it used to be and students today are shrewder and more demanding, with different needs and wants than in the past renders the role of schools as important as ever. In line of this, to be successful, educational institutions must aim to provide students with the proper skills and experience that will place them in the best possible position and prepare them for a smooth entry into today's workplace.

The key to success is creating but also maintaining a competitive advantage over rivals. The transformation of former Cyprus College to a University resulted in a gradual increase in students attending the University. Based on results I got from the University's Department of Planning, in Fall 2009, around 500 more students were registered and based on the department's indications this is expected to increase further. With the increase of students willing to receive a higher education and the increase of students attending European University Cyprus in the following years, I am confident that the proposed work will prove extremely useful, if not vital, for the management of the **university**. The results will be used to understand the factors that students consider important, to identify methods that can give a student more practical experience as well as their significance, and also to develop students with the abilities to effectively communicate, solve problems, work in groups and adjust to a variety of circumstances. The findings can be applied to better prepare students for the business world and thus guide the future planning of the university. The university career services will then keep track of how well its graduates perform in the market by noting how many are recruited each year and comparing this number to those of previous years. This will give an indication as to

whether the university has gained a noticeable change in graduate hirees and whether it keeps a competitive advantage over other institutions or not.

Furthermore, the findings of this project will be extremely useful for **organizations** and at the end of the day, for the **business world** as well. If European University Cyprus is able to employ the findings in its planning process and thus more able to create "battle-ready" students in the workforce, the results on the **business world** will be imperative. Organizations spend a lot of money for not only hiring but also training employees. From personal experience, I can say that employees needs an average of three years to completely learn a job and to adjust to the new environment; therefore, once hired they become a liability for that company. In light of this, a new employee is getting paid without really producing or contributing much, especially during the first year of employment. The company, on the other hand, sees that employee as a future investment, expecting that at some point the hiree will start paying off. I am confident that the outcome of this project will be of vital interest in the **business world** since companies will be in a position to hire employees poised to produce in a shorter period of time, hence saving these companies a great deal of money and ensuring more productivity. As the Leitch Review of skills (2006, pp 8) states, productivity is increasingly driven by skills. The ability of firms to succeed in the face of the growing competition depends highly on the skilled labor force they can employ. Skilled workers are better able to adapt to new technologies and take advantage of opportunities. A higher level of skills drives innovation and improves leadership and management.

Furthermore, the review of skills underscores the fact that the significant acceleration in productivity growth will give organizations a much more efficient workforce. Everyone in the

company's gaining a good platform of basic and employability skills will expand the pool of potential workers that businesses can choose from. Amplifying the availability of training and skilled workers will also help businesses to manage the challenge of globalization and technological change, enhancing their flexibility. A more highly-skilled labor force will enable businesses to innovate further, taking advantage of new technologies and ways of working in order to improve productivity and capture new markets. Without this, businesses will become increasingly vulnerable to global competition, finding it difficult to take advantage of new markets and increasingly difficult to retain share in their current market.

In light of this, it is clear that the study undertaken will positively impact the whole **economy** in general. It will result in a healthier economy with figures like the GDP increasing and the unemployment rate and public deficit decreasing. Studies conducted in the UK show that skills are a key determinant of employment. More specifically less than one half of the people with no qualifications are employed, compared to nearly 90 percent of those with graduate level qualifications.

Additionally, I would say that the greatest usefulness will be on **students** both future and existing, as well as on their **families**. As already mentioned, students will possess extremely valuable skills; hence, they will feel very confident, more comfortable and extremely motivated to adjust and compete in any kind of working environment. Evidently, they will have the option not only to help their organizations be more productive in a shorter period of time, but they will also be in a position to negotiate higher salaries, more benefits and better working conditions, something that will give them a higher leverage. Furthermore, their families will finally see their children recoup the high investment of their education, something that I strongly believe is not the case today.

2 <u>LITERATURE REVIEW</u>

2.1 <u>Definition of skills and competencies</u>

"<u>Skill</u> is the practised application of a topic, technique or concept. Skill levels are defined within a number of standards and are typically assessed through National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) type assessments. <u>Competence</u> is a combination of knowledge, skill, understanding, ability, application, behaviour, aptitude, attitude and performance" (office of government commerce, p.3).

Gammelgaard and Larson (2001) argue that <u>skills</u> cover general, context independent knowledge; <u>competencies</u>, on the other hand, refer to experience based and context dependent knowledge. Taught in most classes, skills are general tools and rules which are vital for the practitioner. However, to reach a competence level, practitioners acquire context dependent knowledge through organizational experience. Gammelgaard and Larson's article (2001 cited Witt 1999) suggests that workers must remain on the job to become competent. The same article (cited Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986) argues that a competent practitioner makes decisions based upon rules and analysis, but with organizational experience can depart from rule-based analysis and make synchronic, intuitive and holistic decisions. The same document (cited Handheld and Nichols 1999) highlights the importance of skills and suggests that supply chain managers, for example, need strong technological and/or functional knowledge, good people skills and common sense.

Sandy Leitch goes a step further. In her Review of skills (2006, p.6) she contends that skills are capabilities and expertise in a particular occupation or activity. As she argues, there are a large number of different types of

skills and they can be split into a number of different categories. Basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, and generic skills, such as team working and communication, are applicable in most jobs. Specific skills tend to be less transferable between occupations. Most occupations use a mix of different types of skills and within each skill there are different levels of ability.

The idea that organizations give variant value to different skills may be true, or the idea that different departments within the same company might also require different qualities might again be true. It may be asserted, for example, that an advertising executive should mostly possess good communication skills, whereas a research analyst should have very good arithmetic skills.

Other practitioners, like Peterson (1997), underscore the importance of communication skills, arguing that it is one of the most critical skills. He posits that a survey with 253 personnel interviewers in Midwestern American businesses revealed that all respondents identified communication skills as having a major effect on hiring decisions. 90% indicated that communication skills are essential for success, yet only 60% reported that applicants were prepared with effective communication skills in job interviews.

In 2000, the U.S Department of Labor and Education formed the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) to study the kind of competencies and skills that workers must have to succeed in today's workplace.

Important to mention here is that the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Model and the Government of Social Research (GSR) Handbook competencies that follow laid the groundwork on which subsequent research was conducted in this project. Based on these two, an *index* was originally created consisting of all possible skills,

competencies or personal qualities that exist. This index then formed the basis for the in-depth employer interviews conducted, with employers indicating which of these skills they consider vital when recruiting a candidate. As described in the Research Design section, based on employers' indication of which skills and competences are deemed important, two *indexes* (A-Level and B-Level Skills) were created. The *A-Level Skill Index* including 29 different skills, competencies and personal qualities was then explored in the focus group section and assessed in the survey section. The SCANS Model and the GSR Handbook competencies, are outlined in Appendix 1.

According to Zikmund (2003), today research has come to be an extremely important part of the business field. Marketing research can fulfil marketing managers' and employees' need for knowledge of the current situation and helps them predict how the market will respond to their decisions. The emphasis of marketing research is to shift decision-making from risky intuitive decisions to ones based on systematic and objective investigations. Almost any organization at some point undergoes some kind of research. Furthermore, nearly every employee at some point is required to research a topic, even in a secondary form. Candidates today should be aware of what research is and be able to go through its basic steps.

They do not have to know how to design questionnaires or how to conduct focus groups, but they should know how to define a problem and set objectives, a simple requirement necessary for most areas of work. Further, they should know how to conduct a literature review and of course interpret a basic set of numbers. These are part of every employee's duties. In line with this, important is to include in this paper the GSR handbook outlined in Appendix 1. The Government Social Research handbook (2007, p.5) highlights that its purpose is to clarify and define a comprehensive set of competencies relevant to the

broad spectrum of research work. As the handbook states, Government Social Researchers have a wide range of responsibilities, including:

- Designing research

- Analysis of large data sets

- Designing interviews

- Managing research

- Literature reviews

- Drawing together an evidence base, etc.

The competencies are described in terms of behaviors so that they can be used for recruiting, promoting, appraising and developing Government of Social Research members. However, as the Government of Social Research (GSR) Handbook mentions, it is important not to lose sight of the core technical skills which underpin the competencies and distinguish Social Researchers from the other analytical professions. As they appear in Appendix, the handbook of Government Social Research defines nine competencies in all.

The above two models outline all possible skills, competencies and personal qualities. It is impossible for a candidate to possess all these skills but a university's goal should be to make these skills at least known to students and try to transfer as many as possible to them. Sometimes students lack knowledge of possibilities. Merely pointing these out might be enough to urge pupils to pay attention, motivating them to mastery. Additionally, since researchers have made known this information, it is every practitioner's job to find ways to pass it on to

students. The problem, however, lies in the difficulty of finding ways to effectively teach students all the above skills.

> "Universities abroad have, consequently, incorporated business communication into their curricula, though in widely divergent ways--workshops, curriculum integration, competency testing, and full-fledged courses. These approaches have focused largely, if not wholly, on skills development. Despite such instruction, business graduates frequently lack preparation for the communication challenges they face and management educators continue to wrestle with questions such as "*What should we teach?*" (Reinsch and Shelby 1997, p. 1).

Yeung et al. (2002), for example, propose in their study that students need to learn business ethics and values to cope with the management decision-making process as well as to deal with situations arising in internal and external markets. They assert that schools, colleges and universities should give priority to the teaching of "business ethics" as it impacts on a student's moral development and future career in the industry. Schools have already started to pay attention to this area, gradually incorporating ethics into their curricula, especially in the U.S and England.

Ethics and decision making are important skills, but in our world we also have to deal with all functions of planning. Throughout this process, we must acknowledge all aspects of business management concepts and their importance. Some people believe that leadership is the key to success and dealing with personnel properly is imperative. Leadership as defined earlier is a skill through which a person *takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; it champions high standards; it gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.* A study by Ball (2007), shows that universities must teach this concept in all majors to shape successful personnel for the industry. As industrial managers continuously have to deal with the man-power of the industry, they should be aware of all personnel elements. They should be able to handle their requests or demands

properly as well as take maximum rewards from the investment and the satisfaction of the personnel.

2.2 The importance of Practical experience

Thomson and Cole (1997) have argued that to cope with the market and its growing competition, every individual has to possess necessary skills and competencies enabling them to handle the competition. Nowadays all international multinational companies are coming up with different strategies and dynamic projects to capture the market, thus forcing out small businesses. Therefore, individuals need strategic planning and skills to stay abreast of current market trends; this requires a proper university education with an emphasis on the development of practical market skills. Research proves that individuals need technical skills integrated with practical knowledge to strategically lead the market**.**

The University of Sydney (2005) supports the idea that student's getting work experience while at university is increasingly important and the options are endless. Students at Sydney University may decide to do vacation work, volunteer work at home or overseas, a work experience placement or part-time work during their schooling. In many degrees, internships and work placements are a course requirement. For example, the department of Chemical Engineering offers the top third-year students the chance to spend six months of their fourth year working full-time in an industrial placement. Students need to be aware of the importance of adding value to a degree with work experience. Practical experience in the workplace breaks the "no experience - can't get a job-no experience" cycle. It gives students a chance to find out how organizations work from the inside. Working alongside colleagues is an excellent way to find out about career options and develop a network in their chosen field, as stated in the university publication. Most

importantly, once students have done some work with an employer, there is always the possibility that they might be offered an ongoing position. Apart from opening doors for future employment, time spent in the workplace helps students put theory into practice, which can translate into seeing their marks improve. According to university representatives, students should have in mind that while financial payment is motivating, unpaid experience may be worth gold in the employment race. Anon (2003) also contends that there are many benefits in obtaining relevant and practical experiences. Perhaps the most salient benefit is that these experiences will assist students in increasing their motivation either to continue in the field or to search for other alternatives before they go too far in their present field of study. As the article states, benefits to obtaining practical experiences abound, helping students:

- gain a better sense of self-esteem and independence
- develop new dimensions of their personalities
- become more interesting
- improve interpersonal, written and oral communication skills
- gain an appreciation for working with individuals from diverse cultures
- understand and practice ethical behaviour
- gain supervisory/leadership/teamwork skills
- develop new friendships
- enhance self-management skills
- obtain work related, transferable skills
- develop conflict resolution skills
- gain job search experience
- develop a professional network

Anon goes on to classify different ways through which a student can obtain practical experience as follows:

1. Part-time job in the field

Starting out at whatever level will provide a student good exposure to understand a specific work setting. A student will get the opportunity to speak with and learn about people in the field. It is easier to learn about daily routine, required skills, rewards and advantages and disadvantages when students are actually in the work place.

2. Volunteer work

There are excellent opportunities, especially in public service, education and health, to gain volunteer experience. Students will learn many of the same things they would from employment. It is an excellent opportunity to ask questions concerning job settings and duties. Employers look favourably on people who demonstrate professional development through public service.

3. Internships

Internships are generally on the job experience set up by employers in conjunction with educational institutions. They generally involve receiving academic credits. Some internships pay, but others do not. Not all internships have to be for credit. Students need to decide if receiving credits is in their best interest; it does cost money and requires completion of additional academic assignments and/or papers.

4. Summer Employment

Seek out relevant and practical experiences for the summer. Before students develop long-term family and job commitments, their summers provide them excellent opportunities to see the world. The main question they should be asking is: why not? With all of the excellent resources, including the Internet, the sky is the limit. Starting early and being creative in the search will pay off.

5. Job Shadow

Spend 2 or 3 days following someone around in an environment they may want to work. This can be excellent way to gain awareness of a field and explore the next step in their professional development. People generally enjoy sharing with others what they do; all students need to do is ask and be respectful and responsible.

6. Information Interviewing

International interviewing is much like shadowing, but it involves interviewing for a shorter period of time in order to get specific career information. Because the process is short, students can afford to set up many interviews in order to gain information, perspective and a larger network.

7. Join Professional Organizations

Many professional organizations have student chapters. Even if they do not have a student chapter, students may be able to join and develop an understanding of what is happening in the field.

8. Attend Relevant Conferences and Seminars

There are many organizations, agencies and private companies providing opportunities to gain employment, specific knowledge and skills. At times, the only way to obtain specific skills required by and employer is through such training. Obtaining such knowledge and skills can greatly impress an employer.

9. Take Course Electives to Compliment Your Career Goals

Making a decision to take a course related to a career area can be an excellent move. There are many courses that will not be required but are beneficial to take. Not only will students learn relevant information, but future employers will respect their efforts to go beyond the boundaries.

10. Participate in Study Abroad Programs

International travel and study will not only develop self-confidence and maturity, but these programs can be included on a resume. It is another example of something that makes students look different to employers.

11.Join Student Organizations and Clubs

Students can develop excellent skills by participating with and/ or leading other in campus groups. Just joining an organization to put on a resume is not enough. Students must be active and develop themselves professionally and personally.

12.Research Papers

Whenever possible, choose to research career opportunities while completing class assignments.

Another publication office of career services at Princeton University (2007) highlights the importance of the internship, one of the ways of getting practical experience. It defines an internship as a career-related experience, intended to expose students to a career field of interest while offering them the ability to acquire a professional background. It should be considered a learning initiative, but students are expected to be productive and add value to any organization they join. Internships may be paid or unpaid, for credit or not, and full-time or part-time. The length of internships may vary, from 8-10 weeks in the summer to an entire year.

The student methods for gaining practical experience will be discussed later and incorporated in the recommendation section.

2.3 <u>Human Capital and Productivity</u>

 Anon (2003) further states that, increasingly, the developed world has evolved into a service and information economy. In an information economy, people are the critical asset and in a service economy many more outputs are intangible, with as much as 80 per cent of a company's worth tied to its people. Access to financial capital is no longer a source of competitive advantage; competitiveness increasingly derives from know-how, or people's abilities, skills and competences.

People, the human capital asset, with the right profile and capability provide an advantage not easily replicated by competitors. At the same time, the labor force has also changed dramatically. Organization managers know they need people to deliver value in new and different ways, and that the people they depend on have evolved. For example, we see an aging, more diverse population, with more women entering the workforce, more dual-earner couples. However, as Anon notes, businesses still struggle with a general shortage of the skills required in a service and information economy.

As the Anon article highlights, the gap between a company's tangible assets and its stock market value is growing. For many businesses the tangible assets on the balance sheet represent a small part of their stock market valuation or the value to a potential acquirer. In most organizations, evaluation of human capital is non-existent. As the world has changed and human capital has become more critical to competitiveness, exposed are the limitations of traditional accounting practices in being able to identify the real value-adding components of an organization. According to Anon, the issue is that not knowing how to measure intangible assets impacts on investment: how do we know whether to invest, or how much? According to Samuelson and Nordhaus (1992)**, human capital** refers to the stock of productive skills and technical knowledge embodied in labor, something closely tied to one of the purposes of this study. Many early economic theories refer to it simply as human resources or labor supply, one of four elements of development, and consider it to be an important aspect that adds on productivity.

Samuelson and Nordhaus (1992) cite that the engine of economic progress must ride on four wheels: 1) Natural resource (land, minerals, climate); 2) Capital information (machines, factories, roads); 3) Technology (science, engineering, management and 4) **human resources/capital** (labor supply, education, motivation).

According to Samuelson and Nordhaus, countries should be concerned with the quality of their human resources and should emphasize programs, like control disease and improve health and nutrition with which they can make people happier and make them more productive workers. Other programs include the improvement of education, reduction of illiteracy and training of workers. Educated people, as Samuelson notes, become more productive workers, who can use capital more effectively, adopt new technologies and learn from their mistakes.

Samuelson and Nordhaus (1992) further highlight, that many economists believe that the quality of labor inputs, human capital, is the single most important catalyst to economic development. Therefore, understanding how and why people add value or not to an organization is an important and difficult management skill for the twenty-first century. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, human capital in the United States became considerably more valuable as the need for skilled labor came with newfound technological advancement. New techniques and processes required education beyond the norm of primary schooling, which then led to the creation of more formalized schooling across the nation. This early insight into the need for education allowed for a significant jump in US productivity and economic prosperity, when compared to other world leaders at the time.

A recent article (Anon 2003) states that 46% of Chief Executives say that finding good people and keeping them is their single biggest worry and most fear their employees are ill-equipped in terms of skills. The investment community is now probing human capital issues, yet most Chief Finance Officers say they have only a moderate understanding of the returns they get from what is often their largest single investment, people. Human capital, as the article states, is a critical contributor to

competitive advantage. The same document states that human capital is just one of an organization's intangible assets. It is basically all of the competencies and commitment of the people within an organization i.e. their skills, experience, potential and capacity. Other examples of intangible assets include brand, software, design, working methods and customer relationships. The human capital asset captures all the people-oriented capabilities necessary for a business to be successful.

Anon (2003) also supports that some people find the term Human Capital somewhat mechanistic, but human capital is not about describing people as economic units, rather it is a way of viewing people as critical contributors to an organization's success. Additionally, the SCANS model visualizes the increase in productivity in a company whose employees are, for example, good problem solvers. Imagine how much time and effort they will save their company by being able to recognize problems and implement an action plan to solve that problem. This then throws the spotlight on how businesses invest in their human capital asset in order to add value. For any commercial organization, the human contributor is an important component to factor in. A company's acknowledgement of how its human capital contributes to its business success would pave the way to more effective measurement and management of this resource.

Additionally, human capital management is a reciprocal relationship between supply and demand: employees, contractors and consultants invest their own human capital in business enterprises and the business enterprises need to manage the supplier. Any organization interested in its performance will naturally ask how well it is managing this asset to ensure maximum return on investment. In the same way, all employees, contractors, consultants and providers of human capital want to ensure they are getting the appropriate return on their own human capital, investing through salary, bonuses, benefits, and so on.

Given this background it is therefore crucial for European University as an educational institution to understand the merits that it can gain by managing future human capital, students. It is imperative to identify those methods that will better equip students with skills so that they become more productive.

2.4 <u>Impact on the economy</u>

As already mentioned, the UK business sector has long ago undergone an in-depth analysis on the matter, specifically aided by Sandy Leitch. According to the Leitch Review of skills (2006, p.3) there is a direct correlation between skills, productivity and employment.

The key drivers of productivity are five; these are competition, enterprise, innovation, investment and skills. As per the review (2006, p. 29), there is a direct and in-direct impact of skills on productivity. The increase of human capital in an organization or a country can be considered a direct driver on the impact while the overflow impact on the productivity of other workers and the encouragement for greater investment and innovation can be considered an indirect driver.

In reference to the UK example described in the review (2006, p.1), people are a country's natural resource with vast opportunity for development. Once these skills are unlocked, a country's workforce will have higher productivity, creating a wealth and social justice. Without these, the UK would have condemned itself to a lingering decline in competitiveness, diminishing economic growth and a bleaker future for everyone.

According to the Leitch Review of Skills, as the global ecomony evolves, change is unavoidable; thus, people should look for other ways to protect their jobs as the traditional old model is no longer

enough. Looking deeper, people should work on the basic platform of skills which will allow flexibility and the update of these skills in parallel with the economy's evolution and change.

According to the same study, characteristics such as innovation, leadership and management, led by a highly skilled workforce, offer businesses the competitive edge in the global economy. Ensuring that high skills are of world class quality and relevance to the economy is just as important as determining the quantity of people that should be qualified at these levels. The world class ambition requires increased engagement and investment from employers with higher education, to drive management, innovation and workforce development.

Furthermore, the Leitch Review of skills (2006, p. 8, p. 23, p.33) posits that skills and particularly qualifications, offer individuals the flexibility to advance as well as to change jobs and careers. In UK, the workforce has issues with job retention at basic entry levels as skilled workers are better able to adapt quickly and effectively to change; productivity is increasingly driven by skills. Business success in the face of competition is linked with the skilled force employed. A skilled workforce is better able to take advantage of opportunities and adopt to new technological advancements to drive innovation and improve leadership and management. For innovation to be effectively implemented, businesses must be able to draw on a flexible, skilled workforce.

The UK is positioned to respond to this challenge by taking advantage of all its strengths: an excellent higher education system where more people than ever are studying for degrees; many good initiatives on vocational training; an increasingly effective school system; and a strong record of improvement over the past decade.

According to Cyprus Republic Statistical Service, Cyprus, has been dependent on the agriculture and tourism sectors due to its geographic position; however, parties within have realized that one of its major strengths would be its ability to become a major service provider, especially in the educational system. In 2007, the Cyprus government made the major decision to advance four colleges into universities. It is, therefore, imperative for European University to realize the role that it has been assigned: To prepare students for the real marketplace and contribute significantly to the country's workforce development.

Mc Mahon in his book <u>Education and Development, Measuring the Social benefits</u> (2006, p. 6) notes that the contribution of education to the individual's welfare is a direct contribution of education to productivity and growth of economy via the development of a skilled workforce. Other indirect effects encourage higher rates of investment in physical capital and stronger export competitiveness with feedback effects on growth.

2.5 <u>Gross Domestic Product (GDP) impact</u>

Contributions to education and investments in human capital also have a positive impact on the gross domestic product (GDP). A region's gross **domestic product** is one of the ways for measuring the size of its economy. According to Samuelson and Nordhaus (1992), the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country is defined as the market value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given period of time. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita can also be seen as a proxy of labor **productivity**. As the productivity of the workers increases, employers must compete for them by paying higher wages. Conversely, if productivity is low, then wages must be low or the businesses will not be able to make a profit.

If employees possess more skills, this simply means that organizations will enjoy higher profits. As a consequence, employers will be able to give higher salaries so the gross domestic product (GDP) will increase. So, if the value of final goods is higher, this means that the value of a country is higher. Competitiveness also gives the ability of increase in the GDP. Increasing jobs from aboard creates wealth so salaries go up.

Furthermore, according to the Labour Survey that was conducted by the Statistical Service (2008), the unemployment rate is higher for young people aged 15-24 which accounted for 10.2% of the labour force of the same age group. Higher skills will increase the number of those with jobs and as a consequence the **unemployment** rate of these people will decrease.

The table below depicts the total gross domestic product (GDP) in 2008 and is also broken down by economic activity. The figures are based on numbers given from the statistical service of Cyprus (2008). The gross domestic product (GDP) for the year 2008 touched 16,934 million, with 70% of that coming primarily out of activities G-P, which to a large extend have to do with services. Additionally, in the fourth quarter of 2008 employed people reached 382,852 with 72.7% concentrated in the service sector.

TABLE 2.1

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AT CURRENT PRICES (€mn)								
Quarter/Year	Time Code	Gross Value Added by Industry						Gross Domestic Product
Code of Industries		A + B	C _ E	F	G _ I	J + K	L _ P	
year 2008	2008	312.1	1529.3	1405.0	4003.9	4119.0	3593.2	16934.0
first quarter		48.7	353.7	343.5	825.9	992.1	865.3	3918.9
second quarter		126.3	377.3	346.6	1070.1	1018.3	903.0	4332.1
third quarter		49.5	409.4	359.1	1137.3	1039.2	901.6	4396.4
fourth quarter		87.6	388.9	355.8	970.6	1069.5	923.2	4286.5

Source: http://www.pio.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf

TABLE 2.2 – Economic Activities

A	Agriculture, hunting and forestry
B	Fishing
C	Mining and quarrying
D	Manufacturing
E	Electricity, gas and water supply
F	Construction
G	Wholesale and retail trade
H	Hotels and restaurants
I	Transport, storage and communication
J	Financial intermediation
K	Real estate, renting and business activities
L	Public administration and defense
M	Education
N	Health and social work
O	Other community social and personal services
P	Private households with employed persons

As per the Leitch Review of skills (2006, p.31), with UK set as an example, almost 50% of those with no qualifications are at work while 90% of those with graduate level qualifications are employed, a clear indication that those people with particular skills are more likely to be at work than those without. It can be assumed that particular occupations, for instance security work, serve as stepping stones to further employment opportunities; this process would then become an important driver of employment in a changing economy. Along with helping people find their jobs, skills can be improved and

developed by sending employees to training courses, workshops, seminars, etc., giving them the chance to adapt to changes.

The Review of skills (2006, p. 9), states that skills are also a key driver of **fairness,** because the unequal access to skills contributes to relatively high rates of child poverty and income inequality. Looking closer, one observes a clear link between skills and wider social outcomes. Skills impact a person's financial capability significantly as better financial employment terms mean that a household can manage their family lifestyle better, allowing them time to dedicate to their children on homework assistance. Concluding, the review states that skills are key drivers to prosperity and fairness of people's lifestyle.

Furthermore, skills are also a driver to a healthy lifestyle as **health problems** (including depression and obesity) are more common among unskilled and low-income households. The skills impact on health directly and indirectly, the former with the sharing of information on how to improve health and indirectly by improving the income making a healthy lifestyle more affordable.

Another area skills affect people's lives according to the Leitch Review of skills (2006, p 37) is the effect on **crime**. By improving people's financial employment terms, you minimize crime, something that is extremely difficult to quantify. According to the Review, there is one study which asserts that a one percentage-point increase in the proportion of the working age population with a GCSE or equivalent qualifications reduces the crime rate, thus saving the country from £10 to 320 million per annum.

Moreover, there is an interim report introduced in this review entitled "Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) model". This model was developed to quantify some of these benefits. The results show that by helping people with low skills improve them, the society significantly reduces income inequality and child poverty while it was difficult to

quantify the wider benefits of skills, such as improved health and reduced crime. This model has shown that with employers investing in people with intermediate and high skills, it helps in delivering the expected results – large productivity benefits.

The Review had used the "Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) model" to analyze the scale of the potential impacts of achieving the world class skills base. If quantified, this impact might translate into a possible overall net benefit of at least £80 billion over 30 years (equivalent to an average of £2.5 billion each year), even considering the significant costs of delivering it and on the basis of cautious assumptions.

These benefits are achieved, as per the Review (2006, pp.60, 61), from a combination of increasing productivity growth and higher employment. If the annual rate of productivity growth would rise by around 0.1 pp from its current underlying trend of 2%, a rise of 5-10% in the underlying growth rate of productivity, equivalent to an average of £1 to 2 billion of output per year.

The Review (2006, pp.15,16) has estimated the enormous benefits that achieving this ambition would bring for the UK. The prize means more economic prosperity and increased social justice. The productivity growth rate would increase by 10%, helping the UK close its productivity gap, something that would also give the average worker £1,800 more output each year by 2020.

Additionally, it was estimated that the employment rate would grow 10 per cent more quickly than projected, with at least an additional 200,000 people into work by 2020, helping move towards the ambition of an 80 per cent employment rate. People will have a fairer chance to progress, there will be less social deprivation and positive wider impacts on health, crime and social cohesion.

Furthermore, the review (Leitch, 2006, p 12) contends that employers, individuals and government should invest significantly in skills improvements. With regard to financial numbers in the UK, employers spend around £2.4 billion on direct course costs and up to £17.4 billion in total, excluding the wages of employees. Employer investment in skills varies significantly by type of employee, type of employer and sector of the economy. Training by employers is disproportionately focused on highly-skilled workers, who are five times more likely to be trained at work than low skill workers. Around one third of firms do no training at all, and this varies between 50 per cent of employers in some sectors to just under 5 per cent in the best performing ones. The government in England invests around £12 billion on adult skills each year, of which around £4.5 billion is on further education, including work-based learning, and £7.4 billion on higher education. These are the overall costs of tuition, learner support and capital. Individuals will pay £1.35 billion per annum through the new variable tuition fees, on top of the existing £0.9 billion per annum income from standard fees.

According to Cyprus Republic Statistical Service (2008), similar investments in Cyprus are much more limited. Despite the upward trend in the amounts spent by employers on employee training, local company directors have not yet realised the importance of investment in skills. Their main aim is to keep costs (investment in training, salaries, benefits, etc.) as low as possible while at the same time increasing their profits. Additionally, the investment varies significantly by type of employee, employer and sector of the economy.

As per a Labour survey conducted by the Cyprus Republic Statistical Service (2008), in Q4 of 2007, the employment sector is divided into 3 areas: 72.7% services, 22.6% manufacturing and 4.7% agriculture.

Based on the above, it is obvious that more money is invested in the service sector than in any other, and in general, just as in the U.K, around one third of the firms do no training at all, with highly skilled employees representing those who mostly get some kind of training rather than low skill employees.

2.6 <u>Economic Sectors in Cyprus</u>

According to the Statistical Service of the Cyprus Republic (2008), the Business activity in Cyprus is divided into four main fields: *manufacturing, exporting, importing and servicing.* Each category is subdivided into many smaller categories. For example, a few of the important categories of *exporting/manufacturing* activity directly related with business and in which most graduates will seek jobs include:

- Beverages, clothing, furniture, machinery, cement, chemicals, paper products, shoes. This category also includes other products important for the economy like vegetables, fruit, cheese and oil.

  Important categories of *Importing* activity include:

- Cosmetics, electrical appliances, footwear, iron & steel, advertising items, animal medicines, batteries, beer, bicycles, boats.

Important categories of the *Service* activity include:

- Accountants, advertising agencies, advocates, banks, consultants, educational institutions, internet service providers, investment companies, shipping companies, telecommunication, training institutions, research companies, web design and other.

The four main areas are divided into smaller sectors:

A	Agriculture, hunting and forestry
B	Fishing
C	Mining and quarrying
D	Manufacturing
E	Electricity, gas and water supply

F	Construction
G	Wholesale and retail trade
H	Hotels and restaurants
I	Transport, storage and communication
J	Financial intermediation
K	Real estate, renting and business activities
L	Public administration and defense
M	Education
N	Health and social work
O	Other community social and personal sevices
P	Private households with employed persons

We have seen earlier, that the Labor survey conducted by the Statistical Service of the Cyprus Republic (2008) specifies that the great majority of the employment sector is concentrated in services (72.7%). Therefore, at E.U.C, in around 1000 graduates every year the majority will find jobs in advertising agencies, shipping companies, consulting firms, education, research, accounting or hospitality management, etc., while a lower percentage of graduates will look for a job in the manufacturing industry (22,6% of people employed are concentrated in manufacturing). The 2008 GDP reaching 16,934 million Euros underscores the importance of these people's contribution to the statistics.

2.7 Recruitment

According to the Labor survey of the Statistical Service of Cyprus (2008), out of the total of employed people in Cyprus in the fourth quarter of 2007 (384,852), 10% (37,224) is aged 15-24.

According to Vareta (2006), recruitment is an activity directed to obtain appropriate human resources whose qualifications and skills match functions of the relevant posts in the organization. Its importance cannot be over-emphasized and can also be best described as the "heart" of the organization. Suitability for a job is typically assessed by looking for skills in communication, typing or computer to name a few. Evidence of

skills required for a job may be provided in the form of qualifications (educational or professional), experience in a job requiring the relevant skills or the testimony of references. Candidates today, as opposed to the past, are typically placed based on a multi-faceted set of criteria (recruited): personal preference and interest, industry or position experience, education, references and even psychographics.

A newcomer in the market, for example, lacks the practical experience and applied knowledge that most companies are looking for.

In a recent article, the office of government commerce in the UK (2007) argues that one of the essential roles of the business management is to ensure that staff members within the organization continue to possess the necessary skills and use them to the benefit of the business. Policies and procedures must be put into place to manage the planning, acquisition, deployment, development and updating of staff skills. Without adequate attention to the skills dimension, services will at best fail to reach full potential and at worst could be totally wasted if a lack of critical skills causes a development to fail.

As per Abell (2000) knowledge management is a philosophy that assumes that no single department or function alone can deliver corporate objectives. Corporate capability is created by:

- Skills and expertise of staff
- Staff's ability to learn and to build knowledge from learning
- Processes that enable the staff's skills and evolving knowledge to be applied and shared
- Culture and values that encourage knowledge building and sharing
- An infrastructure (technology and physical) that supports knowledge building, flow and sharing
- Intellectual assets the organization builds, organizes, maintains and exploits

As she states, information literacy is a broad term that encompasses an awareness of the value of information potential of books, journal articles, technical reports, maps, records, and files created and received by an organization. Information is a necessary and foundational precursor to knowledge. Individuals rather than organizations identify and acquire information. Then they combine it with experience and additional information. In the right environment and circumstances, this nurturing process may lead to new knowledge that the person can share with others, thus benefiting the organization.

2.8 Programmes offered at E.U.C

European University is an independent co-educational university of liberal arts and sciences for men and women of academic promise and strong personal motivation. The university has a strong commitment to higher education in general and excellence in teaching, research and service to the society in particular. It educates a total of 3500 students with 1000 of them being new recruits each year.

It is divided into four main schools:

The School of Arts and Education Sciences that includes Graphic Design and Advertising, Primary Education, Kindergarten Education, Music Education and Educational Leadership

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences that includes English Language and Literature, European Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences with a major in Psychology/Sociology/General Social and Behavioral Sciences

The School of Sciences that includes Computer Science, Computer Engineering and Nursing

The I. Gregoriou School of Business

The main focus of this project is on the I. Gregoriou School of Business.

The Business School offers Bachelor Degrees in the fields of:

- Accounting

- Banking

- Finance

- Economics

- General Business

- Hospitality Management

- Management

- Management Information Systems

- Marketing

- Public Relations and Advertising

- Sports Management

Lastly, the I. Gregoriou School of Business offers a Master Degree in:

- Business Administration (MBA) with concentrations in:

1. Accounting/economics/finance

2. International Business

3. Human Resource Management

4. Management

5. Marketing

According to the University's Bulletin (2009), a student seeking a General Business Degree will have to attend general requirement classes like Principles of Microenconomics and Macroenconomics, Business English, Public Speaking and Expository Writing, Philosophy and Political Sciences, History, Psychology, Sociology, Statistics and Calculus. The same student will then have to attend business classes like Business Law, Introduction to Financial and Managerial Accounting, Introduction to Business and Introduction to Marketing and Principles of Management. Before graduating the student will need to choose a certain

direction (major) and complete around 30 credits within this major. So, if a student declares a marketing major, he/she will have to attend around ten different marketing classes.

This project will portray that, some of the required classes will certainly give this student a strong theoretical background but they will neither completely prepare this student with all possible skills or competencies nor provide the student with any practical experience that will enable him/her to be more competitive when entering the business market. In some classes, however, like Public Speaking, which is designed to teach presentation skills, successful students are able to build good communication and interpersonal skills. Additionally, an English writing class will certainly attempt to provide them with strong writing skills, and a business class will possibly demand reading skills. Moreover, a calculus and a statistics class will provide basic arithmetic/mathematical skills. However, through this project it is proven that all of these classes will neglect the indoctrination of creative thinking in students, or make students believe in their own self-worth (self-esteem skills); the courses will also fail to develop the sense of urgency, drive and determination that students should possess not just to compete but also to survive in a business world.

2.9 <u>Synthesis with the project</u>

All that are discussed in this section are in line with the aim of this project. This section defines and discusses the concepts of skills, competencies and practical experience as these are seen in the international literature. It gives the views of scholars and other practitioners who might have researched these ideas prior to this project, therefore indirectly synthesizing all that is discussed with the main aim.

It also discusses and reveals models like the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and the Government of Social Research (GSR) Handbook models that were highly used in subsequent parts throughout this study. Where possible, like for practical experience, the literature provides ideas that could be used for obtaining experience, something that is among the objectives of the study. Furthermore, this section highlights the importance of human capital and discusses the merits of improvement of human capital on economic progress. Concepts like Gross Domestic Product (GDP), productivity unemployment, fairness to the society, healthy lifestyle and crime decrease are directly linked to the improvement of human capital.

Different scholars highlight the importance of concentrating on the quality of human resources and utilize ways with which to make people happier and make them more productive workers. According to Samuelson and Nordhaus (1992), ways could include the improvement of education, reduction of illiteracy and training of workers. Educated people, become more productive workers, who can use capital more effectively, adopt new technologies and learn from their mistakes.

In line of the above, the development of talent candidates is a necessity and constitutes a challenge not only for European University to hunt, but also for all institutions. Graduates of European University will become future human capital of organizations. Therefore the university has to equip students with all necessary qualities to be able to respond to the demands of the market. As discussed above, most of the existing courses currently being taught are ill-equipped, fail to completely prepare students and neglect to pass on important qualities that students need to survive.

The following section outlines the method and procedures that were followed to administer this project in order to solve the above problem.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN – METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Level and Approach

As researchers have asserted, the value of skills and competencies is irreplaceable. The following section explains the approach used to design and administer this project. In accordance with the research objectives, the project followed four paths of action:

In part 1 an in-depth *secondary data analysis* was performed with the objective to explore the various business sectors of the market and synthesize them to the programs offered at European University.

In light of the above, secondary data analysis was conducted to **explore and define skills, competencies and practical experience as seen through the international literature.** Specifically, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Model and the Government Social Research (GSR) Handbook Competencies discussed in the literature review, were explored and formed the basis on which subsequent research was conducted in this project. As mentioned in the literature review section, the SCANS was formed by the U.S Department of Labor and Education (2000) with the aim to study the kind of competencies and skills that workers must have to succeed in today's workplace. Furthermore, the Handbook of Government Social Research has as its purpose to clarify and define a comprehensive set of competencies relevant to the broad spectrum of research work. Based on the above models as well as on other literature, an <u>original tool</u> was created consisting of all possible skills, competencies and personal qualities. The tool was adjusted to a business oriented tool.

The above tool formed the basis for part 2 in which in-depth interviews were conducted with employers. Specifically, i*n-depth interviews*, explored the views of employers (business directors and managers) who

engage in recruiting. Employers evaluated the ***importance of skills and competencies, as well as the importance of gaining practical experience prior to graduation.*** Employers then <u>cited</u> those skills vital for them when recruiting a candidate, and ***identified the most important skills and competencies for a successful career in the business world***.

Lastly, methods that employers believe are adequate to introduce skills, competencies and practical experience to students, were also explored in this part.

Based on employers' indications, the *A-Level Skills Index* was created. The *A-Level Skill Index* further investigated, includes of 29 different skills, competencies or personal qualities either mentioned in the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Model and Government Social Research Handbook (GSR), or suggested by employers at in-depth interviews. *The A-Level Skill Index* was then explored in the focus group section (part 3), ***revealing a gap between what employers require and what students perceive they possess***.

In addition, methods for introducing non-academic practical experience as well as competencies were also investigated in this part. Two different sets of focus groups were conducted consisting of 6 students each, and their views were analyzed in depth.

Lastly, the *A-Level Skill Index* was assessed in the survey section (part 4), in order to quantitatively ***validate that the gap exists***. The *survey* conducted among students within the university; it attempted to technically evaluate their perception about the importance of skills and competencies and to statistically quantify their **perception** on their ***degree of possession of skills and competencies***. In addition, the study measured the degree of satisfaction of academic background

provided and how well prepared they perceive they are to enter the business world. Results for this section were validated by empirical means through the use of Hypothesis Testing.

In light of the above, in an effort to **assess the degree of possession of skills and competencies**, the *A-Level Skill Index* was further investigated in a detailed technical analysis of each course's syllabi. Each course syllabi was analyzed based on my **personal perception**, resulting in a matrix that combined all the business courses along with the degree to which they are able to offer each skill, competency and personal quality noted. The main aim of this technical analysis was to test exactly which of the 29 *A-Level skills* are actually delivered through courses, and define the level to which each of those is delivered. This contributes greatly to the project as through the analysis it is revealed which, but also how, classes should be enforced to meet the needs of the market. The matrix is discussed in the analysis section.

At this point I have to emphasize that all the previous parts are in line with the aims of this project and were synthesised to form a coherent whole. This allowed the **identification and recommendation of specific methods that European University can utilize to minimize the gab that exists and to ensure that students will be introduced to skills and competencies and will gain some degree of practical experience prior to graduation**.

I believe that the above approach provides a coherent whole that is carefully designed and will lead to safe conclusions and recommendations. The approach has worked with key stakeholders and drawn on evidence from a variety of sources all of whom are greatly affected by the result. The literature was explored, employers have provided the skills that mostly look for when hunting a candidate, and

students have given their perception on the matter. All stakeholders' views were backed up by a technical analysis of the courses that reveals my perception as to the degree that each course offers the needed skills. Safe conclusions are confirmed exactly because the views of all stakeholders were synthesized to complete each other. To illustrate this I am providing just one example. Students' opinion was crucial and as primary stakeholders could not be left out. The focus group part with students turned out to be extremely valuable because it explored, understood in more depth and uncovered important concepts and changed needed for the more efficient teaching of the needed skills. After all, students are the ones who are in daily contact with instructors in class and their perception in the teaching methods that are exposed to is crucial. Most importantly thought, the fact that students were exposed to the skills indicated by employers, clearly revealed the existence of a gap. Based on their perception, students had no idea about the existence of most of those skills, something that could only be revealed by directly talking to students. Had the project failed to receive feedback by students as well by all important stakeholders, I believe that results would not have been safe. Based on this, results can provide sufficient feedback so that safe conclusions can be made.

The results of these procedures are discussed in the analysis section.

3.2 Sampling

For part **(4)** a representative sample of students (n=391) was surveyed to ensure the representativeness of the results. The population (N=1000) basically consisted of undergraduate students registered for Diplomas (two-year study) and Baccalaureate (four-year study) degrees at the School of Business at European University Cyprus. The population, moreover, encompassed students who had completed at least one year of study at the university/college and had an opinion as to the subject under investigation. The selected students, both Cypriot and

international, will enter the business world in the near future. The sampling method employed was a combination of random cluster-stratified-proportional. Cluster sampling consisted of selecting the groups for interviewing on a random basis. In the proposed project different classes (sections being taught) took the form of clusters. Taking into consideration that each class/cluster usually consists of an average of 20 students, a total of 20 clusters was randomly selected so that in the end, a total of 391 students participated in the survey. In addition, an indicative proportion on a sex basis (males and females) was set up-front and the survey was monitored at all times so that the corresponding universe proportion was maintained. The selected sampling method ensures the maximum representativeness of the results.

3.3 <u>Sample size and structure</u>

Table 3.1 - Sample size for gender

Gender	%	No of interviews
Male	50%	195
Female	50%	192

Considering the student population of the university: *the maximum margin of error at a 95% confidence level associated with the aforementioned sample size (391), is plus / minus 3.86% at an overall level, assuming a population of 1000.*

For part **(3)**, two different groups of 6 students were interviewed in order to explore their ideas and views. The groups were homogeneous as to the needs of the participants but also the objectives of the study. This ensured that members of the groups were not intimidated by others and that confusion was avoided. For part **(2)**, 6 business directors or managers with different business backgrounds were interviewed in an attempt to grasp their views and define the needs of the market in terms of skills and competencies. I have to highlight here that interviews

stopped at the point at which no new ideas were expressed. I believe that for parts 2 and 3, the proposed sample size was enough to provide sufficient feedback and ensure that safe conclusions are made.

Table 3.2 – Sample size for exploratory research

	No of interviews
Focus groups	2
Experience surveys	6

3.4 <u>Gathering data – (Interviewing method)</u>

The E.U.C library sources, additional books and the internet were used for *secondary data gathering.*

Surveys took place within the university and data was gathered through a *self administered in-class method.* Questionnaires were given to students by their instructors, usually during the beginning of the semester so that students were not yet burdened by heavy course work and thus more willing to participate. In most classes, I was also there to supervise the process. A number of courses from all four years of studies were selected and questionnaires were distributed to students during the normal classroom time. Classes offered throughout the day, afternoon and night, different days of the week and in a variety of course subjects were selected. To prevent the possibility of obtaining duplicate data, special instructions were provided prior to the distribution of the questionnaire indicating that students participated only once.

In addition, at the beginning of the questionnaire a statement was included specifying that each interview was anonymous and confidential. This eliminated most forms of bias and ensured the gathering of honest responses.

The questionnaire was fully structured and had been tested for validity and reliability. According to Zikmund (2003), examples of basic approaches to dealing with the issue of validity include face or content

validity. This refers to the subjective agreement of professionals that a scale logically appears to be accurately reflecting what it purports to measure. Reliability on the other hand concerns consistency, or the extent to which a measuring procedure yields identical results on repeated trials. Appropriate scales were also used and the entire interview lasted for 10-15 minutes.

Focus group discussions were conducted by me with the guidance and supervision of a focus group expert. Recruiting was conducted with a screener questionnaire that asked a series of questions to evaluate whether a contact was eligible to take part. Contacts were Cypriot European University students, mainly because of the language barrier, with a minimum attendance of two years so that they were in a position to pass an opinion. A general outline of the issues to be covered during the discussion (discussion guide) was designed and used, based on the objectives of the project. Sessions were type-recorded by a typist enabling later reference and review of crucial aspects of the discussion during the analysis stage. Each group session lasted for approximately 1.5 hours.

The discussions were carried out by me with the guidance and supervision of a focus group expert. Conclusions drawn were tested for validity by the focus group expert who independently examined the data and drew his own conclusions. The similarity of the two sets of conclusions confirmed (verified) that the ideas are truly reflective of participants' views without researcher bias.

Finally, _experience surveys/ in-depth interviews_ with business people were conducted _face-to-face_ and took place at the respondents' location. Results were hand written on unstructured questionnaires (transcripts) and analyzed during the analysis stage. This stage was also tested for validity.

Respondents were contacted by phone prior to the study for their permission and to be informed about the topic of interest. Each

experience survey/in-depth interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes.

3.5 <u>Analysis</u>

The primary data from the <u>*survey*</u> was analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences). Analyses employed both simple and advanced. Simple analysis involved the examination of frequencies and advanced employed the use of Hypothesis Testing for verification of the results.

3.5.1 <u>Survey – The empirical verification of results</u>

The purpose of this section is to enable the validation of the findings of the study by empirical means. The rationale behind this decision is grounded to the need of using inferential statistics in order to verify the results and make inferences about the population under investigation.

For the purpose of this study, a decision was made to adopt Hypothesis Testing. The rationale behind this decision was made after reviewing the relevant literature and considering views by leading scholars such as Zikmund (2003) and Norusis (1999).

"In marketing theory a hypothesis is an unproven proposition or supposition that tentatively explains certain facts or phenomena—it is a statement of assumption about the nature of the world. In its simplest form, the hypothesis is a guess" (Zikmund, 2003).

With statistical techniques we are able to decide whether or not our theoretical hypothesis is confirmed by the empirical evidence. This is basically done by testing the null and alternative hypotheses

A null hypothesis is a statement that asserts that any change from what has been thought to be true will be due entirely to random sampling error (no significance). The true purpose of setting up the null hypothesis

is to provide an opportunity for nullifying it. The alternative hypothesis states the opposite of the null hypothesis.

One of the things we wish to test in this project is whether students indeed believe that the academic background received at E.U.C is enough for preparing them entering the business world. A hypothesis that the academic background is enough is a null hypothesis, that is, it describes a **hypothetical but exact state of affairs.** The alternative hypothesis describes the situation when the **null hypothesis is false**. When we statistically test a hypothesis, we assume that the null hypothesis correctly describes the state of affairs. The null hypothesis is the frame of reference against which we will judge our sample results.

3.5.2 <u>What is Hypothesis (significance) testing</u>

We generally assign the symbol H_0 to the null hypothesis and the symbol H_1 to the alternative hypothesis. The purpose of hypothesis testing is to determine which of the two hypotheses is correct.

The t- tests provides a method by which we can compare two data sets. Conducting a t- test informs us whether the degree of difference between the two data sets could be due to factors other than sampling error. If the results indicate that the difference between the groups is not likely due to sampling error, we believe that the two data sets probably do not come from the same population, or else **are not equal with each other** (are statistically significant).

In significance testing we set a critical value which our observed t- statistic value should exceed if we are to say that the means are **SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER**. When the t statistic values are extreme we think the two samples are from different populations (reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis). We say the two sample means are statistically significantly

different from each other (there is a real significant difference between them, therefore we can generalize about our population).

3.5.3 Validity and Reliability

To provide some evidence of the degree of validity, the research design utilized *face validity*. Face validity refers to the subjective agreement of professionals that a scale logically appears to be accurately reflecting what it purports to measure and is just based on a close reading and study of the question. My advisor carefully examined the research design and agreed that it accurately measured what it intended to. It was agreed, between the two of us that the analysis done satisfied the objectives of the work, therefore was no need for further analysis to be done.

Reliability concerns consistency, or the extent to which a measuring procedure yields identical results on repeated trials. Even though there are several methods to measure consistency, the internal consistency approach is more workable for most survey researchers and it focuses on measuring several indicators of a phenomenon and evaluating their joint consistency or homogeneity. Under this approach there is an underlying latent variable, in our case *"possession"* that directly influences the responses. The stronger the effect of the latent variable on the questions the higher the internal consistency reliability. In this project we assessed reliability with the internal consistency statistic, Cronbach's alpha. The idea here was that on question 3-4 of our survey the items comprising our scale should show high levels of internal consistency, which implies that the higher the correlations among the items, the greater the alpha. High correlations simply imply that high or low scores on one question are associated with high or low scores on other questions. In the context of our project for example, respondents who perceive to depict a medium degree of possession on creative thinking are likely to depict a similar

degree of possession on problem solving as both items are affected in a similar manner by the underlying latent variable, *possession.*

In a more simple explanation Cronbach's alpha, denotes the power of the indicators, in my case all *29 skills*, to measure the variable under considerations, in this case *possession.* The higher this statistical term is, that is the Cronbach's alpha, the stronger the evidence is that the 29 skills form a reliable measure, therefore reliability exists. Cronbach's alpha varies from 0 to 1 and it increases as the number of items increases. In other words a scale with more items, should have a higher reliability. For large scales, like mine, alpha should probably be .80 or above.

The method used to analyze the <u>*in-depth interviews*</u> followed four flows of action: *data copying, data display, theme creation and conclusions and verification.*

Data were <u>copied</u> exactly as they were on transcripts so that they were more readily accessible and understandable, enabling the drawing out of various themes and patterns. Based on this process, various analytic conclusions were made.

Data <u>display</u> intends to convey that data are presented as an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusions to be analytically drawn. Emphasis was granted to the "<u>Teaming</u>" method. A diagram was used to aid understanding and to facilitate the ability to present major concepts. Teamed up were the most important skills and competencies on which managers and directors reached a consensus as being most important and less important. This assisted me in understanding and observing certain patterns in the data. A graphical representation of the "Teaming" approach is shown later on.

The <u>conclusions</u> drawn were <u>confirmed</u> to assure that they are real and not biased by my own thinking. For validity reasons another researcher independently examined the data and drew his own conclusions (face

validity). Our results were compared to ensure that our conclusions were similar.

Just like the in-depth interviews, the method used to analyze the _focus groups_ findings followed four flows of action: _data copying, data display, theme creation and conclusions and verification._

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Great emphasis was given to the ethical aspect of the study.   As Zikmund (2003) points out, ethical issues in survey research are of primary importance. "The respondent's right to privacy, use of deception, the respondent's right to be informed about the purpose of the research, the need for confidentiality, the need for honesty and objectivity in collecting and reporting data, and other issues are factors in the design and execution of surveys". Along these lines, student participants were specifically informed that they were randomly selected to take part in the survey.   Both students and business respondents were informed that taking part was voluntary and that in the case of refusal, no consequences would take place. On the other hand, it was explained to them that their participation was valuable because the findings would be taken into consideration, with a potential impact both on the improvement of education at European University Cyprus and on the business world in general.   Furthermore, the respondents were told that their answers would remain strictly confidential.

3.7 Evaluation

The proposed study is not one that will remain on the self but on the contrary, it is one that aims at bringing some sort of immediate, noticeable change in the organization.

I will make an effort to get the university's approval and support, first, for a press conference and in addition, for a publication of the findings in either the form of articles or another type of forum. The aim will include communicating the findings to not only future and existing students and their families but also organizations in the market whose members, as active parties, really need to understand the importance of it. Seminars and/or classes will also be provided to students and to those within organizations interested in grasping the actual results and finding out how their organization can benefit. Lastly, lecturers, instructors and professors of the university will be given advise and go through training seminars if needed, to first understand the importance of the study and then learn the methods of introducing the proposed results onto students. Lastly, the perception as to the degree of possession of *A-Level Skills* will be statistically measured every two years and track will be kept as to the possible improvement.

At this point I have to stress that personally I have already started implementing some of the ideas extracted from the work done so far. In all my classes, I try to spend a few minutes, usually at the beginning of the class, introducing one or two skills and imparting to students that possessing these can greatly impact their career path. Besides theoretical explanation, I have also started incorporating into classes the methods for passing on these skills to them. For example, I sometimes tend to assign a topic or a problem and ask them to critically evaluate it, generate alternatives, or implement a plan of action for solving that problem. In another effort, I tend to initiate discussions or assign in-class group projects so that I develop a positive electric charge, or develop their ability to collaborate effectively with others.

3.8 <u>Epistemology</u>

3.8.1 <u>Epistemological grounding of the project</u>

This project is expected to have significant impact upon the University and to all institutions and to be of value to others. The way this project was approached sets the boundaries for fundamental changes in both the curriculum and Instructors' teaching methods. The project has worked with key stakeholders, employers and students, all of whom they had a strong voice as to the outcome. The work undertaken reflects closely the ideas and views of all stakeholders and is expected to greatly affect the outcome. I certainly believe that the approach used in this work has a valid epistemological grounding. The study falls under the umbrella of a *case study that is injected with secondary data analysis (literature review), experience surveys and a pilot study; all are then reinforced by a quantitative survey and a matrix analysis*. In more specific research terms, I have used the qualitative and quantitative approach, incorporating secondary research, in-depth interviews, focus group sessions and a survey. Special attention was given to the sampling methods, method of gathering data, but also to ethical considerations. Analysis involved a significant part of this project. The primary data from the survey that was used to quantitatively validate that the gap exists was analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences). Analysis employed both simple and advanced. Simple analysis involved the examination of frequencies and advanced employed the use of Hypothesis Testing. For verification of the results a technical analysis of each course's syllabi was followed. Lastly, the work done was approached with the greatest responsibility. Therefore through the above approach used, we can count on the epistemology of this work and we can be certain that the results are valid.

In addition, i strongly believe that voice of all stakeholders will bring a great impact and will provide a solution as to the problem under investigation. The work undertaken presents a new offer to all Universities and to students to help further entrench a culture of learning, ensuring that students get what they need to move on in life. Through this project we have seen that employers and students had a strong, coherent voice and this will hopefully lead to the implementation of an environment in which knowledge is created, shared, harnessed and used for the benefit of the University, its people and its customers.

4 __RESULTS - ANALYSIS__

4.1 Introduction

The investigation of the requirements of the business sector in relation to the skills and competencies students should possess in order to be recruited was the main aim of this project. Relevant to this, I have exploited the importance of "talent creating". The process of developing talents at university level, ones companies can later benefit from, is imperative and can be considered an art. I believe that the interviews with recruiters to glean what skills are actually sought in the business world has given me feedback that can be used to cultivate talented candidates.

As previously mentioned the index that follows, formed the basis for in-depth interviews with recruiters. The index consists of all possible skills, competencies and personal qualities and recruiters indicated which of these they consider vital when selecting a candidate:

a. Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (**SCANS**) Skills and Personal Qualities

Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens, and speaks.

- *Reading* - locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules.
- *Writing* - communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts.
- *Arithmetic/mathematics* - performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.
- *Listening* - receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues.

- *Speaking* - organizes ideas and communicates orally.

Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons.

- *Creative thinking* - generates new ideas.
- *Decision making* - specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternatives.
- *Problem solving* - recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action.
- *Visualizing* - organizes and processes symbols.
- *Knowing how to learn* - uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills.
- *Reasoning* - discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem.

Personal Qualities: Responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty.

- *Responsibility* - exerts a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment.
- *Self-esteem* - believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self.
- *Sociability* - demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings.
- *Self-management* - assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress, and exhibits self-control.
- *Integrity/honesty* - chooses ethical courses of action.

SCANS' Five **Competencies**

Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources

- *Time* - selects goal-relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules.
- *Money* - uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives.
- *Material and facilities* - acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently.
- *Human resources* - assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback.

Interpersonal: Works with others

- *Participates as member of a team* - contributes to group effort.
- *Teaches others new skills*
- *Services clients/customers* - works to satisfy customer expectations.
- *Exercises leadership* - communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies.
- *Negotiates* - works toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolves divergent interests.
- *Works with diversity* - works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds.

Information: Acquires and evaluates information

- *Acquires and evaluates information*
- *Organizes and maintains information*
- *Interprets and communicates information*
- *Uses computers to process information*

Systems: Understands complex interrelationships

- *Understands systems* - knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them.
- *Monitors and corrects performance* - distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses deviations in systems performance and corrects malfunctions.
- *Improves or designs systems* - suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance.

Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

- *Selects technology* - chooses procedures, tools, or equipment including computers and related technologies.
- *Applies technology to task* - understands intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment.
- *Maintains and troubleshoots equipment* - prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies.

c. Other Personal Qualities that were indicated by **employers** in in-depth interviews and are not included in the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) or Government of Social Research Handbook (GSR)

- **Flexible** – *able to adjust readily to different conditions, makes or willing to make concessions.*

- **Handle pressure** – *works under strict deadlines.*

- **Loyalty** - *the act of binding yourself (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action, unwavering in devotion to friend, vow or cause.*

- **Organized** (have an organized mind) - *formed into a structured or coherent whole, methodical and efficient in arrangement or function.*

- **Methodical** - *characterized by method and orderliness.*

- **Reliable** - *giving the same result on successive trials, high degree of certainty and predictability for a desired outcome.*

- **Positive** - *characterized by or displaying affirmation or acceptance or certainty, having a positive electric charge.*

- **Productive** – *producing or capable of producing at high levels.*

- **Ethical** - *conforming to accepted standards of social or professional behavior.*

- **Show high potential** - *constantly show signs of improvement.*

- **Action oriented** - *always ready to take actions in solving a problem.*

d. <u>Government Social Research Handbook</u> **(GSR)**

<u>Delivery skills</u>

Policy and delivery focus - *Understands and directs effort to meet the customer's needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.*

Delivering results - *Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritizing as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.*

Learning and improving - *Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.*

<u>Intellectual capacity</u>

Critical analysis and decision-making - *Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesize and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others to do so); assesses risk, and defends decisions and action; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.*

Constructive thinking - *Thinks imaginatively while keeping the goal in mind; understands the bigger picture and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind with the intellectual rigor to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; able to facilitate, encourage and build upon ideas of others.*

Professional expertise - *Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness.*

Interpersonal skills

Developing constructive relationships - *Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows an awareness of the effects of own behavior on others, and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.*

Communicating with impact - *Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.*

Leadership and management

Leading and directing - *Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.*

In accordance to the objectives of the study, the section that follows examines the views of recruiters (business directors and managers) in an effort to identify what skills and competencies they are looking for and the methods they believe are adequate to prepare students for the business world. The section presents these results, as well as methods and techniques that European University Cyprus can utilize in order to ensure the effective and efficient introduction to students of the skills and competencies derived by the in-depth interviews. Finally, it outlines recruiters' ideas on how the university can offer students practical experience prior to their graduation, boosting their chances of employment. Results were then synthesized with findings exploited in focus groups and in the survey conducted to students, followed by a discussion as to whether the findings are in line or not with the literature.

4.2 <u>Definition</u>

4.2.1 <u>Definition of 'skills and competencies'</u>

Recruiters in general define skills as something that can be acquired or learned, mostly related to specific job responsibilities. A competency, on the other hand, has to do with character-based traits. It is when someone is good at something, like being efficient or productive, and does not necessarily have to do with specific job responsibilities. Pavlos Kouris, Director at Foresights Research & Consultancy, notes that "competency is part of the character and it takes more time to be cultivated".

Maria Georgiou, Regional Group Client Director, Retail Measurement Services, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (EEMEA), notes that "skills are something that can be taught or something that you can teach others. On the other hand, competencies are something that either you have or you don't and that you are only able to improve and develop". For example, paying great attention to detail cannot be taught; a detail person is born not made, though this ability evolves over time.

Nicos Mavroudis, Marketing Manager at PhotosPhodiadies Distributors Ltd, defines skills as the technical side of things and competencies as the strengths of someone's character.

When asked to indicate the difference between skills and competencies, students seemed to have a sense of understanding of what each one is.

Just like recruiters, students define skills as something that can be acquired or learned and is mostly related to specific job responsibilities. A competency, on the other hand, has to do with character-based traits and as they posit, you either possess them or not but you can develop these further through work experience.

The literature defines skills as covering general, contextual, independent knowledge, considered a tool and rule taught in most classes, which is vital for the practitioner. Competence, on the other hand, refers to experience-based and context-dependent knowledge that is gained through organizational experience. Additionally, it is a combination of knowledge, skill, understanding, ability, application, behaviour, aptitude, attitude and performance.

In this context, it is clear that recruiters and students are in line with the literature and are aware of the difference between a skill and a competency and are in a position to judge correctly.

4.3 <u>Importance and identification of skills</u>

4.3.1 <u>Importance of 'skills and competencies', on recruiters</u>

Marios Ioannou, internal Director of Gnomi Advertising Ltd, highlights that the supply of candidates who possess the right skills and competencies is short. Finding people like these today is very difficult as not many people have what it takes to do the job. As he mentions, "If you manage to find such a person who possesses the right skills you have yourself a winner because it is easy to teach them the job specifics through training." The general meaning is that interviewing should be done to identify competencies, since skills can be easily identified in someone's CV. Pavlos Kourris, Director at Foresights Research & Consultancy, stressed that even through an interview it is not easy to identify the competencies that someone possesses. Normally this identification is better made through assessment tests. For example, a company that wishes to recruit a candidate and has collected 20 CVs can end up with a short list of 4. These four candidates could be asked to attend a workshop and given a case study to work on. Observers will evaluate these candidates on certain pre-determined competencies, making it easier to select the right person for the job.

In general recruiters agree that it is extremely important for them to recruit a talent, someone who possesses the right skills and competences because they understand that the latter is something inherent that cannot be taught. The benefit of talent acquisition is imperative because such a person is easier to develop and shape into a well-rounded employee. Additionally, this talented hiree is easier to work with and the time needed for training is notably less, which saves money. As Maria Georgiou, Regional Group Client Director, Retail Measurement Services, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (EEMEA) states, "Otherwise, it is

like hiring someone while knowing that they cannot be developed. In that case I will lose my time. On the other hand, people like these are less likely to change to another job and I can teach them the skills I want."

Moreover, recruiters give special attention to the direct benefits of a good find on their organization and they agree that it saves the company a great deal of money on training and assimilation. Aliki Christou, Marketing officer at Sharelink Financial Services (SFS) Group, contends: "Imagine a person who does not have the sense of urgency and keeps missing deadlines. This person will cost the company a lot of money."

For most recruiters, their role becomes even more difficult as nowadays they have to uncover the real skills that candidates possess through interviews. The job is even more challenging as candidates today have similar qualifications and the difference lies only on such skills and competencies. So through time they have developed their own methods of uncovering the "hidden" skills of candidates. Gnomi Ltd, for example, uses a screening questionnaire when hiring so that it is able to spot candidates' competencies more easily. Of course people at Gnomi Ltd, understand that it is not simple to spot the qualified just by a few interviews, but as they say, "It is better than nothing."

4.3.2 <u>Importance of 'skills and competencies', on candidates</u>

The benefit is imperative for candidates as well. A person with skills and competencies can work up the ladder faster especially with the proper competencies. Additionally, since the supply of people like this is short, simply having skills and competencies differentiates a candidate from another. George Sphiktos, Director of Retail Measurement Services (RMS) at Nielsen, notes that "having the skills I am looking for, a candidate can accelerate his/her career <u>easier</u>. Otherwise it will take them a lot more time." Furthermore, Maria Georgiou highlights that "as a rule of thumb, if a person just happened to be on top without having the right

competencies, this person eventually will not last. On the other hand, a person with the right competencies will eventually reach the top and be able to stay there."

Generally though, is always important for candidates to possess the right competencies or skills simply because they can be taught the job specifics and eventually will end up as well-rounded, more productive employees who will keep their supervisors happy. At Sharelink Financial Services (SFS) Group for example, as Aliki Christou, Marketing Officer has mentioned, employees undergo an evaluation every February on which they are evaluated using different parameters such as quality of work, execution and others. This evaluation is around 40% of their increase in salary in the following year.

Nicos Mavroudis, Marketing Manager of Photos Phodiadies Distributors Ltd, has highlighted that.....

> "a company is like a vehicle moving with a certain speed on the main road. All employees at a certain point catch up to this speed, otherwise they are kicked off. This is called a 'company's culture' and it exists in every office and in every employee. As soon as an employee realizes what a culture is all about, he tries to see whether he fits into it or not."

This simply means that employees who possess the right competencies will catch up more easily and adjust to their jobs, whereas all others will simply have to abandon them.

Besides the above findings that were mainly extracted from exploratory research, employers in in-depth interviews and students in focus groups, a question assessing the importance of skills, competencies and practical experience was asked to students in the survey. This question aimed at quantitatively measuring the perception of the importance of the above concepts and validating that students' perception in focus groups could be indeed true to the population.
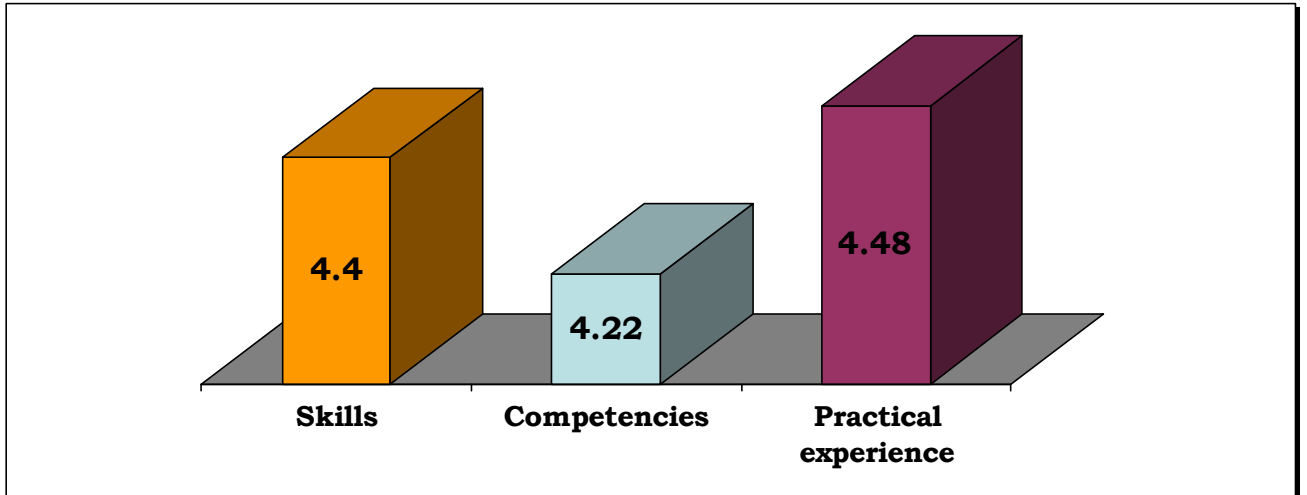
Figure 4.1 – <u>Perception on the Importance of skills, competencies and practical experience in entering the business world</u>

Based on the findings, perception on the importance is on the high side. Students, just like recruiters, seem to realize the general concept of importance of skills, competencies and practical experience. On a scale of 1-5, where 1=Not at all important and 5=Extremely important, the importance is averaged on 4.40, 4.22, 4.48 respectively. Significant differences within gender do not exist. Importance for men is averaged on the high side for all three concepts respectively (4.35, 4.12, 4.34) just as in women (4.47, 4.32, 4.62). This indicates that students grasp the general importance.

The **null hypothesis** is that skills, competencies and practical experience are not considered important for students.

Ho: $\mu=0$

H1: $\mu\neq0$

As already mentioned, the significance level is a critical probability in choosing between the null and the alternative hypotheses. The level of significance determines the probability—say, .05 or .01—that is to be considered too low to warrant support of the null hypothesis (we reject the null hypothesis).

In our question, at 5% significance level the critical value is 1.96 and the t=123.163, t=114,567 and t=110,535 respectively, so since the t-statistic falls in the rejection region we reject the null hypothesis that skills, competencies and practical experience are not considered important for students and we accept the alternative hypothesis that skills, competencies and practical experience are considered important.

So we conclude that, **on a 95% confidence level, there is enough evidence to support that skills, competencies and practical experience are considered important for students**.

Table 4.1 – Significance testing for importance

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean
Skills	390	4,40
Competencies	386	4,22
Practical experience	388	4,48

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Skills	123,163	389	,000	4,397
Competencies	114,567	385	,000	4,215
Practical experience	110,535	387	,000	4,482

The notion that skills and competencies are important both for the organizations but also for the candidates is clearly in line with the relevant literature. Many scholars have critiqued on the importance of it. Peterson (1997) underscores the importance of skills and put his lights on communication skills, which as he says, is one of the most critical skills. Additionally, Casey (1985) highlights that "a two-year full-time course in most institutions amounts in reality to a maximum of twenty-one months' work". The meaning of this is that a student in college is able to gain professional experience but it needs a two-year academic work, that is, going through academic projects (meeting deadlines, solving problems, handle pressure, ect) to actually do that. This is how important is for a student to actually posses such skills before entering the market place. Furthermore, Marlen Philippou (Politis 2006, p.79), coordinator of Smart Options (University Counselors) highlights that companies are currently looking for applicants with something beyond just an excellent academic record *and* she says education today is extended not only to excellent academic records but also to candidates who possess skills with which they can really make a difference. Lastly, as per the Leitch Review of skills (2006), as we have seen the merits on productivity, unemployment rate and on the economy in general are many.

4.3.3 Skills and competencies cited as vital for a successful career

Recruiters clearly indicate that all kinds of skills (basic and thinking) as well as personal qualities and competencies are vital for a candidate to succeed in today's workplace. Most of them believe that the basic and thinking skills a person should normally have evolve through secondary education or at least in college, even though they frequently come across candidates who lack a few of the basic skills. However, they realise that people who possess the majority of these skills and competencies are rare talents, close to extinction. Recruiters cite the fact that sometimes the skills or competencies needed depend on the position. As they relate, for a researcher position the candidate should possess very good analytical skills, whereas for a client service position the candidate needs extremely good communication skills. The bottom line, however, is that some tenets are universal and they mostly look for competencies and personal qualities which, as they say, emerge through a person's character and cannot be taught easily.

When they were asked, unaided, to indicate the competencies and qualities candidates should possess at the time of their hiring (as soon as they graduate), recruiters noted that they are mainly looking for candidates who can make the difference and as they emphasize, people like this are scarce. The two most important qualities that stand out for all recruiters are for candidates to be client-oriented and able to collaborate effectively in a group environment. Business market players today know that they need to make sizable profit to survive. Therefore, the modern business character has brought an increasing number of firms involved with sales to have adopted the concept of team selling or sales teams. This is a group of people representing a sales department as well as other functional areas such as finance, production and research, who are brought together to meet the needs of the client. Additionally, firm management has realised the merits of developing a mutually

beneficial relationship with the client, over time. As displayed in the graphical representation following, integrity, honesty, responsibility and reliability are just a few of the qualities necessary for building such strong bonds.

Skills, personal qualities and competencies directly indicated as being important by recruiters are labelled *Level A qualities.*

Table 4.2 - Teaming

Level A

Basic/Thinking skills	Competencies	Personal qualities
Communication skills (speaking)	Business knowledge	Able to form constructive relationships
Problem solving skills	Customer orientation	Self-managing
Decision making skills	Team work abilities	Loyal
Creative thinking skills	Analytical thinking	Organized (have an organized mind)
	Constructive thinking	Methodical
	Time management abilities	Have Integrity/honesty
	Action orientation	Reliable
	Sense of urgency	Responsible
	Initiative	Sociable (able to adjust)
	Show high potential	Flexible
	Determination/hard working	Positive/confident
	Street smartness	Productive
	Critical analysis abilities	

All other skills that not mentioned were Levelled B qualities. It is obvious, for example, that inspiring or leading is not a competence that a candidate should possess. This is mostly a managerial competence that an employee acquires and develops through an organization with some years of experience. Obviously recruiters do not expect a candidate to possess such a competence and therefore are not looking for such skills.

Table 4.3 - Teaming

Level B
Basic/Thinking skills   Competencies   Personal Qualities

Reading skills Writing skills Arithmetic skills Listening skills Learning and Improving skills Reasoning skills	Innovation Developing talent Inspiring, leading Human resources Technology	Self-esteem

Students believe that a graduate must first possess an **Undergraduate degree.** As stated by one member, "This is a must for someone to ask for a job and attend an interview." However, students agree that in a few years, more and more people will have a degree and competition will be even more fierce than it is today. They believe that graduates must prove themselves through their actual work in a working environment. As one mentioned, "There are graduates that only care about money. As soon as you ask about money in an interview, you've probably lost the game." What organizations are primarily seeking, as students cite, is people who are **ambitious, have willingness to work, energy and enthusiasm**. Graduates, moreover, should have the abilities to **work in a group** environment, to **communicate with other members**, to develop **constructive relationships** (have interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others) as well as being good **problem solvers**. Organizations have incorporated ways to see whether graduates possess these characteristics. A first step towards this process is interviewing, at which recruiters can get clues about candidates, but basically graduates should work for some time to reveal their true qualities to the company. As one student put it, "Through the interview

graduates will show a first glance of what they are made of, but it is through actual work that they will prove themselves."

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, (SCANS) Model and the Government of Social Research (GSR) Handbook competencies that we have investigated prove that our work is in line with the relevant literature. It is clear that most of the skills derived by these models are skills desperately wanted by recruiters when hiring. Additionally, scholars like Yeung et al. (2002), have long, proposed that students need to learn business ethics and values to cope with the management decision-making process as well as to deal with situations arising in internal and external markets. They assert that schools, colleges and universities should give priority to the teaching of "business ethics" as it impacts on a student's moral development and future career in the industry. Our results are in line with this. Recruiters clearly respect candidates who show integrity and honesty which as they say are important qualities necessary for building strong bonds with clients. In line with this, Wilson's (2006), interviews with employers revealed that most organizations did not specifically look for very high great point averages (GPAs). Firms and organizations usually look for qualities such as integrity, honesty and reliability; they seek employees who show responsibility as well as the ability to work in teams. These traits, though rare to find in candidates, make them more productive and efficient within the work place. As Wilson (2006) notes, it stands to reason that this is true for all organizations in every country.

On the other hand in our work recruiters do not favor candidates who show abilities to lead because they consider this a managerial competence that a candidate will acquire after some years of experience. Therefore our work is somehow in contradiction with scholars like Ball (2007) whose studies show that universities must teach "leadership" in all majors to shape successful personnel for the industry.

4.4 <u>Gap Identification</u>

4.4.1 <u>Students' satisfaction with academic background received</u>

Students in general seem to be quite satisfied with the academic background. They believe, however, that some requirements being taught are unnecessary. For example, a marketing major student should not be forced to take three different history classes as only one history class is sufficient, preferably "History of Cyprus" especially if he/she is Cypriot. This would free up curriculum options, and learners could take more important classes. They perceive to have learned how to be **organized** and **manage their time properly** but most importantly, they have learned to be good **team players**. They understand that being a good team player has many advantages. "When you operate as a team you have better and faster results," one student contended. However, they believe that European University can do more to help students further develop some of these skills, like being good team players. "They asked me to work in a group, but they never taught me how", one students interjected.

Besides these competencies, students perceive to have learned how to **respect other cultures** and to listen to people from foreign countries. They have learned something about cultural relativity and respecting the beliefs of others.

Something they believe is imperative and they have perceive to have also gained through their studies is **confidence**. Students believe they have learned how to express their ideas freely; according to one participant, "Something that I gained and I did not have prior to my studies is the freedom to express my own views, and suggestions and give my opinion."

They note that some instructors press students to give their opinion and to discuss ideas in class, whereas others don't.

4.4.2 <u>Skills not have been provided</u>

Students are mature enough to realize that having more **experience** increases their probabilities for a job. They strongly indicate that besides theory, EUC is not able to pass on to students any kind of experience. They cite the example of universities in Greece allowing students to work in a real organization for six months and then they are graded by their employers. The student gets references that can then be used to land a job. As they mention, a good idea would be to design a Marketing Plan for a real company instead of doing it in the isolation of a classroom. Through this kind of experience they expect to not only gain empirical skills, but also be tested on dimensions such as their **productivity, punctuality** and many other skills and qualities that cannot be seen in class. As students say, there is a great gap between university and a real job that basically involves the way students **respond to difficulties**, the way they **treat problems** and the way they **communicate with others**. One of the things on which they need to work at university is improving their interpersonal skills. As one respondent stated, "One of the things I was missing was interpersonal skills," going on to clarify that this can be greatly improved through some kind of experience. Students also underscored the importance of punctuality. Through work experience they can test whether they posses such a quality. They believe a quality like this is very important because people who always are at work on time are usually more responsible and more apt to keep deadlines, exactly because they have a sense of urgency.

Students clearly indicate their perception that besides being taught how to be organized and confident, manage their time properly and be good

team players, European University has failed to pass on to them all other qualities that recruiters require. Among others, customer orientation and time management are a few of the skills that European University could easily foster an awareness of. Regarding customer orientation, students think that there should be some sort of a practical course through which they will be sent to organizations to work so that they come in contact with people. Regarding time management, as they mention, it is very important for instructors to set deadlines and strictly follow them as "most instructors are quite flexible and do not force students to keep to their deadlines".

In addition, students believe that it is not feasible for them to acquire most of the skills at university. It is not possible, for example, while at university to be sent to a company to work. They believe that most of the skills can be acquired while working after graduation.

4.4.3 Skills and competencies that students are familiar with

It was explained to students that all the skills and competencies shown to them on a card were extracted through in-depth interviews among recruiters and it was stressed that all of them are the A- Level Skills that the business world is looking for when hiring.

Out of 29 skills, competencies and personal qualities, only 11 were mentioned by students as being familiar: Being positive and confident, organized, productive, and responsible; having a sense of urgency; and the abilities for team work, developing constructive relationships, problem solving and time management.

Creative thinking was also known to them theoretically but it is a skill they have never worked on developing. One participant's quote seems to represent the group reaction: "We have seen this somewhere, but only in theory." Students seem to have unconsciously worked on other skills, for example decision making, without understanding what it really was. For

example, when they were asked whether they had to make any decisions throughout their studies, like in a group assignment, they all agreed that they had, but they never associated the process with skill-building. It was clear that with most of the A-Level Skills students were not familiar.

The graph below provides an analysis of what the business world is looking for and what students at European University perceive to possess, as derived from exploratory research. Easily depicted is the great gap between the two.

Table 4.3.1 – Gap Analysis between recruiters and students
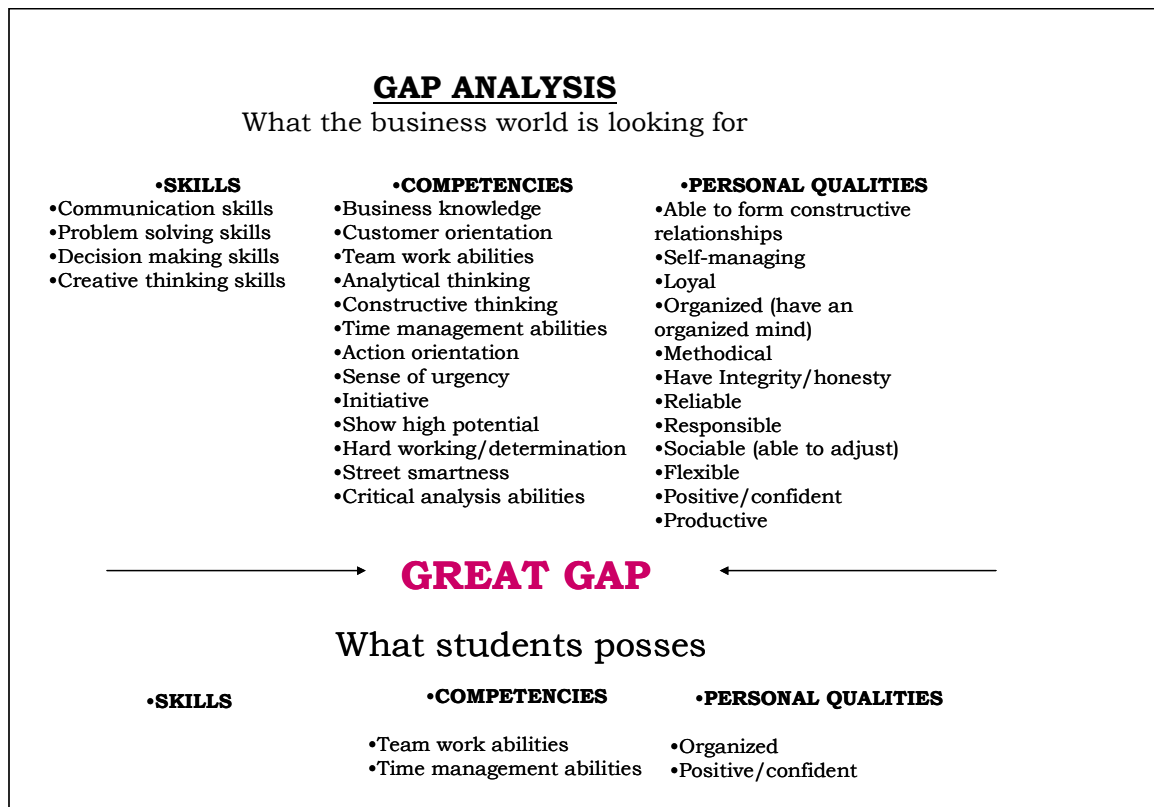
Where focus groups aimed at exploring the views of students and gain insights, the survey approach aimed at statistically measure the students' opinion on academic background received, their perception on the importance and degree of possession of A-Level Skills, and their perception on the level of preparation as were directly mentioned by them. Figures that follow present the quantitative findings of the above

concepts as they were examined in the survey, followed by a hypothesis testing that aims to test as to whether results can be generalized to the population.
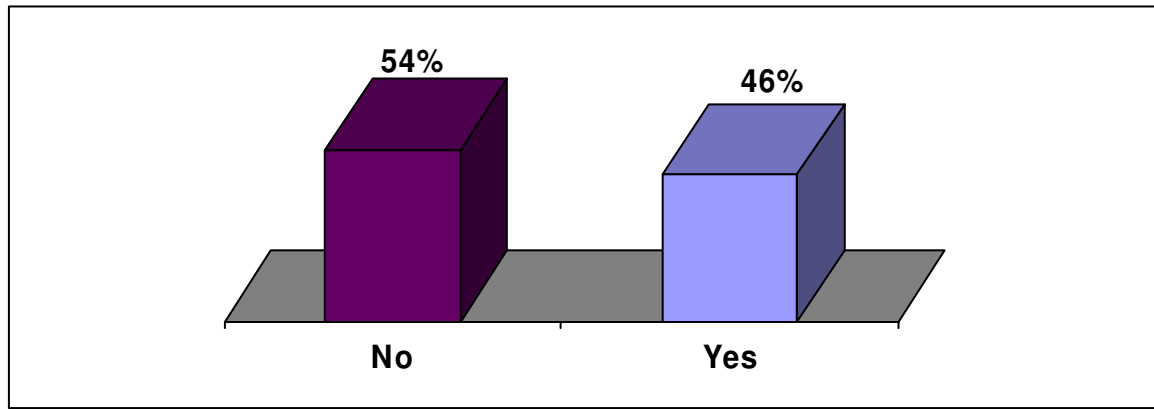
Figure 4.2 – Belief as to whether academic background received is enough for preparing students' entry into the business world

Around five in ten students believe that with the existing academic background they receive at European University, they can have a smooth entry in the business world and be able to satisfactory compete with other candidates. Around five in ten students site on the contrary. More specifically, (54%), cited the belief that just the academic background received, in other words the material they learn from books in class, is NOT enough for preparing their entry in the business world, with 46% citing that that could be enough. It should be added that there is no difference in the above perception within gender (men and women).
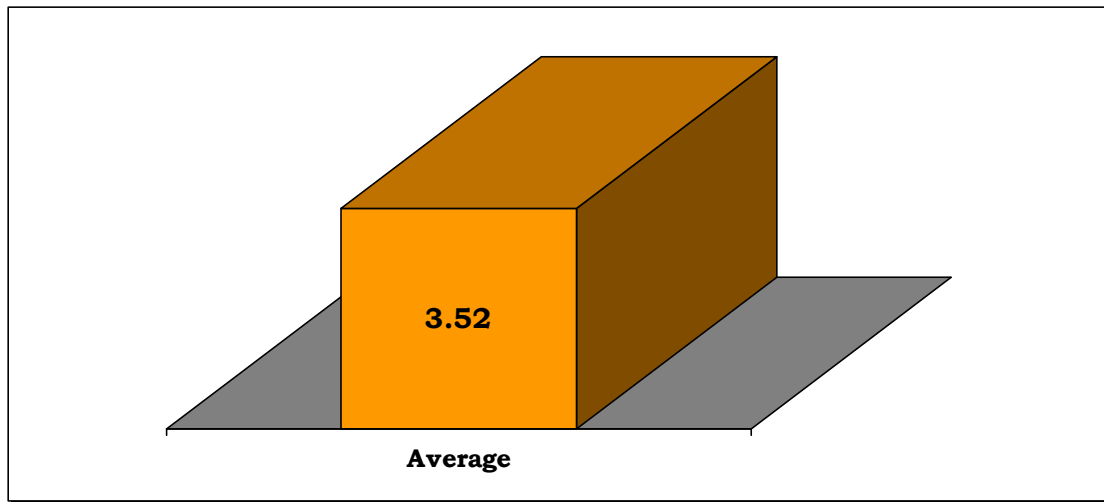
Figure 4.3 – Perception on the level of preparation in entering the business world

Important is also the notion that when asked to indicate how prepared they feel they are in entering the business world, this averages at 3.52 indicating a neutral preparation. Preparation is also neutrally averaged within gender. Preparation for men averages at 3.46 and for women at 3.57. This clearly indicates that there is a perceived gap between what students are taught and being ready for the business world. I have to add to this point that the above results, as well as the results that follow are subject to students' subjectivity, because it is obvious that when people are asked to rate themselves, rating will be in their favor. More over, I have to add that should we wish to isolate the results, these will be considered quite satisfactory. In the case though, results are compared with the optimum level.

4.4.4 The Chi-Square test for Goodness of Fit

Significance level is defined as the level at which we are significant 5%, the level which is considered too low to warrant support of the null hypothesis-we have to reject it.

Additionally, **confidence level** is defined as the percentage that indicates the long-run probability that the results will be correct. Traditionally, researchers have used the 95% confidence level.

Testing a hypothesis about a *mean,* **requires interval data or ratio data**. When for example we wish to test the level possession of students for the A-Level Skills, we deal with interval data. When we wish to work with a **nominal** scale such as distinguishing between those who believe academic background is enough and those who believe otherwise (Yes, No), because of the type of scale, we may use the Chi-square approach.

The **chi-square** test allows us to test for significance in the analysis of frequency distributions. Thus categorical data on variables such as *sex, education,* or *dichotomous* (yes or no) answers may be statistically analyzed.

In my project i wish to test the **null hypothesis** that the number of students who believe that the academic background received (material they learn from books and in class) IS *enough* for preparing their entry into the business world *equals* the number of students who believe that academic background received is *NOT enough* for preparing them.

Ho: μ1=μ2

H1: μ1≠μ2

Our frequency distribution (based on our sample) suggests that the majority of the population (54%) believes that the academic background received is not enough for preparing their entry into the business world.

The computed **chi-square** value needs to be compared with the critical **chi-square** value associated with the *.05 probability level with 1 degree of freedom* (remember, degrees of freedom refers to the number of observations that can be varied without changing the constraints or assumptions associated with a numerical system= *df=k̲-1* where k̲= the

number of categorical responses-thus *df=2-1=1*). From the **chi-square** table the **chi-square** critical value is **3.84**. Since the calculated **chi-square (2.173)** is lower than the tabular one, the null hypothesis – that number of students who believe that the academic background received IS enough for preparing their entry into the business world *equals* the number of students who believe that academic background received is NOT enough for preparing them – IS NOT REJECTED.

Therefore we conclude that on a 95% confidence level there is NOT enough evidence to support that the number of students who believe that the academic background received is NOT enough for preparing their entry into the business world is higher than the number of those who believe is enough.

Therefore on this we cannot generalize on the population.

Table 4.4 - Chi-Square Test for Academic background received

q1

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Yes	179	193,5	-14,5
No	208	193,5	14,5
Total	387		

Test Statistics

	q1
Chi-Square[a]	*2,173*
df	*1*
Asymp. Sig.	*,140*

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected frequencies less than
5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 193,5.

The **null hypothesis** is that students are not neutrally (do not consider themselves) prepared in entering the business world.

Ho: $\mu=0$

H1: $\mu \neq 0$

As already mentioned, the significance level is a critical probability in choosing between the null and the alternative hypotheses. The level of significance determines the probability—say, .05 or .01—that is to be considered too low to warrant support of the null hypothesis (we reject the null hypothesis).

In our question, at 5% significance level the critical value is 1.96 and the t=83,243, so since the t-statistic falls in the rejection region we reject the null that students are not neutrally prepared in entering the business world and we accept the alternative hypothesis.

So we conclude that, **on a 95% confidence level, there is enough evidence to support that students are neutrally prepared to enter the business world (3.52)**.

Table 4.5 – Significance testing for preparation

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean
Preparion for entering the business world	380	3,52

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Preparion for entering the business world	83,243	379	,000	3,516

4.5 <u>Validation of Gap</u>

4.5.1 <u>Level of possession of A-Level Skills</u>

In focus groups students explained that it is impossible for a candidate to possess all skills and competencies that recruiters require. They believe, however, that most of these skills are universal for a business person, in other words, they are a must for any business environment. Nevertheless, they believe that a few of the A-level items are highly job-specific. A person who wishes to work in an advertising agency, for example, should probably be a creative thinker whereas an account manager must have good business knowledge.

Upon reading the skills and competencies on the card, they immediately remembered that in job interviews attended, recruiters had tried through different methods to assess their attainment level of a few of these skills. At the time they had not cognated the recruiters' aim, but now it made more sense.

Further to what students have noted in focus groups, the survey approach as described at the methodology section, aimed at statistically quantifying their perception as to the degree of possession of A-Level Skills. Figures that follow present the quantitative findings of the above as they were examined in the survey, followed by a hypothesis testing that aims to test as to whether results can be generalized to the population.
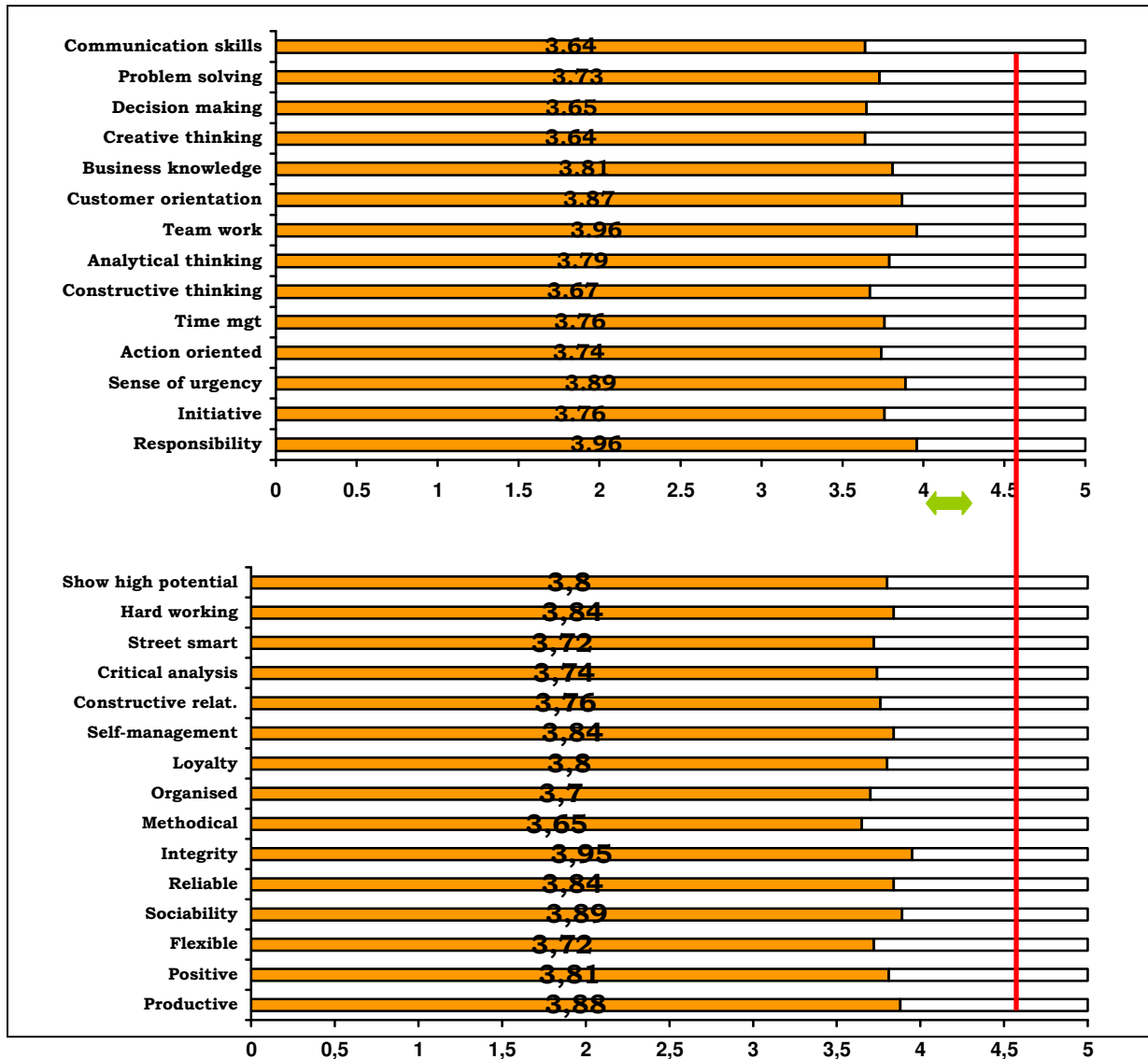
Figure 4.4 – Perception on the level of possession of skills and competencies

When statistically tested, students' perception on the possession of the skills seems to be on the neutral side. Students were asked to indicate in what degree they believe they posses (the University has provided to them) the A-Level skills and competencies. On a scale of 1-5, where 1= Extremely Low and 5=Extremely high, all skills are averaged between 3.0-4.0, with **Total Average Perceived Possession** being 3.78. Students of E.U.C seem to depict a bit higher levels of possession on having

integrity/honesty (being able to choose an ethical course of action), with average possession being 3,95, as well as being responsible (able to exert a high level of effort and insist towards goal attainment) and good team players with average being 3.96. Lower levels of possession exist on creative thinking (able to generate new ideas) with possession averaging on 3.64 and on communication skills (able to organize ideas and communicate orally) with average being 3.64.

Differences within gender exist only regarding honesty (men=3.83, women=4.07), sociability (men=3.71, women=4.08), responsibility (men=3.82, women=4.11) and sense of urgency (men=3.75, women=4.05) with women assessing them selves a bit higher than men in the above three skills.

Through discussion with my advisor, we have set the **Minimum Level of Possession** that a University student must posses before graduate, to be at 4.50. We believe that if we isolate the Total Average Perceived Possession (3.78) then we can conclude that it is already high, but it is our belief that there is a great room for improvement and we have the option to increase this level of possession, therefore making graduates better competitors in the business world. The formula that follows, depicts the gap that exists between Optimum and Perceived Current results.

GAP=Optimum Level of Possession (4.50) - Current Perceived Possession of Skills (3.78)

The **null hypothesis** is that possession by students of the above skills, competencies and personal qualities is not on the neutral side.

Ho: μ=0

H1: μ≠0

As already mentioned, the significance level is a critical probability in choosing between the null and the alternative hypotheses. The level of significance determines the probability—say, .05 or .01—that is to be considered too low to warrant support of the null hypothesis (we reject the null hypothesis).

In our question, at 5% significance level the critical value is 1.96 and the t1=79.427, t2......respectively, so since the t-statistic falls in the rejection region we reject the null hypothesis possession is not on the neutral side and we accept the alternative hypothesis.

So we conclude that, **on a 95% confidence level, possession by students of the above skills is on the neutral side**.

Table 4.6 – Significance testing for possession of skills and competencies

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Communication-Speaking	79,427	390	,000	3,639
Creative thinking	78,605	390	,000	3,637
Decision making	85,788	386	,000	3,649
Problem solving	84,100	386	,000	3,731
Responsibility	81,808	385	,000	3,961
Sociability	81,556	387	,000	3,887
Developing constructive relationships	81,950	385	,000	3,764
Self-management	84,636	382	,000	3,841
Integrity/honesty	78,894	385	,000	3,953
Loyalty	78,562	385	,000	3,795
Organized	82,354	382	,000	3,697
Methodical	78,767	383	,000	3,648
Reliable	91,772	382	,000	3,843
Flexible	79,592	385	,000	3,718
Positive/confident	83,641	386	,000	3,814
Productive	84,489	387	,000	3,876
Sense of urgency	81,420	385	,000	3,891
Determination-hard working	83,214	386	,000	3,840
Business knowledge	85,444	386	,000	3,811
Customer orientation	86,461	383	,000	3,867
Team work	82,230	384	,000	3,964
Initiative	80,875	383	,000	3,760
Analytical thinking	87,718	382	,000	3,791
Critical analysis	83,278	385	,000	3,736
Constructive thinking	81,003	385	,000	3,671
Time-management	79,078	386	,000	3,762
Show high potential	87,454	385	,000	3,803
Street smart	76,389	383	,000	3,716
Action oriented	82,817	388	,000	3,743

Cronbach's alpha varies from 0 to 1 and it increases as the number of items increases. In other words a scale with more items, should have a higher reliability. For large scales, alpha should probably be .80 or above.

In our case, alpha is quite large, .886 for skills and .895 for competencies. This is a strong evidence that the items form a reliable measure of the students' possession of skills and competencies.

Table 4.7 – Reliability test for possession of skills and competencies

Reliability Statistics for skills

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.886	13

Reliability Statistics for competencies

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.895	16

4.5.2 <u>Testing differences among more than two groups – Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)</u>

We turn now to a more general version of the t-test situation when there are more than two groups to compare. SPSS includes a special one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure, which allows a single predictor or independent variable. For a t-test with only two groups, this decision is unambiguous; if the result is significant, which mean is higher and which is lower is obvious. When using more than two groups a statistically significant result tells us only that it is unlikely that all of the group means in the population are the same, but not which groups are

different from each other. *The post hoc, or multiple comparison tests, provide this information.*

Post hoc tests are used to determine which means are statistically different from the means in the categories of the factor variable. **These tests are used only after the overall F test indicates that population differences exist**. In this example we will use the Bonferroni, a less conservative test to provide a contrast.

The output form oneway encompasses several tables. For the purpose of the project we will go through one example. If further information is requested it can be found in Appendix 3.

Table 4.8 – Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test for communication-speaking skill

Descriptives

Communication-Speaking

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
General Business	112	3,46	,889	,084	3,29	3,62	1	5
Accounting	90	3,69	,907	,096	3,50	3,88	1	5
Banking & Finance	29	3,55	1,270	,236	3,07	4,03	1	5
Economics	9	3,44	1,236	,412	2,49	4,39	1	5
Hospitality Mgt	22	3,82	,588	,125	3,56	4,08	3	5
Management	26	3,81	,849	,167	3,46	4,15	2	5
Mgt Information Systems	14	3,57	,938	,251	3,03	4,11	2	5
Marketing	36	3,75	,874	,146	3,45	4,05	2	5
Public Relations & Advertising	16	4,00	,632	,158	3,66	4,34	3	5
Sports Mgt	6	3,50	,548	,224	2,93	4,07	3	4
Human Resources	3	3,67	,577	,333	2,23	5,10	3	4
Other	26	3,85	,881	,173	3,49	4,20	2	5
Total	389	3,64	,907	,046	3,55	3,73	1	5

In analysis of variance, an F statistic is computed and used to test the null hypothesis of **no difference in the means**. For our purposes the F test is NOT significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, we conclude that there is NO statistically significant difference in mean **possession of communication skills across majors**.

ANOVA

Communication-Speaking

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	*9,830*	*11*	*,894*	*1,089*	*,369*
Within Groups	*309,501*	*377*	*,821*		
Total	*319,332*	*388*			

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) table provides a test of the further hypothesis that there is a relationship between possession of communication skills and major. The null hypothesis for the test is that there is **NO** relationship. The significance of the test is 0.369, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that, there is No relationship.

The overall F test demonstrated clearly that the means on the possession of communication skills across majors are equal. Had the F test indicated that there was a significant difference, then we could get further comparisons of the means so we could turn to the post hoc tests. The key column is the "Sig." column which contains the significance value of the various tests.

Referring to the Appendix 3, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results suggest that all of the pairwise comparisons between possession of communication skills and majors fail to reject the null hypothesis of no difference. Therefore there is **not** enough evidence to support that the mean possession of communication skills is different across majors.
Using the same procedure we have tested all *A-Level Skills* possession across major (refer to Appendix).

The same procedure was followed for all *A-Level Skills* possession across years of education. As mentioned earlier, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) table provides a test of the further hypothesis that there is a relationship between possession of communication skills and years of education. The null hypothesis for the test is that there is **NO** relationship. The significance of the test is 0.848, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that, there is **not** enough evidence to support that the mean possession of communication skills is different across years of education. All of the pairwise comparisons between possession of communication skills and year of education fail to reject the null hypothesis of no difference

4.5.3 MATRIX –Impact on fields of study

The previously mentioned A-Level Skills as revealed in our work, were investigated as to whether they apply or not to the University's Business courses. The analysis involved a total of 141 courses covering all Business Fields of the University and the aforementioned matrix was designed. Each course's syllabi was analyzed based on whether is able to offer, and in which degree, each of the A-Level skills, competencies and personal qualities that the business world is looking for. Specifically, based on my belief, it aimed to test which of the 29 *A-Level skills* are actually delivered through courses, and define the level to which each skill is delivered. A five point scale was used where 1=Not at all offered, 5= Completely offered.
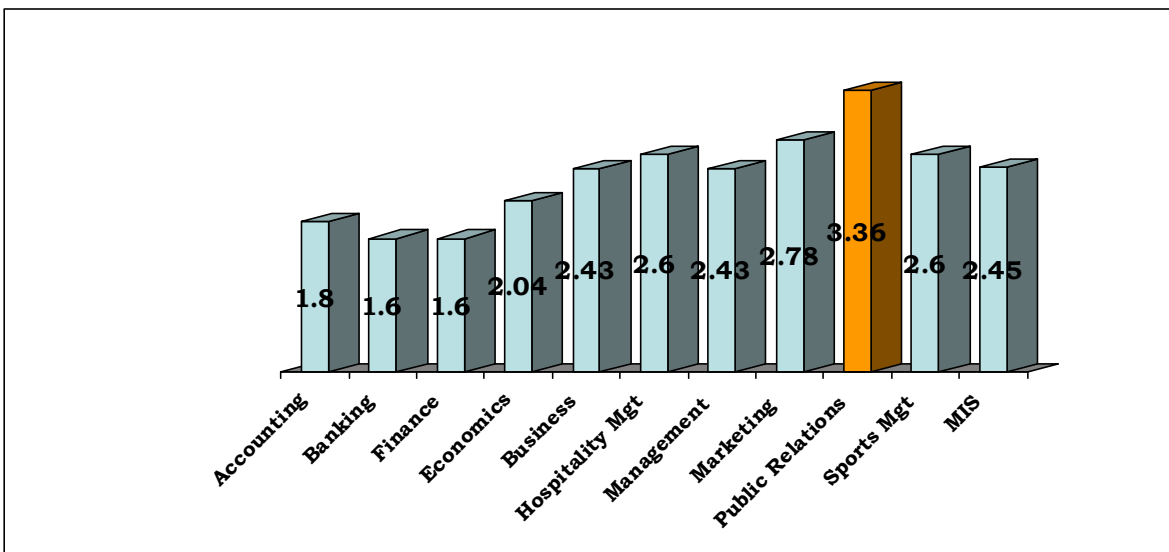
Figure 4.5 – Average impact on skills and competencies by field of study

The above figure depicts the *Total Average Impact* of each field of study on skills and competencies, and is based on all 29A-Level skills. More specifically, on a 5-point scale I have personally rated each skill and competence according to the degree that I believe is offered in each course independently and then I have calculated the average for each course (e.g. Principles of Microeconomics=1.75). Then, the mean of the

averages of the courses in a certain field of study was calculated, indicating the *Total Average impact by field of study*. This simply means that on average none of the above Business Fields is considered satisfactory in transfusing *All 29A-Level skills*. More effective among all majors in offering the skills, is Public Relations with an Average Impact of 3.36, even though it is well below the minimum level of possession (4.5) that we have set. We have to stress here that PR includes only four courses as compared with other fields that have a lot more.

Table 4.9 – Impact of Practical Courses on skills and competencies

Public Relations Audit - Project	**4,96**
Internship I in Hospitality Mgt	**4,65**
Internship in Sports Mgt	**4,48**
Internship II in Hospitality Mgt	**4,44**
Independent Study in Mgt	**4,0**
Business Senior Project	**4,13**
Independent Study in Mkt	**4,06**
Special Topics in Sports Mgt	**4,03**
MIS – Senior Project	**4,13**

A detailed analysis of each course is shown in the analytical tables that follow, but it is important to note that in Table 4.9, that depicts an analysis of each practical course independently, someone can easily conclude that courses that are more practical in nature, like Senior Projects, Independent Studies, Internships and Special Topics are all averaged above 4.0, with Internships even exceeding the minimum level of possession (4.5). More specifically, Internships I and II in Hospitality Management and Internship in Sports Management are averaged at 4.65, 4.44 and 4.48 respectively. Worth noting is the fact that Public Relations Audit is rated well above the minimum level of possession. Consequently,

this signifies that these courses are more able to pass on the required skills to students.

Furthermore, on the same scale, each skill and competence was also analysed based on how well it performs within all courses of the Business School (refer to figure 4.6) indicating the *Average Impact of Skills within all courses of the Business School*. None of the 29 A-Level skills is considered to being offered at a satisfactory level through all courses. All skills are averaged below 4.0, and are well below the minimum expected level (4.5). This simply means that even if a student goes through all majors of the Business School, he/she will not be able to capture all skills effectively. Someone though, is more able than any other skill to learn how to be "positive and confident" (display affirmation or acceptance and certainty, having a positive electric charge), with this being averaged at 3.82. On the other hand "loyalty" is averaged at the lowest level (1.23). It is clear that all courses together fail to teach students how to bind themselves intellectually or emotionally to a course of action.

Impact on skills and competencies
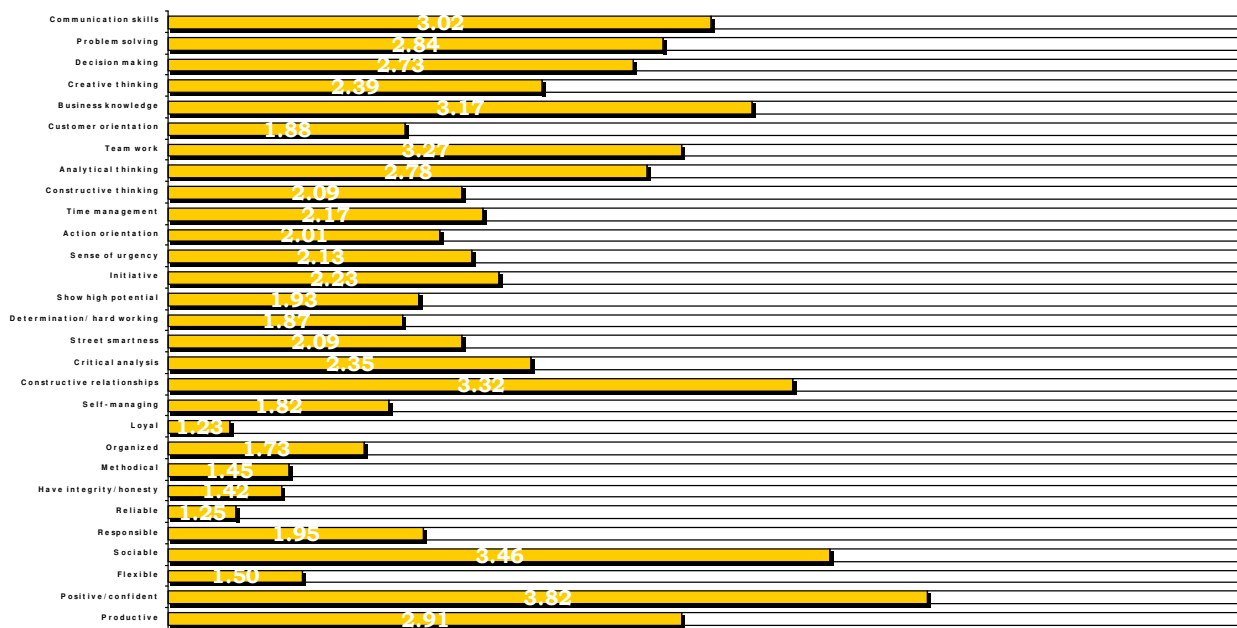
Figure 4.6 – Average impact of all courses on skills and competencies

4.6 <u>Methods to minimize the gap</u>

4.6.1 <u>Methods of introducing 'skills and competencies'</u>

To summarize, an original tool that consisted of all skills, competencies and personal qualities that the literature defines, was originally created and adjusted to fit the business world. This tool was investigated in in-depth interviews with employers who cited the most important skills for a successful career. Through employers' indications, the 29 A-Level index was created that was further investigated in focus groups. Based on students' belief, it was revealed that there is a gap between what the business world requires and what students possess. This gap was then validated in a survey based on students' perception and in a technical analysis of the courses' syllabi. In order to minimize the gap, methods for gaining skills and competencies were investigated in both in in-depth interviews with employers and in focus groups with students. The methods that students and employers have proposed for the more effective introduction of those skills to students are discussed below.

<u>Students</u> have indicated problem areas in which EUC should do things differently so that students are more prepared for their entry into the business world. They believe that they lack the excellent communication skills required by the working world. A reason for this is that students are asked to take **communication classes (refer to Appendix 4)** at the end of their studies, instead of at the beginning. This results in their missing out on opportunities to build up proper communication skills, to the point that they are afraid to make presentations and in general they graduate without having strong abilities in this area. They specifically recommend that communication classes should be required during the first year and that classes should be more practical with a smaller number of students. Additionally, a specific Powerpoint workshop must

be taught as a separate class during the first year. As we have seen, practitioners like Peterson (1997) underscore the importance of communication skills. Our finding based on which communication classes should be carefully taught, is backed by Peterson's finding based on which respondents who identify effective communication skills have more chances of employment. This clearly makes our finding even more important.

Moreover, **research** class (**refer to Appendix 4**) should be mandatory for all majors. Students are forced to undertake the "Senior Project" class but they are missing the basic research skills required for this class. Furthermore, they insist that European University instructors strictly adhere to the **prerequisite policy** It is more helpful, for example, for students to take the senior project course after they have finished the one on marketing research instead of doing these two classes simultaneously. The notion that research should be mandatory is in line with Zikmund who highlights the importance of research as a part for the business world. As he notes, research helps employees to predict how the market will respond to their decisions. It is also in direct line with the Government Social Research Handbook that defines a set of competencies like, designing, analyzing and drawing an evidence base, all of which are a part of today's business field.

Additionally, programs should be more **technology** oriented. Students should be asked to take tests and based on how good they are, they should be encouraged to take classes on Excel, Word, PowerPoint etc.

Lastly, students recommend that unnecessary multiple classes like history should be skipped. In addition, students of specific majors must be forced to take all classes of their major instead of selecting just a few of them. A marketing major student, for example, should take all possible marketing classes.

Regarding <u>recruiters</u>, in a sense there is the idea that personal qualities and competencies are sometimes ingrained through upbringing. Being organized, methodical, honest and reliable, for example, does not necessarily depend on what we learn in class. People who are spoiled by their parents will most probably lack a sense of responsibility. Or if a parent does not consistently ask children to tidy up their bedrooms, we will most probably not be organized. This eventually impacts on our professional career simply because we lack all the ingredients necessary to become successful.

However, there are certain steps that can be taken to counteract these inadequacies. Maria Georgiou, Regional Group Client Director, Retail Measurement Services, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (EEMEA) believes that students should strive to study abroad. Through this they can build up positive personal qualities and competencies. She states, "Students who study abroad on their own are more likely to practise their time management skills and build on their reliability and sense of urgency. Additionally, they are more likely to know how to prioritize tasks because they need to do so to survive."

Recruiters believe that besides studying abroad, there are certain ways through which we can infuse qualities or competencies to students at a university level. The majority of recruiters believe that skills and competencies can evolve through in-**class projects**. Working in teams, competing with others and at the same time having deadlines provide an excellent opportunity to build team working and time management skills. At the same time students can exert their leadership abilities while practicing their creative thinking. Students can learn discipline through class projects; instructors could urge them to deliver on time, thus building a sense of discipline and urgency. Additionally, students can be taught how to plan. Instructors can sit down with them, addressing the topic of procrastination, and explain the importance of time delivery.

Instructors can also teach students the importance of creating a schedule or keeping an agenda to order their work and ask them to use technology to do so. Educators can also teach students to set tasks and break those down into deliverables. They can coach them how to make a beginning, or else how to get started, as this is sometimes the most important hurdle. As recruiters highlight, this should be in the sense of coaching and not policing so that students build a philosophy of the right skills. For example, in a project, coaching them to write the first paragraph helps fight the blank page syndrome. Moreover, urging them to meet once a week to review their progress is also a good idea. Marios Ioannou, Internal Director at Gnomi Ltd, believes that instructors should factor in fewer exams and more team projects because the value that students get from projects is much higher.

Recruiters have specifically recommended that students should attend business **seminars** as they prove meritorious. Seminars that deal with time management, defusing hostile customers, and stress awareness are just a few examples from which students can greatly benefit. Obviously, this exposure can lead students to absorb techniques on how to manage their time or stress more effectively and furthermore, enlighten them about issues they have never considered. In my experience, for example, most students do not even know that the most productive hours are from 8-10 in the morning, during which an employee is supposed to do the more difficult tasks. During noon hours, 12:00-13:00 people are usually less productive, so they should use this time to accomplish easier tasks, like answering phone calls, emails or something similar.

Moreover, according to employers, E.U.C should call upon certain affiliations with organizations, asking representatives to make presentations specifically designed for students. This can take the form of **In-Class Guest Speakers** or visits to the company premises. These endeavors can provide a plethora of benefits since students will be

exposed to different approaches, styles and environments of which they are unaware. An excellent example would be if someone who is considered an expert or a leader in a field could visit a class of students and explain to them his/her style of managing people or the style of leadership he/she uses.

The idea that through more practical work, in-class projects, seminars and in-class guest speakers, students can develop important skills and competencies is clearly in line with our work. A significant finding that derived from our analysis of the matrix is the impact that the more practical courses have on skills and competencies. We have proved that the more practical the nature of a course or a seminar is the more able it is to effectively introduce the aforementioned skills and competencies.

An excellent idea recommended by the respondents is the introduction of a **specific class** that would explain and drive home the importance of the treasured skills and competences. Subjects discussed at seminars can be very easily taught in classes. The course, entitled "psychology of success" or "Skills and Competencies Introduction", could very easily introduce all these topics in the form of modules/units. The class should be taught during the first or second year, so that students have time to acquire the necessary skills that will help them through the rest of their degree. The primary aim of this course should be to inform students about the existence of all the different skills and competencies and then analyse each one separately as to the cross-over benefits to students; a further focus would be elucidating how each relates to a specific job position. Additionally, a first chapter for example could highlight the importance of problem solving skills and how these attained and developed through in-class projects. Additionally, a second chapter could emphasize the necessity of time management skills, of meeting deadlines and of fostering a sense of urgency; in short the unit aim would to illuminate the sense of discipline that students need when dealing with clients. At

the end of the semester, as part of the course assessment, students could undergo an interview process with a panel of instructors or real employers. Through 360 degree feedback, a profile will be created for each student; it will inform them about their strengths and weaknesses as well as suggest jobs that they might excel at and those for which they lack certain ingredients.

Lastly, employers insist that all students should definitely take at least one **Research Skills** class, making classes like this mandatory for all majors. In addition, instructors can have their students conduct some kind of research, either primary or secondary, for coursework. As evidenced through the literature review, research skills are extremely important nowadays and it is imperative that all students be provided with opportunities to develop them. Recruiters believe that students should be asked to progress through all aspects of the research process: Search for a topic; define the problem, set objectives, come up with solutions and ideas about how to solve the problem and of course present those to the rest of the class. From researching and self-based learning, students will ascertain how to be more creative and take initiatives as well as improving their analytical thinking and, most certainly, their communication skills.

4.7 <u>Practical experience</u>

4.7.1 <u>Definition of 'practical experience'</u>

Six business directors or managers who engage in recruiting and have different business backgrounds were in-depth interviewed. They clearly have a strong opinion on the matter and well understand the importance that experience has both for their organizations, but for students as well. Their suggestions are discussed below.

Recruiters define practical experience as working in an organization in a field relevant to the field of interest, for a solid period of at least a year, having a specific task and responsibilities. They elaborate saying that practical experience is the ability to know how to act and what to do on various work tasks in order to get the job done. Recruiters even go a step further highlighting that frequent job rotation is usually a problem in getting work experience because it does not allow candidates to build up their experience properly. George Sphictos, Director of Retail Measurement Services (RMS) at Nielsen Company, asserts that "a person needs at least 3 years in a certain job to be able to take something away from it." A person who constantly rotates on a job will simply lack the depth of experience needed.

4.7.2 <u>Importance of 'practical experience', on recruiters</u>

It is very important for recruiters that candidates possess some kind of practical experience relevant to their field of work because this means they have learned and developed certain skills or at least the job specifics. In general, this eases the selection process.

People with some kind of practical experience could easily be asked questions in an interview about their prior jobs and be selected more readily than somebody with no prior experience. Additionally, people with experience can supply references which most of the time greatly facilitates the recruitment process. Furthermore, it saves money and time on training. As they note, "On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the maximum a candidate can ever achieve, it is imperative to recruit someone who is at 5 or 6 rather than someone who is at zero. Obviously, the first worker will need less time and money to advance towards 10 on the scale". Also salient is the fact that candidates who have some kind of knowledge and balance when recruited adjust more easily. Kyriaki Miltiadous, Human Resource Manager at Sharelink Financial Services

(SFS) Group, highlights that "a person with some kind of practical experience will be able to adjust more easily and close the gap of the training period. Therefore, he/she will save the company a great deal of money from training".

There was a case of a recruiter, though, who mentioned that an entry level position might not require any experience. Nicos Mavroudis, Marketing Manager at Photosphodiades states, "As a matter of fact we prefer this situation. Fresh minds can adopt more easily." In these circumstances, recruiters usually prefer taking on new university graduates because company managers wish to train employees from scratch and obviously because they will receive less pay than an experienced person. In this case they do save money over the short run, but they risk investing more money over the long run. University graduates are usually in the "trial and error" process, meaning that after graduation they tend to rotate jobs until they find the one that they really like. Graduates might change job three or four times until they find what they are looking for, so a recruiter basically risks investing in someone with no future.

4.7.3 <u>Importance of 'practical experience', on candidates</u>

According to recruiters, it is imperative that a candidate possess at least basic practical experience when recruited. This gives them a competitive advantage over others, making it easier for them to adjust and as they are more productive, they can accelerate their career. They are usually more confident and empowered because they know the job; they are willing to take more chances and initiatives, are more flexible and are usually able to understand things better. Pavlos Kouris, at Foresights & Consultancy, articulates the fact that with some kind of experience, candidates' blindfolds are removed: They have the right mentality,

evaluate things better, ask the right questions and can do the job faster. Dominant is the fact that experience increases aspirants' self-esteem and places them in the right psychological position, therefore making them more confident. "Remember your emotions and how you felt the first day of your career. It is not a good feeling, is it?" Kyriaki Miltiadous, Human Resource Manager at Sharelink Financial Services (SFS) Group relates.

Finally, candidates with basic practical experience can be developed more easily. Take for example a person whose job has to do with managing people. Having some prior relevant experience, the new-hire can start producing immediately and his/her superiors will not have to worry about starting from scratch. Thus, companies save on the huge investment undertaken when hiring someone for training and assimilation.

When asked about practical experience, <u>students</u> emphasize that it is extremely important. They believe that they can learn things not found in books and build on competencies. Practical experience provides empirical skills as well as a way to see if individuals measure up in areas like productivity, responsibility and punctuality, skills that cannot always be evidenced in class. Additionally, experience can minimize the gap between theory and practice. A real job reveals the way students respond to difficulties, the way they treat problems and the way they communicate with others. They strongly believe that if they had been able to gain some experience while at college, it would have greatly helped them in the job- hunting process.

In line with the literature, the notion that practical experience is important is widespread in both the recruiters and students. We have investigated authors like Thomson and Cole (1997) who just like

recruiters they believe that individuals need technical skills integrated with practical knowledge to strategically lead the market.

Additionally, the University of Sydney (2005) supports the idea that student's getting work experience while at university is increasingly important and the options are endless and proposes that students need to be aware of the importance of adding value to a degree with work experience.

4.7.4 <u>Methods of gaining 'practical experience'</u>

Besides being in line with the literature as to the definition and importance, employers have proposed interesting method that as most of them have said, will assist in the creation of talent candidates. The methods they believe will be helpful in injecting students with practical experience before entering the business world are discussed below.

Internship, or at least Sandwich courses, was the first method mentioned by most recruiters. They maintain that this type of guided work practice is an excellent way to pass on some kind of experience to students. Kyriaki Miltiadous has further stressed the fact that internships should last for at least a year. According to recruiters, schools should stop asking students to undergo a final project and instead place them in a job related to their field of study, at which they could spend a year. Students putting their studies on hold before their senior year and work in a company for a year is also a good idea. As she asserts, less than a year is a very short period of time. Pavlos Kouris at Foresights & Consultancy has proposed the idea of earning credit for internships, and the company should produce a report assessing the candidate. With these stipulations, the candidate will take the job more seriously.

Recruiters also put forth that being a member of some kind of an **organization** is an excellent way to gain experience. For example, by being a member of the Advertising Organization students will have the chance to prepare presentations and present those at conferences while at the same time competing with other schools. By doing this, they gradually develop a sense of professionalism and they glimpse how things are done beyond the academic world.

Further, it is recruiters' belief that students can design competitions and industry experts can critique their productions and assign awards. For

example, in an advertising or a marketing class the projects can take the form of a competition. At the end of the semester the presentations can be presented to the Advertising Association, which can select the best project, give advice and assign awards. The competition could also be set up between universities; rivals could compete each other in a conference setting.

Short Placements came up in the discussion with recruiters as a good way for students to   gain experience. Through affiliations with organizations, students can be placed in companies for a month (like a mini internship) towards the end of their degrees just before graduating. The company will require the student to take part in a specified project. The project can be something small but should serve as a performance platform; at the end, students will prepare a portfolio of what they have done and most importantly, a self-assessment report of what they have learned. A brief presentation of a mere three to four slides can take place to ensure that students can communicate the objectives set, the steps followed, the analysis undertaken, and what they have learned. Employers will rate these students on certain competencies, giving feedback specifically on strengths and weakness, with recommendations for improvement. For example, the employers will let the students know that their organizational and time management skills are substantial whereas their communication skills need improvement. The short placement is a win-win situation because students will get solid experience out of it and the company will have the option to keep them if they stand out.

Furthermore, this practical experience could take the form of a larger scale project like a marketing plan. Companies can save money spent on hiring experts to put together plans, and students will have the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned in class.

Short placements would be even more effective if done on a regular basis, maybe twice a year, continuing on from the very beginning of the students' academic work until the end. They could even take place through certain classes. For example, while taking Marketing Research, learners could be placed in a research agency for 2 days and undergo a similar procedure.

Just having students **visit** a number of companies and talk to the heads and employees of each department would provide students vicarious experience, recruiters believe. On a second step companies could even hire students on a temporary or permanent basis.

European University should additionally incorporate the use of **Graduate assistants.** GAs are students hired in a specific department, assigned to one to two professors whom they assist in grading papers, keeping scores, conducting research or even, in some instances, teaching classes. This is an excellent opportunity to gain on-site experience.

Inviting guest speakers is an excellent way to transfer students their experience and knowledge in class. European University could cooperate with organizations like the Advertising Association; ask them to provide seminars with experts in this field in the form of class speakers.

Attending **seminars** on subjects like client relationships; defusing hostile clients; and/or time, people and stress management presents another option from which students can get a feel for how experts deal with real problems in the business world.

Lastly, an interesting idea that came out was providing students an in-class hands-on **simulation game**. In this context, students will have to make real-life decisions. Linking the process and outcome of the game to

their final grade will force students to pay extra attention, motivating them to play correctly.

Most methods proposed by recruiters are in line with the relevant literature. Internships, organization memberships, visits in companies and seminars have all being discussed by Anon (2003) and seem to be important options for gaining experience.

5) <u>CONCLUSION</u>

5.1 <u>Discussion and summary of the main findings</u>

According to focus groups results, students in general believe to be quite satisfied from the ***academic background received*** at European University. Survey results additionally prove that the majority of students believe that just the academic background received, is not enough for preparing their entry in the business world.

Just like recruiters, students ***define*** skills as something that can be acquired or learned and mostly related to specific job responsibilities. A competency, on the other hand, has to do with character-based traits and as they all seem to agree, a person either possesses it or not but it can be developed through work experience.

More over, in general the survey depicts that students seem to realize the ***importance*** of skills, competencies and practical experience, but through exploratory research we have indicated that they have not yet realised the <u>exact</u> importance of having such skills. Students are in no position to grasp the idea of <u>why</u> skills are important, <u>how</u> can they benefited or differentiate themselves from others by possessing such skills and how they can <u>use</u> those skills towards their benefit to work up the ladder.

Even though students are on the right track regarding their belief about the business world, they understand that organizations look for candidates who can do the job and that recruiters look beyond just the degree. They have not yet internalized, though, the deep importance of having such skills, that the supply of candidates who possess the right skills and competencies is short and that finding qualified people is very difficult as not many people have what it takes to do the job. They are in

no position at the moment to know that a person with skills and competencies can work up the ladder faster, especially if endowed with the proper set for the complexity of the current business world. Additionally, they do not yet understand that since the pool of such people is limited, simply having the right skills and competencies differentiates one candidate from another. On the other hand, recruiters know the exact benefits of the endowments, both for the candidate and for their businesses. They have grasped that most of them are universal for all organizations and for all positions, even though a few of them depend highly on the field of work somebody is in. For example "business knowledge" according to which someone should have knowledge of the external market, depends on the industry that a person works in. On the other hand, a person should be loyal, honest and reliable at all times.

Exploratory research suggests that students perceive to realize their **lack** of skills and competencies. Survey findings indicate that this is actually true and that based on students' perception, a Gap between what the business world is looking for and what European University offers really exists. Through focus groups (refer to table 4.3.1, page 83) we have identified a perceived **gap** between what students perceive to posses and what the business world requires. Students in those groups noted to have learned how to be good team players, how to be organized, how to manage their time efficiently and how to express their views with confidence (being positive), indicating furthermore that they lack the rest of the qualities that recruiters deem important. Out of the 29 A-Level skills, competencies and personal qualities supplied by recruiters, students cited to posses the four mentioned above and to be familiar with only eleven: Being positive and confident, organized, productive, and responsible; having a sense of urgency as well as the abilities for team work, development of constructive relationships, problem solving, time

management, creative thinking and decision making. The rest of the primary skills were not known to students.

The above gap was then validated through empirical means. When was statistically tested, perception on the possession of the 29A- Level skills was found to be on the neutral side with **Total Average Perceived Possession** being 3.78. All skills were found to average below 4.0 on a 5-point scale. Even the above four skills students have indicated in focus groups to have learned, are neutrally averaged. Based on this we have validated the gap to be even higher.

Based on the fact that average perception on the possession for each skill is well below the University minimum level requirement (4.50), with the **Total Average Perceived Possession** (3.78) also being below the bar, we therefore conclude that a gap between what the Business world requires and what European University offers, practically exists. Add to that, the fact that when students were asked to indicate the degree of possession, they have probably overrated their answers. This merely means that the perceived **Gap** is probably even higher.

Furthermore, through further investigation, with the use of the matrix, of my personal perceived degree to which the 29 *A-Level skills* are actually delivered through courses, and the assessment of the level to which each of those is delivered, we have seen that the *Average Impact of Skills within all courses of the Business School* indicates that none of the 29 A-Level skills is considered to being offered at a satisfactory level through all courses. All skills are averaged below 4.0, and are well below the minimum expected level (4.5), validating our finding once more that the perception that a **gap** exists is true.

Students are in no position to judge whether European University is able as an institution to ***introduce to them*** all these skills. All they realize is that they lack most of them and that European University does not do a

very good job at the moment at providing those skills to them. In addition, they have expressed the belief that it is not feasible for them to acquire most of these skills while at a university level, which reflects a lack of awareness of possibilities. On the contrary, there are many ways as cited by recruiters through which most, if not all, of these skills can be developed.

As suggested by recruiters through practical experience, but also through in-class projects, seminars, guest speakers or specifically designed classes, students could potentially develop all of the above skills. Regarding practical experience, both students and recruiters deem this imperative as it is considered valuable in developing a plethora of the previously mentioned skills. It seems that European University is not using available methods to provide some kind of practical experience to students. Students suggest that the university should utilize methods to help its customers/learners acquire more practical experience in order to develop most of the *A-Level skills.*

Ensuring that everyone leaving European University possesses the skills and competencies investigated in this project should be a mission for the university. In a similar way this should also be a mission for all academic institutions. In the 21st century, in a member union state, young people should be in a position to graduate endowed with these basics. To succeed in this, European University must face making fundamental alterations which will require significant reorganization. Therefore, I am providing my recommendations, as derived through this work, which outline the changes that the university's management must undergo to close the gap.

5.2 <u>Recommendations</u>

The analysis section as it was discussed earlier is synthesized to the literature review. As it was earlier discussed, the findings of the project are in line with the relevant literature. For example, in line to our results we have seen scholars like Peterson (1997) and Casey (1985), critiquing on the importance of skills and competencies. Additionally, scholars like Yeung et al. (2002), have long proposed that students need to learn business ethics and values to cope with the management decision-making process and they assert that schools, colleges and universities should give priority to the teaching of "business ethics" as it impacts on a student's moral development and future career in the industry. Wilson (2006), has added to that, clearly indicating that most organizations do not specifically look for very high great point averages, but instead firms and organizations usually look for qualities such as integrity, honesty and reliability. We have noted that this is in line with our findings. We have seen that recruiters in Cyprus, just like the literature notes, clearly respect candidates who show ethical behavior, like integrity and honesty, which as they say, are important qualities necessary for building strong bonds with clients. Further to this, they seek employees who show responsibility as well as the ability to work in teams.

Therefore, the recommendations that follow are derived from findings, as those were discussed in the project, and are rooted in the literature. Section 4.6.1 of the analysis chapter discusses the methods that employers and students have proposed that will assist in students being introduced at skills and competencies. In the same way section 4.7.4 discusses the methods that employers believe are effective in passing over students with practical experience prior to their graduation. Recommendations regarding introducing skills and competences are derived directly by the research findings (section 4.6.1). Furthermore, recommendations regarding gaining practical experience are derived

directly from the research findings (section 4.7.4) and the literature (section 2.2) that outlines different ways through which a student can obtain practical experience.

In order to more effectively introduce the required <u>skills and competencies</u> to students, institutions should incorporate the following into their teaching methods:

a. **Students should be asked to go through some kind of an in-class project throughout their curriculum. The project should be a team project, consisting of 3-4 students so that each member is forced to participate. In larger groups there is a tendency for unmotivated students to become freeloaders.**

1. **Students should be urged to have a sense of discipline and to be punctual. They should be urged to be in class on time.**
2. **Students should be introduced the steps in planning.**
3. **Among other concepts, students should be introduced to the real meaning of being "organized", "methodical", "honest" "reliable", and "responsible" as these traits are not inherent.**
4. **Students should be urged not to leave things to the very last moment and be explained the importance of time delivery. They should be introduced to ways of learning how to keep their deadlines.**
5. **Students should be introduced to the importance of keeping a schedule or an agenda for their tasks and if possible, they should be urged to use technology to do so.**

6. **Students should be urged on how to set tasks and break them down into deliverables.**

7. **Instructors should act as mentors, coach students how to make a "beginning" in their tasks. For example in a project, coaching them through the first paragraph gets the momentum started.**

8. **Instructors should provide advice, setting up regular meetings to check student progress. This should be carried out in the spirit of coaching and not policing so that students develop a sense of trust.**

9. **Exams should be used, but in-class projects and practical work should have a significant weight in the overall grade.**

b. **Instructors should make use of in-class _guest speakers_ either in the form of a single person or in the form of a business team. Guest speakers can bring their experience into the classroom through examples or by elucidating styles of managing people, leadership styles, etc. In another approach, an organization could simply design student tailor-made presentations.**

c. **If a guest speaker is not possible, instructors should ask students to attend _seminars_ on related subjects. This participation can take the form of extra credit so that students are more motivated.**

d. **A _specific class_ entitled "Skills and Competencies Introduction" should be designed and taught, introducing all the aforementioned subjects in the form of modules/units. The class should be required during the first year, so that students are able to acquire the necessary skills to help them through the rest of their degree. Aiming to inform students about the existence of all the different skills and**

competencies, the course would provide an analysis of each one separately; it would reveal benefits that can transfer to students and highlight how each one relates to a specific job position, employing all methods possible to pass this vital information to students (guest speakers, in-class projects, discussions, etc). At the end of the semester, students could go through an Interview process with a panel of instructors or real employers for assessment. Through 360 degree feedback, a profile would be created for each student, to impart strengths and weaknesses as well as to divulge jobs they might be good at and those for which they lack certain elements.

e. *Research* should become mandatory for all majors as this will increase the ability of students to define a problem and follow a path of action to solve that problem.

f. Students should be urged to conduct some kind of research either *primary or secondary*. Students should be asked to search for a topic; defining the problem, set objectives, come up with solutions and ideas about how to solve the problem and of course present those to the rest of the class.

g. Communication classes should become mandatory in the first year. This will build on students' confidence to perform better presentations.

h. A specific *Powerpoint Class* should become mandatory in the first year so that students become skilful in designing presentations.

i. *Prerequisites* should be strictly adhered to; for example, Research should not be taken along with Senior Project. If students attend Research first, they will develop basic research skills that will enable them to be more productive in completing the Senior Project.

j. **Unnecessary classes should be eliminated/replaced in each path as much as possible and students should be allowed to take *more classes or electives* within their majors. E.g. multiple history classes for business majors.**

k. **Students should be examined as to how well *technology-oriented* they are and based on this, they could be required to take Excel, Word and Powerpoint classes.**

l. **More class *discussions* about real-life (local) topics, sparked by case studies or any other possible stimulus, should be originated from instructors. This will cultivate students' critical thinking and confidence.**

In order to assist students in gaining practical experience, institutions should incorporate the following in its curriculum:

a. **Departments should be asked to create *professional organizations*. The business department can create an advertising or research association. Students should be urged to join these groups, in which they could prepare presentations to compete with other schools or to present at conferences.**

b. **Students should be urged to present their in-class projects to these organizations, at the end of the semester, in the form of a competition, at which industry experts can critique and assign awards.**

c. **If possible, institutions should incorporate *Internships* into its curriculum paths. For example, instead of going through a Senior Project, all students should be placed in a job related to their specific area of study for at least six months and then prepare a summary or a presentation of what they have done**

or learned. They would function as regular employees and the job could be paid or unpaid, depending on each company. A report should also be originated from that company assessing the candidate.

d. **Instructors should have their classes _visit_ certain organizations. This will take the form of touring around the departments, talking to the heads or other employees to get a feel for how things are done in reality.**

e. **Instructors should make use of expert and knowledgeable in-class _guest speakers_ as these people will bring their experience in class.**

f. **Instructors should utilize _short placements_. Through affiliations with organizations, students can be placed in a company for a month and be specifically asked to produce a specified culminating project in lieu of their in-class one. The project can be something small but reflective and at the end students will present a portfolio containing evidence of what they have done but most importantly, what they have learned. A presentation of just three to four slides can take place just to make sure that students can communicate the objectives set, the steps followed, the analysis undertaken, and the knowledge learned. Employers will rate these students on certain competencies, letting them know specifically what their strengths and weaknesses are, with recommendations for improvement.**

g. **In a similar way, instructors could also facilitate/encourage students' being _placed_ in an organization for a very short period of time, for example two days, with an extra-credit incentive.**

h. **Instructors should incorporate _games_ in their classes, ones in which students make undertake real-life decisions. These**

activities can be simulations or take any form requiring students to make real decisions that will affect the future of their imaginary companies. Participation in these games should be a part of their grade, thereby keeping them motivated to invest in the process and outcome.

i. **Institutions should seriously consider the use of GAs. _Graduate Assistants_, assigned to one or two instructors, would assist them in grading papers, recording scores, conducting research and, in extreme cases, even replacing them in class. GAs should be graduate students only and should be given a discount on tuition, and/or paid on a monthly basis.**

j. **Students should be urged to get a _part time_ or at least a summer job while studying.**

k. **Students should be prompted to seek relevant "_Job Shadow_" situations.**

l. **Students should be inspired to participate in _Study Abroad Programs_. This will result in more confident and mature students.**

m. **Students should be urged join student _organisations or clubs_.**

Besides all previously stated, I personally believe that effective pre-college career guidance is also imperative for students, so that they can make the best start to their lives. Frequently, students lack the skills and knowledge to make the right decision as to which class they should take or when. Therefore they end up getting advice from others. Services like the university's Career Office or trained advisors are essential to nurturing career and learning ambitions and to ensure that students make informed decisions. Therefore, advisors in the university as well as employees in the Career Office should be informed about the outcomes of this work so that they are better able to pass on the right advice.

I certainly believe that the approach used in this work was appropriate. I have used both the qualitative and quantitative approaches, incorporating secondary research, focus group sessions, in-depth interviews and a survey. Attention was given to the sampling methods and method of gathering data as well as to ethical considerations. Lastly, the work done was approached with the greatest responsibility and ethical concerns.

As previously explained, this project is expected to have significant impact upon the university and to be of value to others. The way this project was approached lays the groundwork/underscores the need for fundamental changes in both the curriculum and instructors' teaching methods. The project has enlisted key stakeholders, employers and students, all of whom had a strong voice in its outcome. The work undertaken reflects closely the ideas and views of all.

I strongly believe that the voices of all stakeholders will have a strong impact on European University as an organization and will provide a solution as to the problem under investigation. The work undertaken presents a new challenge to the university and to students, to help further entrench a culture of learning, ensuring that students get what they need to move on in life. Through this project we have seen that employers and students have a strong, coherent voice; this recognition will lead to the fostering of an environment in which knowledge is created, shared, harnessed and used for the benefit of the university, its employees, its customers and its affiliates.

5.3 <u>Limitations</u>

Despite its significant impact upon stakeholders, the study is subject to limitations. Firstly, it should be noted that the study measures <u>perceived</u>

possession and not actual one. Methods to assess actual possession, like certain tests were not utilized, instead students were asked to indicate what they believe they possess. In addition, the matrix was conducted based on my personal perception. This constitutes a limitation in the sense that findings might be slightly different than they should be, if we perform actual tests of possession.

To the above limitations we should add the problem of subjectivity. At the survey, students were asked to rate them selves on the degree they believe they possess the 29 skills and competencies. It is obvious that when students were asked to rate themselves, rating was probably in their favor.

In addition, the examination of the syllabi is also subject to my personal subjectivity. When reading each syllabi, the rating provided was based on my personal view and understanding of the degree to which each course is able to offer each of the 29 skills.

The above two limitations are understandable and were taken into consideration throughout the study. After discussion with my advisor we concluded that they neither seriously impact the approach nor the results of the study.

Word count (37,343)

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APPENDIX 1

a. <u>Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills</u> **(SCANS)** <u>Skills and Personal Qualities</u>

Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens, and speaks.

- *Reading* - locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules.

- *Writing* - communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts.

- *Arithmetic/mathematics* - performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.

- *Listening* - receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues.

- *Speaking* - organizes ideas and communicates orally.

Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons.

- *Creative thinking* - generates new ideas.

- *Decision making* - specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternatives.

- *Problem solving* - recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action.

- *Visualizing* - organizes and processes symbols.

- *Knowing how to learn* - uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills.
- *Reasoning* - discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem.

Personal Qualities: Responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty.

- *Responsibility* - exerts a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment.
- *Self-esteem* - believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self.
- *Sociability* - demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings.
- *Self-management* - assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress, and exhibits self-control.
- *Integrity/honesty* - chooses ethical courses of action.

SCANS' Five **Competencies**

Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources

- *Time* - selects goal-relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules.
- *Money* - uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives.
- *Material and facilities* - acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently.
- *Human resources* - assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback.

Interpersonal: Works with others

- *Participates as member of a team* - contributes to group effort.

- *Teaches others new skills*
- *Services clients/customers* - works to satisfy customer expectations.
- *Exercises leadership* - communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies.
- *Negotiates* - works toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolves divergent interests.
- *Works with diversity* - works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds.

Information: Acquires and evaluates information

- *Acquires and evaluates information*
- *Organizes and maintains information*
- *Interprets and communicates information*
- *Uses computers to process information*

Systems: Understands complex interrelationships

- *Understands systems* - knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them.
- *Monitors and corrects performance* - distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses deviations in systems performance and corrects malfunctions.
- *Improves or designs systems* - suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance.

Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

- *Selects technology* - chooses procedures, tools, or equipment including computers and related technologies.

- *Applies technology to task* - understands intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment.
- *Maintains and troubleshoots equipment* - prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies.

c. Other Personal Qualities that were indicated by **employers** in-depth interviews and are not included in the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and Government of Social Research Handbook (GSR)

- **Flexible** – *able to adjust readily to different conditions, makes or willing to make concessions.*

- **Handle pressure** – *works under strict deadlines.*

- **Loyalty** - *the act of binding yourself (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action, unwavering in devotion to friend, vow or cause.*

- **Organized** (have an organized mind) - *formed into a structured or coherent whole, methodical and efficient in arrangement or function.*

- **Methodical** - *characterized by method and orderliness.*

- **Reliable** - *giving the same result on successive trials, high degree of certainty and predictability for a desired outcome.*

- **Positive** - *characterized by or displaying affirmation or acceptance or certainty, having a positive electric charge.*

- **Productive** – *producing or capable of producing at high levels.*

- **Ethical** - *conforming to accepted standards of social or professional behavior.*

- **Show high potential** - *constantly show signs of improvement.*

- **Action oriented -** *always ready to take actions in solving a problem.*

d. Government Social Research Handbook **(GSR)**

Delivery skills

Policy and delivery focus - *Understands and directs effort to meet the customer's needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.*

Delivering results - *Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritizing as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.*

Learning and improving - *Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.*

Intellectual capacity

Critical analysis and decision-making - *Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesize and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others to do so); assesses risk, and defends decisions and action; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.*

Constructive thinking - *Thinks imaginatively while keeping the goal in mind; understands the bigger picture and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind with the intellectual rigor to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; able to facilitate, encourage and build upon ideas of others.*

Professional expertise - *Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness.*

Interpersonal skills

Developing constructive relationships - *Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows an awareness of the effects of own behavior on others, and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.*

Communicating with impact - *Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.*

Leadership and management

Leading and directing *- Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.*

Name: Nasios Orinos   Student Number: M00089628

APPENDIX 3 / Courses 1 — Skills and Competencies		Practical Book Keeping	Intr. To Financial Acc.	Intr.to Managerial Acc.	Principles of Accounting	Intermediate accounting I	Cost of managerial Acc.	Intermediate Accounting II	Accounting framework	Tax Framework	Cyprus Taxation	European Accounting	Introduction to Auditing	Consolidations	Inf. Systems for Accountants	Computer Applications in Acc.	Advanced Cost & Mgt Acc.	Advanced Financial Reporting	Advanced Business Taxation	Financial Statement Analysis
B.1	Communication Skills	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	2	5	4	2	5	1	4
B.2	Problem solving	4	5	5	3	2	2	4	3	2	2	2	3	2	5	2	1	5	3	5
B.3	Decision making	4	4	5	3	2	5	4	3	2	1	1	3	1	5	1	1	5	3	3
B.4	Creative thinking	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	1	5	1	1	5	3	3
B.5	Business knowledge	1	5	2	4	4	2	2	5	5	4	4	4	2	3	1	4	3	4	1
B.6	Customer orientation	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
B.7	Team work	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	5	2	5	5	2	5	1	5
B.8	Analytical thinking	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	5	3	4
B.9	Constructive thinking	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	3
B.10	Time management	2	2	5	2	2	5	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2
B.11	Action oriented	3	3	4	3	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	4
B.12	Sense of urgency	2	2	4	2	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	4
B.13	Initiative	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	3	1	4
B.14	Show high potential	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	3	1	1
B.15	Hard working (determined)	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	1	1
B.16	Street smart	4	3	4	3	2	2	1	1	5	5	4	5	1	4	1	1	2	2	1
B.17	Critical analysis	4	4	4	4	2	1	3	5	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	4	5	3	3
B.18	Constructive relationships	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	3	3	2	5	5	2	4	2	4
B.19	Self-management	2	2	4	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
B.20	Loyalty	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.21	Organized	1	1	2	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
B.22	Methodical	1	1	3	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
B.23	Integrity/honesty	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.24	Reliable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
B.25	Responsibility	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
B.26	Sociability (able to adjust)	1	3	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	2	5	5	3	5	2	5
B.27	Flexible	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.28	Positive/confident	2	4	2	3	2	1	1	1	5	5	5	5	2	5	5	2	5	4	5
B.29	Productive	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	5	3	1	5	3	3

Name: Nasios Orinos   Student Number: M00089628

Courses 2 / Skills and Competencies		Advanced Audit & Internal Review	Advamced Accounting Theory	Special Topics in Financial Acc.	International Accounting	Financial Mgt & Control	The Business of Banking	Banking Operations - UK lending	Financial Services	Law relating to Banking services	Banking Operations-Regulations	Essentials of Financial Analysis	Personal Finance	Topics in Managerial Finance	Multinational Business Finance	International Trade Finance	Investments	Portfolio Mgt	Financial Analysis	Starting a New Business
B.1	Communication Skills	1	4	1	4	1	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
B.2	Problem solving	1	4	5	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	4	1	4	1	1	4	1	4	3
B.3	Decision making	1	3	4	3	2	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	5	1	1	2	1	1	3
B.4	Creative thinking	1	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
B.5	Business knowledge	3	3	1	5	3	3	1	3	1	5	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	3
B.6	Customer orientation	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	3	3	1	2
B.7	Team work	1	5	1	5	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	1	2	2	3
B.8	Analytical thinking	1	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	1	5	1	1	4	1	4	3
B.9	Constructive thinking	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	2
B.10	Time management	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
B.11	Action oriented	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
B.12	Sense of urgency	1	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.13	Initiative	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.14	Show high potential	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.15	Hard working (determined)	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
B.16	Street smart	2	1	1	5	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
B.17	Critical analysis	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1
B.18	Constructive relationships	2	5	1	5	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	1	2	3	3
B.19	Self-management	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.20	Loyalty	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.21	Organized	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
B.22	Methodical	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.23	Integrity/honesty	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.24	Reliable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.25	Responsibility	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.26	Sociability (able to adjust)	2	5	1	5	1	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	3
B.27	Flexible	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.28	Positive/confident	4	5	2	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	1	4	4	4
B.29	Productive	1	1	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1

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Courses 3 **Skills and Competencies**		Venture Capital	Mergers and Acquisitions	Financial Markets and Institution	Options and Futures	Independent Study in Finance	Principles of Microeconomics	Principles of Macroeconomics	Principles of Economics	The Cyprus economy	Economics of the European Union	Mathematics for Economics	European Industrial Relations	Intermediate Microeconomics	Intermediate Macroeconomics	Labor economics	Economic Devel. & Growth	Money and Banking	Managerial Economics	International Trade
B.1	Communication Skills	2	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	3	4	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
B.2	Problem solving	1	2	2	2	4	3	3	1	3	2	4	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
B.3	Decision making	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1	5	1
B.4	Creative thinking	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	1	2	3	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.5	Business knowledge	2	2	2	2	3	4	5	3	4	5	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2
B.6	Customer orientation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1
B.7	Team work	2	3	3	3	5	1	1	3	3	4	1	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
B.8	Analytical thinking	1	1	1	1	4	5	5	1	5	2	5	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
B.9	Constructive thinking	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
B.10	Time management	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	4	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	1	2
B.11	Action oriented	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	3	1
B.12	Sense of urgency	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	2
B.13	Initiative	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	3	3	3	3	1	2
B.14	Show high potential	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.15	Hard working (determined)	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.16	Street smart	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.17	Critical analysis	3	1	2	2	5	2	5	1	2	5	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
B.18	Constructive relationships	2	3	3	3	5	2	2	3	3	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
B.19	Self-management	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.20	Loyalty	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.21	Organized	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
B.22	Methodical	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.23	Integrity/honesty	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.24	Reliable	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.25	Responsibility	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	2
B.26	Sociability (able to adjust)	3	3	2	2	5	2	2	3	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
B.27	Flexible	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.28	Positive/confident	4	3	3	3	5	2	2	4	4	5	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
B.29	Productive	1	2	2	2	5	1	1	3	3	3	1	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

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Courses 4 / Skills and Competencies		Open Economy Macroeconomics	Econometrics	International Economics	Current Issues in Economics	Independent Study in economics	Introduction to Business	International Business	Business Policy and Str. Mgt	Senior Project	Introd. To Hospitality Mgt	Principles & Practices of Tourism	Mkt Mgt for the Hospital. Industry	Food & Beverage Operations	Practicum in Food & Beverage	Internship I	Front Office Mgt	European Tourism & Hospitality	Food, Beverage and Labor Cost	Convention Mgt and Group sales
B.1	Communication Skills	4	4	5	4	5	2	3	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	1	2	4
B.2	Problem solving	1	5	3	4	5	3	1	5	5	1	2	3	3	5	5	4	1	3	1
B.3	Decision making	1	1	3	2	5	1	1	5	5	1	2	3	1	4	4	2	1	1	2
B.4	Creative thinking	1	1	4	2	5	1	1	4	5	1	1	2	1	3	3	2	1	1	2
B.5	Business knowledge	3	3	4	1	2	4	4	2	4	3	3	3	2	4	4	3	3	2	3
B.6	Customer orientation	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	1	1	4	4	3	5	4	1	3	4
B.7	Team work	3	3	3	5	2	2	3	5	5	3	4	4	2	5	5	2	3	3	2
B.8	Analytical thinking	1	5	5	4	5	1	1	5	4	1	1	4	1	5	5	3	1	3	1
B.9	Constructive thinking	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	4	4	1	3	3	1	3	4	2	2	2	1
B.10	Time management	2	2	2	3	5	2	2	3	5	3	3	2	2	3	5	2	1	1	2
B.11	Action oriented	1	1	1	2	4	1	1	5	4	1	2	4	1	4	4	1	1	1	1
B.12	Sense of urgency	3	3	2	3	5	1	2	3	5	3	3	3	2	3	5	2	1	1	2
B.13	Initiative	2	2	2	3	5	1	1	1	5	2	3	3	2	4	5	2	1	1	1
B.14	Show high potential	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	4	1	1	4	3	4	4	1	1	1	1
B.15	Hard working (determined)	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	2	4	2	2	4	1	4	5	2	1	1	1
B.16	Street smart	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	4	1	1	2	1	2	4	1	1	1	1
B.17	Critical analysis	1	4	5	1	3	1	1	4	5	1	2	2	1	3	5	1	2	1	1
B.18	Constructive relationships	4	4	5	5	2	1	3	5	5	3	4	2	2	5	5	3	3	1	3
B.19	Self-management	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	2	5	1	1	2	2	4	4	1	1	1	1
B.20	Loyalty	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1
B.21	Organized	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	4	5	3	1	1	3
B.22	Methodical	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	2	4	1	1	1	1
B.23	Integrity/honesty	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1
B.24	Reliable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1
B.25	Responsibility	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	4	3	4	2	2	3	5	2	1	1	2
B.26	Sociability (able to adjust)	4	4	5	5	2	2	3	5	5	4	5	3	3	5	5	3	3	1	3
B.27	Flexible	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	5	1	1	1	1
B.28	Positive/confident	3	3	5	4	3	2	2	5	5	3	4	5	3	5	5	5	4	1	4
B.29	Productive	1	3	3	3	4	1	1	4	5	3	4	4	3	5	5	3	3	1	1

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Courses 5 **Skills and Competencies**		Internship II	Seminars in Hospitality Mgt	Principles of Mgt	Production and Operations Mgt	Personnel and HRM	Organizational Behavior	Small Business Mgt	Mgt Consulting	Business & Society	International Mgt	Mgt of Services	Mgt Science	Managing Change	Indep. Study in Mgt	Special Topics in Mgt	Introduction to Marketing	Advertising & Sales Promotion	Introduction to Art	Fundamentals of Typography
B.1	Communication Skills	5	4	2	3	4	4	4	5	5	1	4	3	1	5	5	1	5	4	1
B.2	Problem solving	5	5	1	3	3	4	2	2	1	3	2	5	2	5	4	1	1	2	2
B.3	Decision making	5	3	4	3	4	4	3	1	1	3	1	5	4	5	5	1	4	3	3
B.4	Creative thinking	5	3	2	1	4	3	1	4	1	3	1	1	4	5	5	1	4	3	3
B.5	Business knowledge	5	4	4	3	5	5	3	4	5	3	4	2	4	2	3	5	5	3	3
B.6	Customer orientation	5	2	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1
B.7	Team work	5	3	3	2	5	4	1	3	1	5	1	2	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
B.8	Analytical thinking	5	5	2	3	3	4	1	4	1	3	1	4	2	5	5	1	2	2	2
B.9	Constructive thinking	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	4	3	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	2	3
B.10	Time management	5	2	3	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	5	1	2	2	3	3
B.11	Action oriented	5	1	1	3	2	3	1	4	3	1	2	4	1	5	1	1	1	3	3
B.12	Sense of urgency	5	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	2	1	3	3
B.13	Initiative	5	3	1	2	1	1	1	5	1	2	1	1	2	5	1	1	4	4	4
B.14	Show high potential	5	1	1	3	2	3	1	4	1	2	1	3	2	5	3	1	2	3	3
B.15	Hard working (determined)	5	2	1	1	4	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	4	4
B.16	Street smart	5	4	1	2	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	1	2	1	3	1	4	2	2
B.17	Critical analysis	4	4	1	1	4	4	3	4	1	3	3	3	3	5	5	1	1	4	1
B.18	Constructive relationships	5	3	1	1	3	3	2	5	4	5	1	2	5	5	4	4	5	5	5
B.19	Self-management	5	3	1	3	2	2	1	4	2	2	1	1	1	5	1	1	2	3	2
B.20	Loyalty	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1
B.21	Organized	5	2	4	1	3	3	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
B.22	Methodical	5	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
B.23	Integrity/honesty	1	1	1	1	1	2	5	3	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
B.24	Reliable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
B.25	Responsibility	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	3	1	3	2	1	3	2	2
B.26	Sociability	5	3	1	1	3	3	3	5	4	5	1	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5
B.27	Flexible (able to adjust)	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2
B.28	Positive/confident	5	5	1	1	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	5
B.29	Productive	5	4	1	1	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	5	4	5	4	2	3	5	5

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Courses 6 Skills and Competencies		Adverting Design and Production	Consumer Behavior	Selling and Sales Mgt	Professional Salesmanship	Direct Mkt	Adverting Media Planning	Marketing Research	Public Relations	International Mkt	Retail Mgt	Mkt of Services	Advanced Mkt Mgt	Advertising and Symbolism	Independent. Study in Mkt	Special Topics in Mkt	Specialized Public Relations	Public Relations Mgt	Public Relations Practice	Public Relations Audit-Project
B.1	Communication Skills	2	3	5	5	5	1	5	4	3	3	3	4	5	4	5	3	3	5	5
B.2	Problem solving	3	2	3	2	2	3	4	2	2	3	2	5	4	5	5	1	3	4	5
B.3	Decision making	3	5	4	5	4	3	4	1	2	2	3	5	4	4	5	2	4	5	5
B.4	Creative thinking	3	1	4	5	4	1	4	1	1	2	2	5	4	4	5	2	4	5	5
B.5	Business knowledge	3	3	4	4	4	3	5	3	5	3	5	4	4	1	1	3	2	4	5
B.6	Customer orientation	1	1	5	5	2	2	2	3	1	5	4	2	4	3	5	3	4	4	5
B.7	Team work	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	2	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	5
B.8	Analytical thinking	3	1	4	2	2	3	4	1	1	2	2	5	4	5	5	1	4	5	5
B.9	Constructive thinking	3	1	2	4	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	4	4	3	3	1	2	4	5
B.10	Time management	3	1	4	2	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	4	1	1	4	5
B.11	Action oriented	2	2	4	2	5	2	4	1	1	2	2	4	2	5	5	1	1	4	5
B.12	Sense of urgency	3	1	4	2	3	2	4	1	1	2	2	2	2	5	4	2	1	4	5
B.13	Initiative	3	3	4	5	5	2	4	1	2	2	2	5	3	5	5	1	4	5	5
B.14	Show high potential	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	1	1	2	4	2	5	5	2	3	5	5
B.15	Hard working (determined)	2	1	3	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	5	5	1	3	3	5
B.16	Street smart	1	1	5	3	4	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	4	5
B.17	Critical analysis	1	1	2	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	2	5	3	5	5	1	3	1	5
B.18	Constructive relationships	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	5
B.19	Self-management	2	3	4	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	5	4	2	2	4	5
B.20	Loyalty	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	4	1	2	3	5
B.21	Organized	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	3	1	1	4	5
B.22	Methodical	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	4	4	1	1	4	5
B.23	Integrity/honesty	1	1	5	3	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	1	5
B.24	Reliable	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	4
B.25	Responsibility	3	2	4	1	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	4	5	2	2	4	5
B.26	Sociability (able to adjust)	3	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	2	3	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	5
B.27	Flexible	1	1	5	3	2	1	3	4	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	1	1	3	5
B.28	Positive/confident	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5
B.29	Productive	4	3	5	2	3	4	5	3	2	3	3	4	5	5	5	3	4	5	5

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Courses 7 / Skills and Competencies		Bar & Beverage Mgt.	Business LawI	Business Law II	Introduction in Sports Mgt	Historical & Social Aspects of Athl	Ethics & Legal issues in Sports	Sports Leadership	Marketing Strategies in Sports	Exe. Physiology and Human Perf.	The economics and Finance & Spo.	Sports Communication	Internship in Sports Mgt	Facility Mgt and Event Planning	Independent Study in Sports Mgt	Special Topics in Sports Mgt	Effective Mgt of Sport Delivery Sy.	Discrete Structures	Programming Principles I	Programming Principles II
B.1	Communication Skills		1		4	4	5	5	3	2	1	5	5	3	3	5	4	1	1	1
B.2	Problem solving		1		1	2	3	2	1	1	1	5	4	2	5	5	2	5	5	3
B.3	Decision making		1		1	1	5	2	2	1	4	5	4	4	5	5	3	4	2	2
B.4	Creative thinking		1		2	2	4	2	2	1	3	5	4	4	5	5	3	3	2	2
B.5	Business knowledge		4		3	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	5	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
B.6	Customer orientation		2		3	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	5	2	1	1	3	1	1	1
B.7	Team work		1		3	3	3	5	1	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	3	3
B.8	Analytical thinking		1		1	1	3	3	1	1	1	5	4	1	5	5	2	5	5	2
B.9	Constructive thinking		2		2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	5	3	4	4	3	2	2	2
B.10	Time management		1		1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	5	2	3	4	2	1	2	2
B.11	Action oriented		1		1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	5	2	3	4	2	1	1	1
B.12	Sense of urgency		1		1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	5	2	3	4	2	1	2	2
B.13	Initiative		1		2	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	5	1	5	5	2	1	3	3
B.14	Show high potential		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	1	5	5	2	3	1	1
B.15	Hard working (determined)		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	5	1	5	5	1	3	2	2
B.16	Street smart		2		3	3	1	3	1	1	1	3	5	2	2	2	1	1	1	2
B.17	Critical analysis		1		2	3	4	3	1	1	4	4	4	3	5	5	1	3	1	2
B.18	Constructive relationships		1		4	4	4	5	1	4	3	5	5	4	5	5	5	1	3	3
B.19	Self-management		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	2	5	5	1	3	1	1
B.20	Loyalty		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.21	Organized		1		1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	4	1	3	4	3	3	1	1
B.22	Methodical		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	3	4	1	3	1	1
B.23	Integrity/honesty		1		4	4	5	4	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
B.24	Reliable		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	1	3	1	1
B.25	Responsibility		1		2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	4	1	4	4	1	1	2	1
B.26	Sociability (able to adjust)		2		3	3	3	5	1	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	3	3
B.27	Flexible		1		2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	4	4	1	1	2	2
B.28	Positive/confident		1		4	4	5	5	2	4	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	4
B.29	Productive		1		4	4	4	4	2	1	2	3	5	4	5	5	5	2	3	3

Name: Nasios Orinos   Student Number: M00089628

	Courses 8 **Skills and Competencies**	Data Structures and Algorithms	The C++ Programming Language	Database Management Systems	Software Engineering I	Software Engineering II	Management Information Systems	Computer Fundamentals and App.	Senior Project											
B.1	Communication Skills	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4											
B.2	Problem solving	3	4	1	4	3	2	3	5											
B.3	Decision making	3	2	1	4	3	3	2	5											
B.4	Creative thinking	3	1	3	4	3	1	2	5											
B.5	Business knowledge	1	2	2	4	3	2	3	4											
B.6	Customer orientation	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4											
B.7	Team work	4	3	2	4	5	3	3	5											
B.8	Analytical thinking	3	4	1	3	3	2	3	5											
B.9	Constructive thinking	2	2	1	3	2	3	3	4											
B.10	Time management	3	1	1	4	3	2	2	4											
B.11	Action oriented	2	1	1	3	3	2	3	4											
B.12	Sense of urgency	2	1	1	4	3	2	2	5											
B.13	Initiative	2	2	1	4	4	2	3	5											
B.14	Show high potential	2	2	2	4	4	2	3	5											
B.15	Hard working (determined)	1	2	2	4	5	2	3	5											
B.16	Street smart	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	5											
B.17	Critical analysis	1	2	1	3	1	1	3	5											
B.18	Constructive relationships	4	3	2	4	5	3	3	5											
B.19	Self-management	2	1	1	4	4	1	3	4											
B.20	Loyalty	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1											
B.21	Organized	1	1	3	3	3	3	2	3											
B.22	Methodical	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	3											
B.23	Integrity/honesty	1	1	1	1	2	4	1	1											
B.24	Reliable	2	1	1	3	3	1	3	2											
B.25	Responsibility	2	2	1	4	4	2	3	4											
B.26	Sociability (able to adjust)	4	4	2	5	5	3	3	5											
B.27	Flexible	2	2	1	4	2	1	1	3											
B.28	Positive/confident	4	4	3	5	5	4	4	5							155				
B.29	Productive	4	3	2	5	5	4	4	5											

<u>APPENDIX 4 – DESCRIPTION OF COURSES</u>

<u>Marketing Research – MAR 302</u>

<u>Description</u>

Marketing research is defined as the systematic and objective process of generating information to aid in making marketing decisions. Thus is important that a marketer understands the real meaning of it so that successfully applies its techniques.

The goal of this class is to provide students with a comprehensive presentation of the field of marketing research. Emphasis is placed on an applied approach with practical applications that give students a basic understanding of the scope of marketing research.

Areas of concentration include: the role of marketing research, the research process, defining the problem, secondary data, survey research, observation and experimental research, test marketing, measurement and attitude scaling, questionnaire design, sampling, samle size, field work, data analysis, the research report.

<u>Senior Project – BUS 410</u>

<u>Description</u>

In contrast to other elements of their program, where they are guided fairly closely, the aim of the project is to give students the opportunity to learn independently and show that they can identify, define and analyze problems and issues and integrate knowledge in a business context. A final year project is a substantial piece of written work that provides an opportunity for students to integrate several aspects of their academic and, where relevant or appropriate, practical experience. It is a student-centered activity that enables students to pursue a topic in some depth, provide evidence of independent thought and to demonstrate research skills, communication skills, and other higher order skills.

The only precise rule on what constitutes an acceptable project is that is should be an ordered critical exposition, which affords evidence of reasoning power and knowledge of the relevant literature in an approved field falling within the subject matter of the program. The emphasis should be on applied research and the investigation of some practical problem or issue related to the situation in which an organization operates.

Public Speaking – COM 101

<u>Description</u>

The students are first introduced to the theory of human communication. Such topics as the models of the communication process and the characteristics of communication competence are presented. The process of public speaking is analysed: students learn, for example, the steps in speech development and organization, the importance of audience analysis and research. Students also learn the different characteristics of specific types of public speeches such as the informative and persuasive. Moreover, emphasis is given to the delivery of a speech. The group as a communicating medium is analysed and various aspects such as small group characteristics and the role of leadership are presented. Aspects of dyadic and interpersonal communication such as types of interview, interview situations and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships are studied.

Other aspects of communication are introduced such as perception and self-concept, verbal and non verbal communication, mass media and the skill of listening. The importance of topics such as the above may be reinforced by requiring students to carry out practical assignments. Most specifically, the projects that the students complete throughout the course may include speech presentations, oral group projects, interview assignments, film assignments or others.