# 3 Skills outlook

This chapter presents the results of the Future of Jobs Survey concerning skills, as classified by the World Economic Forum's Global Skills Taxonomy.[36] It begins by analysing respondents' expectations of skill disruption by 2030, as well as the skills currently required for work and whether employers anticipate these skills will increase or decrease in importance over the next five years. The chapter then assesses the skills expected to become core skills by 2030, based on their current significance and anticipated evolution. It also contrasts the skills required for growing and declining jobs, revealing windows of opportunity for enabling dynamic job transitions. Finally, it offers an overview of the key drivers of skill transformation and concludes with an exploration of anticipated training needs and trends.


## 3.1 Expected disruptions to skills

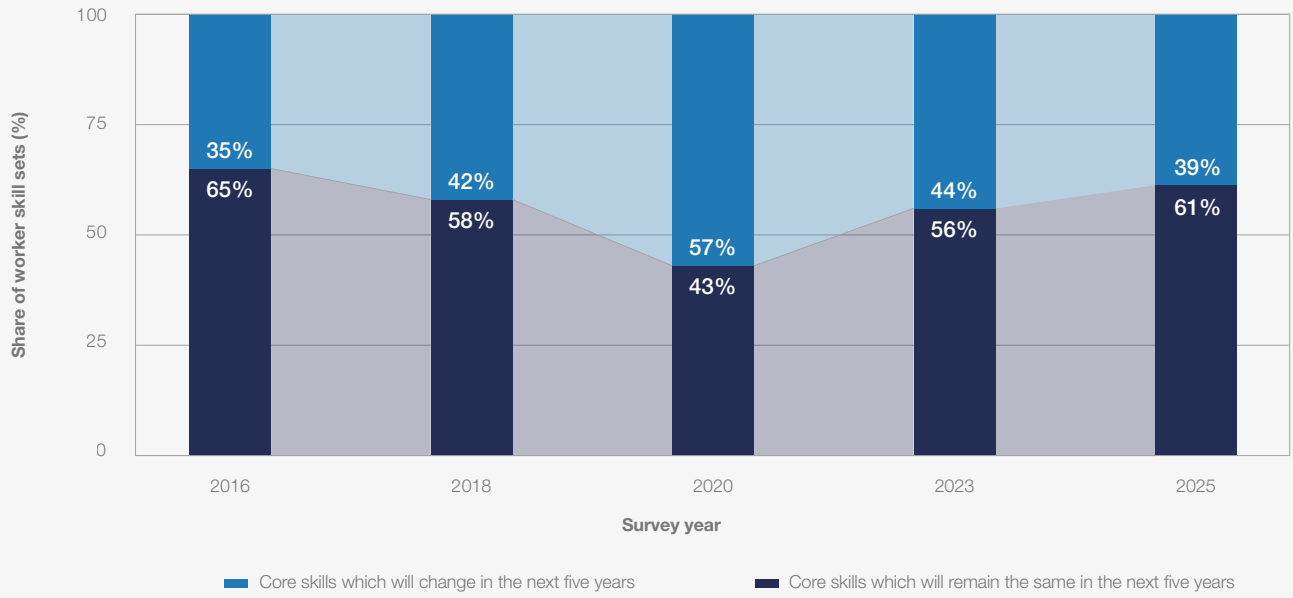
When the Future of Jobs Report was first published in 2016, surveyed employers expected that 35% of workers' skills would face disruption in the coming years. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with rapid advancements in frontier technologies, led to significant disruptions in working life and skills, prompting respondents to predict high levels of skills instability in subsequent editions of the report. The post-pandemic period, however, has seen employers adapt to these changes. The accelerated adoption of digital tools, remote work solutions, and advanced technologies such as machine learning and generative AI provided companies with relevant experience to better understand the critical skills required to navigate rapid technological change.

Despite current uncertainty around the long-term impact of generative AI, the expected ongoing pace of disruption of skills has begun to stabilize, albeit at a high level. Overall, employers expect 39% of workers' core skills to change by 2030 (Figure 3.1). While this represents significant ongoing skill disruption, it is down from 44% in 2023. One element contributing to this finding may be a growing focus on continuous learning, upskilling and reskilling programmes, enabling companies to better anticipate and manage future skill requirements. This is reflected in an increasing share of the workforce (50%) having completing training as part of long-term learning strategies compared to 2023 (41%) – a finding that is consistent across almost all industries. This is discussed further in section 3.3.

FIGURE 3.1

## Disruptions to skills

Evolution in the share of workers' core skills expected to change and to remain the same within the next five years, 2016-2025.




Source

World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Surveys 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024.

Note

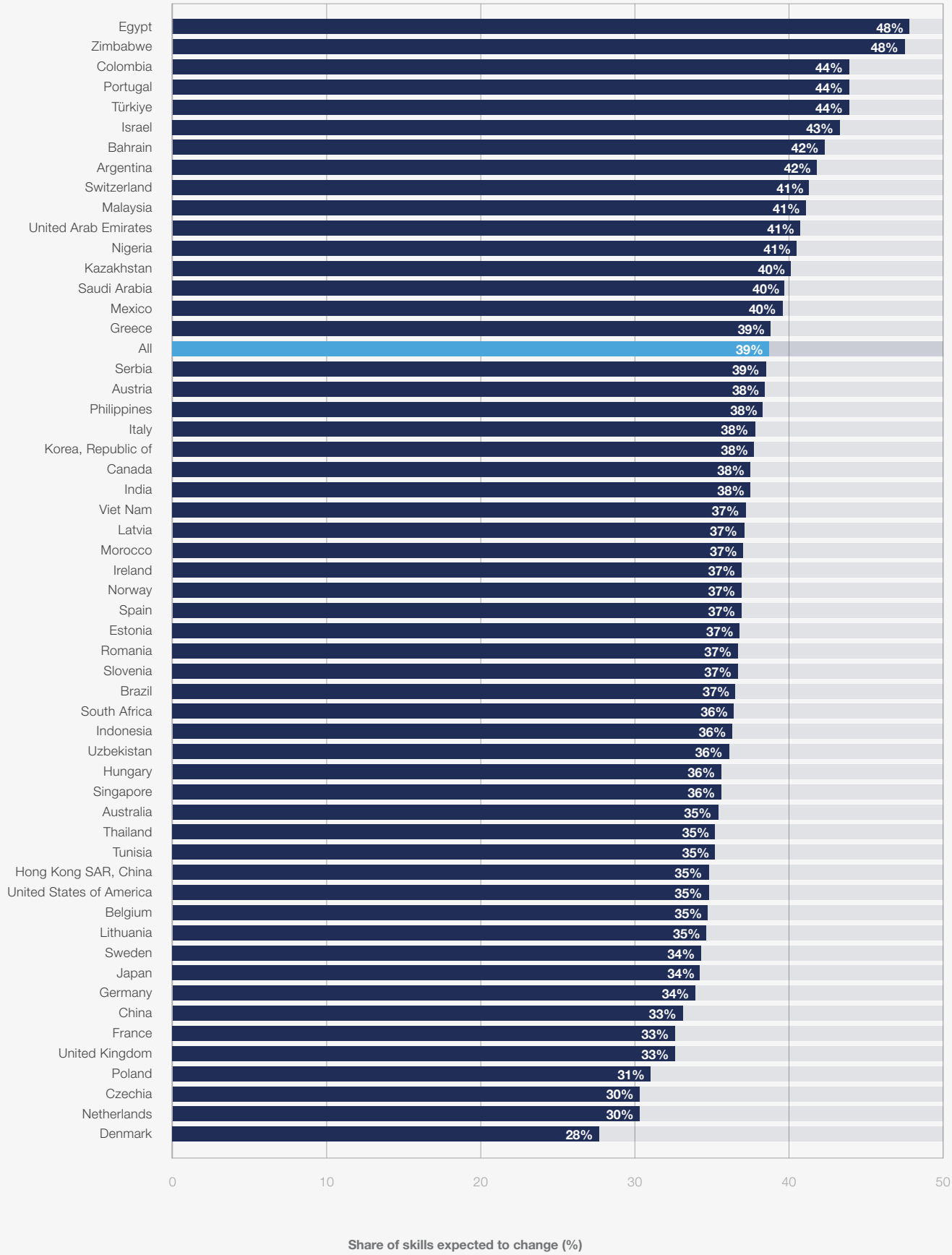
Values reported are the mean skill stability percentages estimated by employers surveyed in each edition of the survey.

However, the extent of skills disruption is not uniform across economies and industries. Lower-middle and upper middle-income economies and those affected by conflict tend to expect greater disruption in workers' skills, while high-income economies foresee less instability (Figure 3.2).

FIGURE 3.2

## Disruption to skills 2025-2030, by economy

Share of workers' core skills that will change in the next five years




Source

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024.

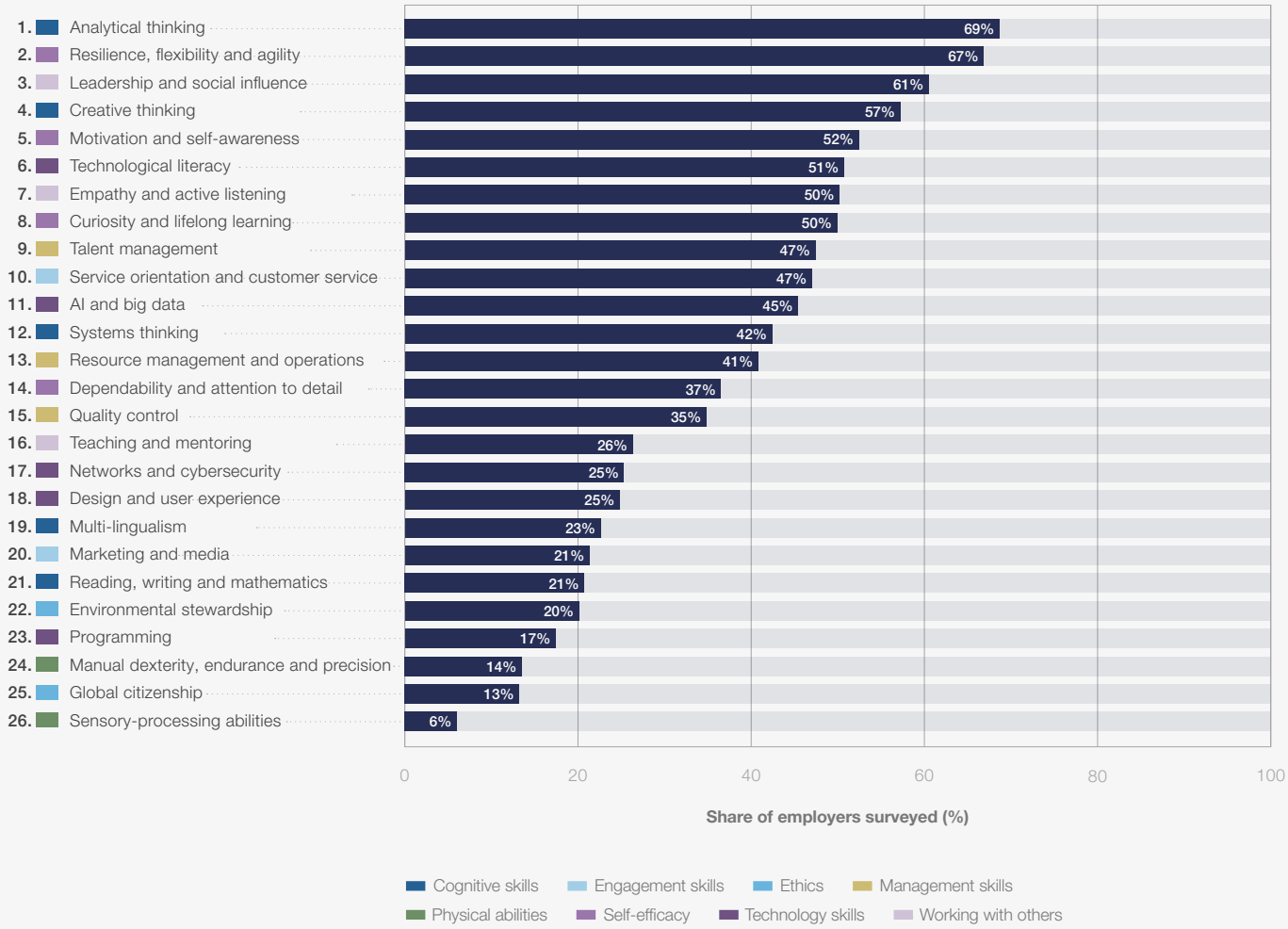
Note

Values reported are the mean skill stability percentages estimated by organizations surveyed.

FIGURE 3.3

## Core skills in 2025

Share of employers who consider the stated skills to be core skills for their workforce.




Source

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024.

Note

The Future of Jobs Survey uses the World Economic Forum's Global Skills Taxonomy.

## Core skills

Figure 3.3 shows the core skills Future of Jobs Survey respondents identify as required by workers today. As in the two previous editions of this report, analytical thinking remains the top core skill for employers, with seven out of 10 companies considering it as essential. This is followed by resilience, flexibility and agility, along with leadership and social influence, underscoring the critical role of adaptability and collaboration alongside cognitive skills. Creative thinking and motivation and self-awareness rank fourth and fifth, respectively. This combination of cognitive, self-efficacy and interpersonal skills within the top five emphasizes the importance ascribed by respondents to having an agile, innovative and collaborative workforce, where both problem-solving abilities and personal resilience are critical for success.

The top 10 core skills are complemented by technological literacy, empathy and active listening, curiosity and lifelong learning, talent management, and service orientation and customer service. Skills that reflect the important role of technical proficiency, strong interpersonal abilities, emotional intelligence, and a commitment to continuous learning demonstrate respondents' expectation that workers must balance hard and soft skills to thrive in today's work environments.

While the core skill sets are relatively consistent across broader industries and geographical regions, there are notable distinctions within specific sectors and geographies. For instance, the Insurance and Pensions Management industry places a significantly higher value on curiosity and lifelong learning, with 83% of respondents identifying it as a core skill compared to the global average of 50%. Resilience, flexibility and agility are also considered as especially crucial in this sector, with 94% of respondents emphasizing their importance versus a global average of 67%.

The Mining and Metals industry distinguishes itself with a strong focus on environmental stewardship, as 50% of respondents view it as a core skill – 2.5 times the global average. This emphasis on environmental skills is also evident in the Government and Public Sector, where it is double the global average. Additionally, both the Mining and Metals and Advanced Manufacturing industries place higher importance on manual dexterity, endurance and precision skills compared to other sectors, with roughly 25% of respondents identifying this as a core skill.

The Telecommunications industry stands out for prioritizing design and user experience, networks and cybersecurity, and programming skills, with twice the global average of respondents considering these as core skills in their organizations. Similarly, the Information and Technology Services sector places greater emphasis on programming skills.

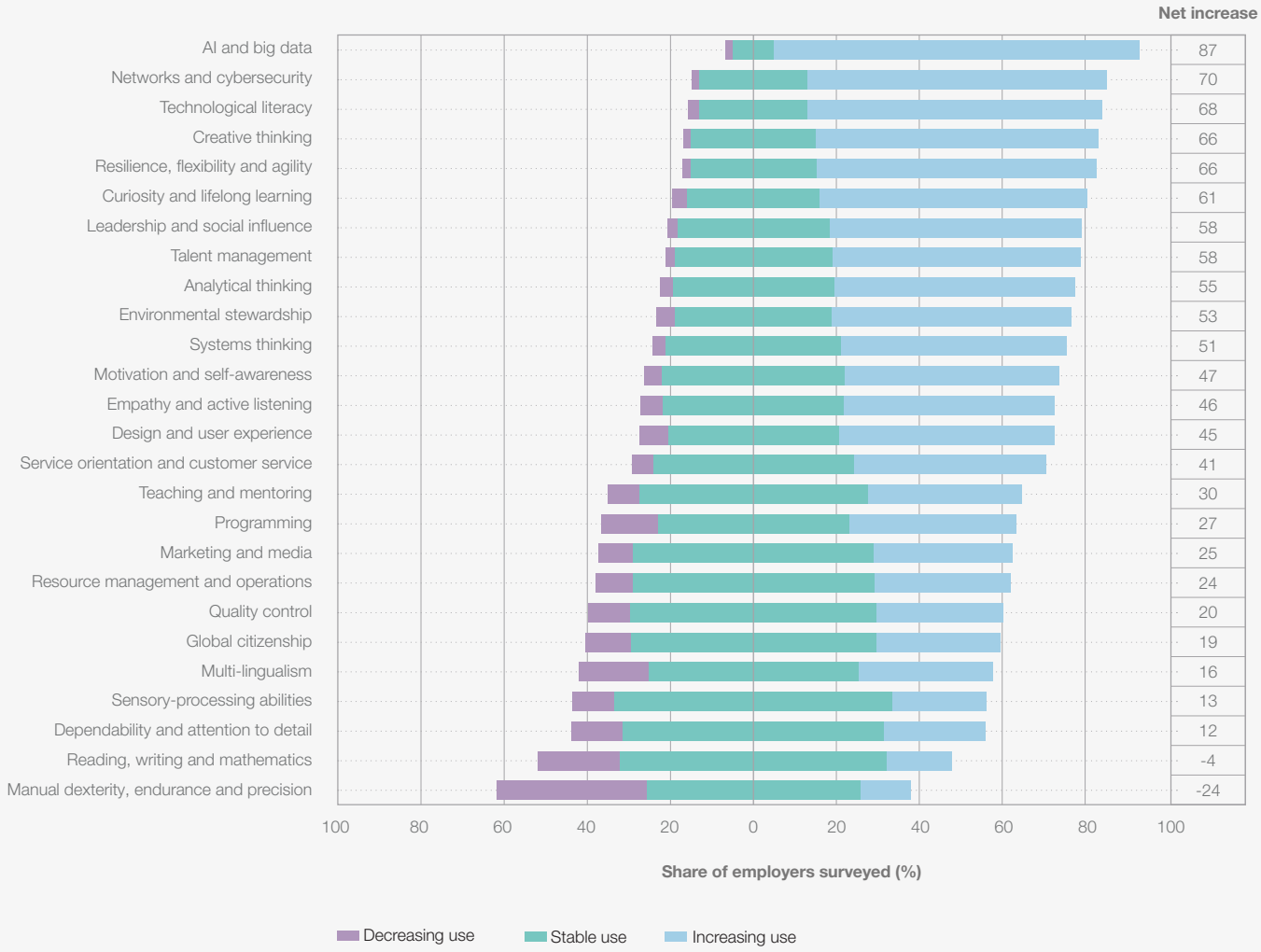
Compared to the 2023 edition of this report, some significant shifts in core skills have emerged. Leadership and social influence, AI and big data, talent management, and service orientation and customer service have all seen marked increases in relevance. Conversely, skills like dependability, attention to detail, and quality control have decreased in importance for organizations compared to the 2023 data.

Overall, leadership and social influence, resilience, flexibility and agility, and AI and big data have seen the most substantial increase in importance, with 22, 17, and 17 percentage-point rises, respectively, in the share of respondents identifying them as core skills compared to the 2023 edition of the report.

FIGURE 3.4

## Skills on the rise, 2025-2030

Share of employers that consider skills to be increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable in importance. Skills are ranked based on net increase, which is the difference between the share of employers that consider a skill category to be increasing in use and those that consider it to be decreasing in use.




Source

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024.

Note

The Future of Jobs Survey uses the World Economic Forum's Global Skills Taxonomy.

## Skill evolution

According to employer expectations for the evolution of skills in the next five years, as shown in Figure 3.4, technological skills are projected to grow in importance more rapidly than any other type of skills. Among these, **AI and big data** top the list as the fastest-growing skills, followed closely by **networks and cybersecurity** and **technological literacy**. Complementing these technological skills, creative thinking and two socio-emotional attitudes – **resilience, flexibility, and agility**, along with **curiosity and lifelong learning** – are also seen as rising in importance.

Also ranking among the top 10 skills on the rise are leadership and social influence, talent management, analytical thinking, and environmental stewardship. These skills highlight the need for workers who can lead teams, manage talent effectively and adapt to sustainability and green transitions in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

At the other end of the spectrum, respondents identified sensory-processing abilities; reading, writing and mathematics; dependability and attention to detail; quality control; and global citizenship as among the most stable skills. However, a small net decline is anticipated in reading, writing, and mathematics. Manual

dexterity, endurance, and precision stands out with a notable anticipated net decline, with 24% of respondents foreseeing a decrease in its importance. The declining relevance of physical abilities has been a trend in previous *Future of Jobs Reports*, but this is the first time it has seen a net negative decline.

Comparisons with previous editions of the Future of Jobs Survey reveal a notable shift in skill demands, with technology skills such as AI and big data, networks and cybersecurity, and environmental stewardship showing the largest net increase in the share of respondents identifying them as critical for the next five years. Conversely, skills like reading, writing, and mathematics; manual dexterity, endurance, and precision; and dependability and attention to detail have seen the largest decline in projected future demand.

Figure 3.5 illustrates industry-specific variations in the evolving importance of skills. AI and big data are predicted to see significant growth across nearly all sectors. In the top 10 industries, over 90% of respondents expect this skill to increase in use. The lowest growth shares are observed in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing (70%) and Accommodation, Food, and ILisure industries (69%). This highlights a broad-based but uneven embrace of advanced technological skills across industries.

Resilience, flexibility and agility are growing in demand more quickly in the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing; Telecommunications; and Information and Technology Services sectors. The Insurance and Pensions Management industry stands out as the industry forecasting the fastest growth in importance in creative thinking skills. This industry, along with Education and Training and Telecommunications forecast fast growth in the importance of curiosity and lifelong learning.

Increasing skill demands in environmental stewardship skills are particularly evident in the Oil and Gas and Chemical and Advanced Materials industries.

Furthermore, the net decline in the demand for manual dexterity, endurance, and precision skills is observed across sectors, with the most significant decreases in Energy Technology and Utilities, Chemicals and Advanced Materials, and Information Technology Services, each experiencing declines exceeding 39%. By contrast, the Accommodation, Food, and Leisure sector and the Automotive and Aerospace industries show the smallest declines, with net reductions below 14%.

FIGURE 3.5

## Top 10 industries for increasing skill requirements, 2025-2030

Share of employers considering skills within the corresponding skill category to be growing in importance for their workforce from 2025 to 2030, as opposed to having stable or declining importance. The top 10 industries out of the 22 studied in this report are selected in each case and ranked.

### AI and big data

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Automotive and aerospace | 100% |
| 2. Telecommunications | 100% |
| 3. Professional services | 98% |
| 4. Information and technology services | 97% |
| 5. Insurance and pensions management | 97% |
| 6. Financial services and capital markets | 95% |
| 7. Supply chain and transportation | 94% |
| 8. Medical and healthcare services | 92% |
| 9. Energy technology and utilities | 90% |
| 10. Government and public sector | 90% |

### Networks and cybersecurity

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Financial services and capital markets | 82% |
| 2. Insurance and pensions management | 81% |
| 3. Energy technology and utilities | 79% |
| 4. Medical and healthcare services | 78% |
| 5. Automotive and aerospace | 78% |
| 6. Government and public sector | 78% |
| 7. Supply chain and transportation | 76% |
| 8. Telecommunications | 75% |
| 9. Advanced manufacturing | 74% |
| 10. Information and technology services | 74% |

### Technological literacy

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Automotive and aerospace | 84% |
| 2. Financial services and capital markets | 84% |
| 3. Medical and healthcare services | 81% |
| 4. Insurance and pensions management | 81% |
| 5. Supply chain and transportation | 77% |
| 6. Education and training | 76% |
| 7. Oil and gas | 76% |
| 8. Professional services | 75% |
| 9. Advanced manufacturing | 73% |
| 10. Production of consumer goods | 72% |

### Creative thinking

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Insurance and pensions management | 86% |
| 2. Education and training | 79% |
| 3. Medical and healthcare services | 76% |
| 4. Advanced manufacturing | 76% |
| 5. Telecommunications | 75% |
| 6. Information and technology services | 75% |
| 7. Real estate | 73% |
| 8. Professional services | 69% |
| 9. Supply chain and transportation | 69% |
| 10. Production of consumer goods | 69% |

### Resilience, flexibility and agility

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing | 83% |
| 2. Telecommunications | 79% |
| 3. Information and technology services | 78% |
| 4. Production of consumer goods | 73% |
| 5. Insurance and pensions management | 72% |
| 6. Automotive and aerospace | 71% |
| 7. Advanced manufacturing | 71% |
| 8. Retail and wholesale of consumer goods | 69% |
| 9. Financial services and capital markets | 68% |
| 10. Electronics | 68% |

### Curiosity and lifelong learning

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Education and training | 79% |
| 2. Insurance and pensions management | 77% |
| 3. Telecommunications | 75% |
| 4. Real estate | 68% |
| 5. Information and technology services | 68% |
| 6. Automotive and aerospace | 68% |
| 7. Energy technology and utilities | 67% |
| 8. Retail and wholesale of consumer goods | 67% |
| 9. Oil and gas | 64% |
| 10. Medical and healthcare services | 64% |

### Leadership and social influence

1. Automotive and aerospace 71%
2. Telecommunications 69%
3. Education and training 68%
4. Information and technology services 67%
5. Medical and healthcare services 66%
6. Electronics 64%
7. Chemical and advanced materials 63%
8. Accommodation, food, and leisure 63%
9. Energy technology and utilities 62%
10. Production of consumer goods 61%

### Talent management

1. Infrastructure 70%
2. Automotive and aerospace 68%
3. Mining and metals 68%
4. Chemical and advanced materials 67%
5. Supply chain and transportation 65%
6. Telecommunications 64%
7. Production of consumer goods 63%
8. Oil and gas 62%
9. Education and training 60%
10. Real estate 59%

### Analytical thinking

1. Education and training 70%
2. Supply chain and transportation 70%
3. Automotive and aerospace 68%
4. Telecommunications 67%
5. Production of consumer goods 65%
6. Insurance and pensions management 61%
7. Advanced manufacturing 61%
8. Financial services and capital markets 60%
9. Infrastructure 59%
10. Real estate 59%

### Environmental stewardship

1. Oil and gas 80%
2. Chemical and advanced materials 75%
3. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 71%
4. Automotive and aerospace 70%
5. Mining and metals 68%
6. Supply chain and transportation 68%
7. Infrastructure 67%
8. Production of consumer goods 66%
9. Professional services 63%
10. Energy technology and utilities 60%

Cognitive skills | Ethics | Management skills | Self-efficacy | Technology skills | Working with others

Source

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024.

Note

The Future of Jobs Survey uses the World Economic Forum's Global Skills Taxonomy.

## Core skills in 2030

Looking ahead to 2030, Figure 3.6 provides further insights into key priority areas for workforce development for organizations, by comparing core and emerging skills by 2030 based on their relative importance today and their future evolution. The top right quadrant highlights skills that are already core to organizations today and are expected to continue growing rapidly. Skills such as **AI and big data; analytical thinking; creative thinking; resilience, flexibility and agility;** and **technological literacy** are not only considered critical now but are also projected to become even more important. Moreover, **leadership and social influence, curiosity and lifelong learning, systems thinking, talent management,** and **motivation and self-awareness** solidify their importance, emphasizing the continued relevance of human-centric skills amid rapid technological advances.

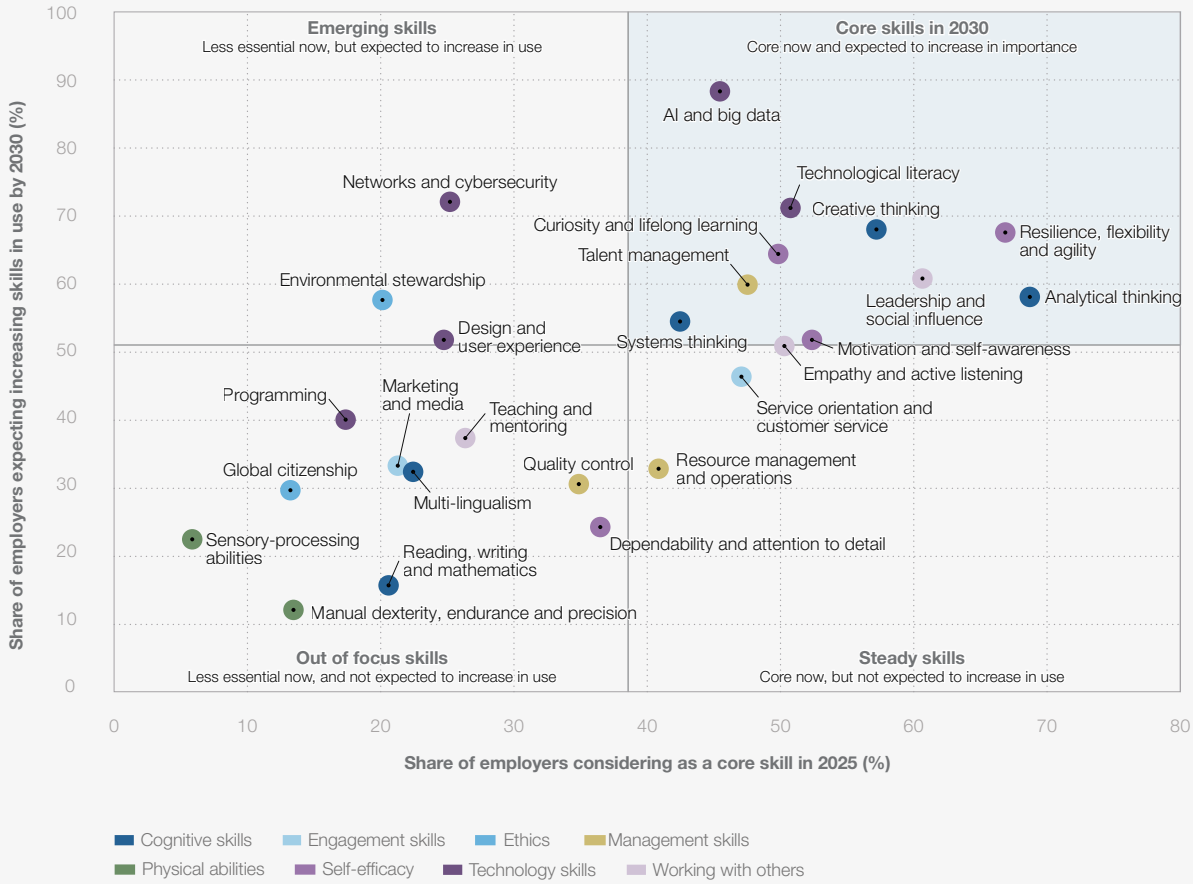
Meanwhile, **networks and cybersecurity** and **environmental stewardship** – in the top left quadrant of the figure – rank among the top 10 skills expected to increase significantly in use by 2030, yet they are not currently considered core skills for most organizations. These emerging skills represent areas where businesses may need to anticipate growing demands and develop capabilities before they become critical.

On the other hand, skills that are core today, but expected to remain stable over the next five years without significant increase in use, displayed in the lower right quadrant, include empathy and active listening, service orientation and customer service and resource management and operations. Finally, the bottom left quadrant of Figure 3.6 highlights skills that are neither critical now nor expected to increase significantly in use over the next five years. While most of these skills remain important, they may represent areas where less investment is required, allowing employers to prioritize resources toward more rapidly evolving skill sets.

FIGURE 3.6

## Core skills in 2030

Share of employers considering skills to be a core skill in 2025 and share of employers expecting skills to increase in importance by 2030.




Source

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024.

Note

The Future of Jobs Survey uses the World Economic Forum's Global Skills Taxonomy. Bold lines represent the median values across all skills.

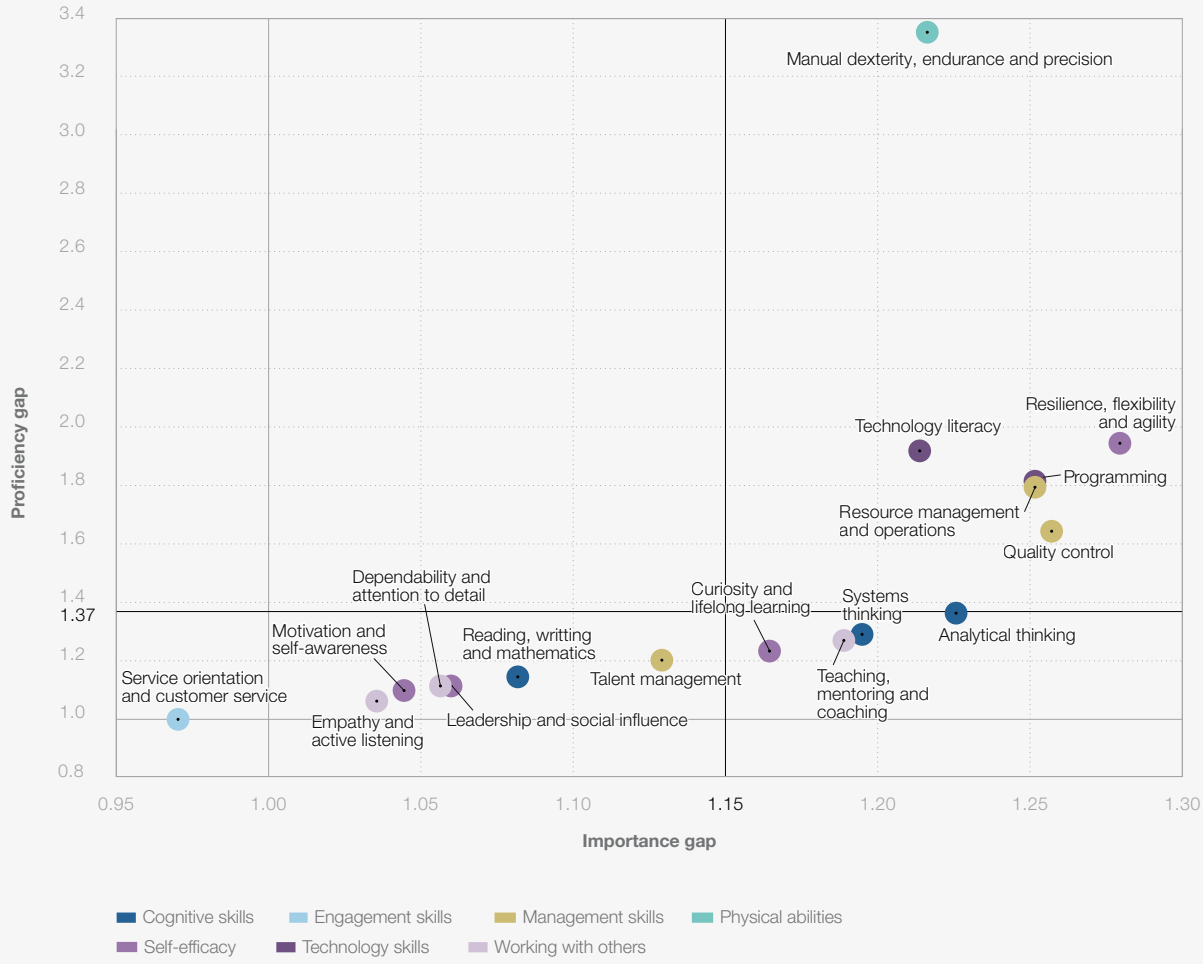
## Skill differences between growing and declining jobs

While a diverse set of skills is essential for navigating the evolving workforce landscape, contrasting the skills requirements particularly associated with growing jobs, and those associated with declining ones, reveals windows of opportunity that exist for enabling dynamic job transitions.[37,38] Figure 3.7 illustrates these differences based on two metrics derived from the O*NET skills inventory:[39] the "importance gap", which measures how much more essential a skill is for growing jobs, and the "proficiency gap", which indicates the level of expertise required for each skill in growing jobs compared to declining jobs. For example, a score of 2 in either metric means a skill is twice as critical or requires double the proficiency in growing roles.

FIGURE 3.7

## Skill importance gap and skill proficiency gap between growing and declining jobs

When growing and declining job roles attach the same level of importance and proficiency to a skill, the index equals one. The bigger the value, the bigger the gap between growing and declining jobs.




Source

World Economy Forum analysis, based on Future of Jobs Survey 2024, the World Economic Forum's Global Skills Taxonomy and O*NET skill importance and level for each occupation.

Note

Bold lines represent the average across all skills.

At an aggregate level across all growing and declining roles, resilience, flexibility and agility skills are the most significant differentiator between growing and declining job roles, ranking higher in both importance and proficiency for growing roles. Programming and technological literacy also differentiates growing and declining roles, reflecting the increasing integration of technology across occupational fields. While programming scores higher in importance, it requires less proficiency compared to technological literacy.

Resource management and operations, and quality control skills also show marked gaps in both proficiency and importance. Analytical thinking completes the list of top five skills for the importance gap, while ranking 6th for the skill proficiency gap.

Manual dexterity, endurance, and precision display a notable difference in proficiency requirements rather than importance. This suggests that in roles in which manual skills remain critical, businesses are seeking a higher degree of specialization that combines manual abilities with technological literacy, and problem-solving skills. Growing roles demanding high manual skill proficiency include Drafters, Engineering and Mapping Technicians, Electrotechnology Engineers, Mechanics, Machinery Repairers, and Solar Energy Installation Engineers. By contrast, declining roles, such as printing trades workers and transportation attendants, generally require lower levels of manual skill proficiency. Notably, the only skill with an equal or lesser requirement in importance or proficiency for growing jobs is service orientation and customer service.

These findings underscore the importance of targeted skills development efforts to support workers in transitioning to growing roles as well as to ensure employers can access a talent pool with the skills required for the future of work.

# 3.2 Drivers of skill disruption

This section discusses how each of the five identified macrotrends driving labour-market transformation – technological change, geoeconomic fragmentation, green transition, demographic shifts and economic uncertainty – are expected to influence skill evolution by 2030.

## Technological change

Technological advances are expected to drive skills change more than any other trend over the next five years. The increasing importance of AI and big data, networks and cybersecurity, and technological literacy is driven by the expansion of digital access and the integration of AI and information processing technologies. These trends are not only seen as responsible for the growth of these three fastest-growing skills but also for the rising importance of analytical thinking and systems thinking. These shifts highlight the increasing complexity of decision-making and the need for critical problem solving in a data-driven world.

Beyond the top 10 fastest-growing skills, design and user experience, along with marketing and media skills, are also expected to see growth driven by technological advancements. These skills are closely linked to digital transformation, reflecting the rising importance of delivering seamless digital experiences and understanding the impact of consumer behaviour.

Robots and autonomous systems are also seen as a key driver of skills change, contributing to the increased demand for not only the three top-growing skills, but also programming and systems thinking – skills essential for managing and optimizing interactions with autonomous technology. As noted in Chapter 2, robots and autonomous systems are also among the primary drivers behind the fastest-growing jobs. Coupled with the rising demand for the three top growing skills, and programming, this trend underscores the importance of technological expertise and systems thinking as core skills in technical fields. These capabilities are crucial for enabling employees to adapt to, and collaborate effectively with, automated systems across a range of industries.

While technology fuels demand for certain skills, it also accelerates the decline of others. Skills such as manual dexterity, endurance, precision, and reading, writing, and mathematics are expected to diminish in relevance as digital access, AI and information processing, and robotics increasingly automate these tasks. Interestingly, whereas programming remains stable as an in-demand skill, both respondents expecting growth in its use and those expecting decline consistently point to technological change as the primary driver behind this change. As discussed in more depth in Chapter 2, this highlights the dual effect of technology, underscoring how the same technological forces that drive job creation may also contribute to job displacement. Additionally, as also discussed in Chapter 2, the primary impact of technologies such as GenAI on skills may lie in their potential for "augmenting" human skills through human-machine collaboration, rather than in outright replacement, particularly given the continued importance of human-centred skills (Box 3.1).

These findings underscore an urgent need for appropriate reskilling and upskilling strategies to bridge emerging divides. Such strategies will be essential in helping workers transition to roles that blend technical expertise with human-centred capabilities, supporting a more adaptable workforce in an increasingly technology-driven landscape.

### BOX 3.1 Generative AI and human-centred skills

In collaboration with Indeed

The release of ChatGPT 3.5 in November 2022 marked an inflection point in public awareness of GenAI technologies, which sparked both excitement and apprehension regarding their potential impact on the workforce.[40] In this context, research conducted by Indeed for this report highlights the continued importance of human-centred skills in an age of GenAI. Figure B3.1 illustrates the capacity of GenAI to substitute a human in executing specific skills, based on an assessment by GPT-4o of its own ability to utilize skills across three areas: its ability to provide theoretical knowledge about a given skill, its problem-solving abilities related to that skill, and the need for physical presence or manual actions in performing that skill.[41] The chart categorizes more than 2,800 granular skills into the World Economic Forum's Global Skills Taxonomy and evaluates their capacity of substitution by GenAI according to five categories: very low capacity, low capacity, moderate capacity, high capacity, and very high capacity.

Zero of the more than 2,800 skills assessed were determined to exhibit "very high capacity" to be replaced by the current generation of GenAI

tools, with the majority of examined skills (69%) determined to have either “very low capacity” or “low capacity” to be substituted, indicating that GenAI currently remains limited in performing tasks that require physical execution, nuanced judgment or hands-on application. Skills rooted in human interaction – including empathy and active listening, and sensory processing abilities – and manual dexterity, endurance and precision, currently show no substitution potential due to their physical and deeply human components. These findings underscore the practical limitations of current GenAI models, which lack the physicality to perform tasks that require hands-on interaction – although advances in robotics and the integration of GenAI into robotic systems could impact this in the future.

Where GenAI demonstrates higher substitution potential is in skills that can be effectively performed by leveraging theoretical knowledge alongside digital manipulation. These include granular skills within AI and big data, such as data mining and machine learning applications.

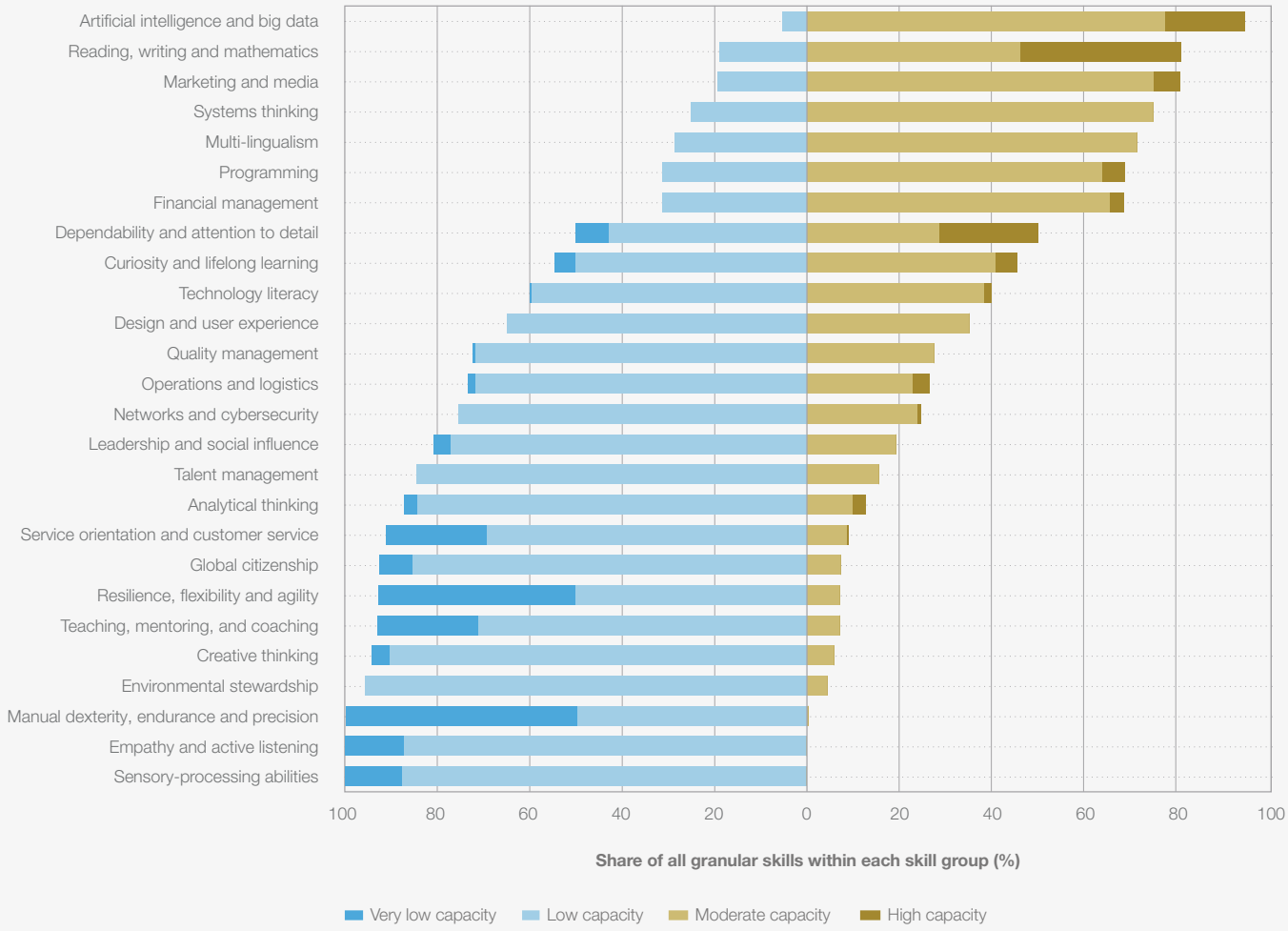
Furthermore, GenAI shows strengths in reading, writing, and mathematics, and multi-lingualism, where it can assist in summarizing complex information, drafting text, performing calculations, and translation. Notably, more than one-quarter (28.5%) of the more than 2,800 granular skills examined currently exhibit a moderate capacity of substitution, highlighting areas where, as the technology continues to evolve, its capacity of substitution could increase in the near future.

These findings highlight the potential of GenAI for augmenting human work through human-machine collaboration, rather than fully replacing it in most areas. Skills requiring nuanced understanding, complex problem-solving or sensory processing show limited current risk of replacement by GenAI, affirming that human oversight remains crucial even in areas where GenAI can provide assistance. For employers, these insights emphasize the need for training and upskilling initiatives that focus on both advanced prompt-writing skills and broader GenAI literacy.

FIGURE B3.1

## Current capacity for substitution by Generative AI, by skill group

Capacity of GenAI substituting a human in performing a given skill as a percentage share of all granular skills within each skill group. Analysis based on GPT-4o, with over 2800 granular skills from the Indeed database as of August 2024.




Source

Indeed analysis; World Economic Forum, Global Skills Taxonomy.

Note

No skills have been rated with “very high capacity” for substitution.

## Geoeconomic fragmentation and economic uncertainty

The Future of Jobs Survey also examined the impact of geoeconomic trends on skill evolution. Increasing geoeconomic fragmentation, coupled with the rapid adoption of new technologies and expansion of digital access, has significantly increased cybersecurity concerns.[42] These geoeconomic trends have led to a surge in demand for network and cybersecurity skills as organizations seek to protect digital infrastructure from emerging threats.

Geoeconomic fragmentation is also driving a need for human-centred skills such as resilience, flexibility, agility, leadership and social influence, and global citizenship. In a world where crises are becoming more frequent, employers need leaders and teams capable of adapting to uncertainty and managing complex social dynamics.

Slower economic growth and increased restrictions to global trade are contributing to the increased importance of creative thinking and resilience, flexibility, and agility. These skills are crucial for navigating uncertain economic landscapes, as businesses seek to innovate and remain competitive despite market constraints.

## Green transition

A growing focus on environmental stewardship as a critical skill reflects an evolving alignment between business strategies and sustainability objectives. This rise, driven by climate adaptation efforts, carbon reduction initiatives, and energy generation, storage and distribution technologies, points to a profound shift whereby environmental skills are becoming increasingly integral across diverse sectors. As previously shown in Chapter 2 and Box 2.1, an increasing prioritization of climate adaptation and energy solutions by employers responding to the Future of Jobs Survey is not only evident in skill requirements but also appears as a significant factor in net job growth by 2030.

While demand for global citizenship skills is expected by most respondents to remain stable over the next five years, employers that anticipate a rise in its importance cite the convergence of climate-change adaptation, geoeconomic fragmentation and broadening digital access as key factors. This highlights the growing interconnectedness of sustainability and global collaboration, particularly as businesses operate in increasingly fragmented and climate-sensitive environments.

## Demographic shifts

Ongoing demographic shifts, particularly aging and declining workforces in developed economies, are expected to emerge as a significant driver of skill demand. Aging and declining working-age populations are pressing organizations to prioritize talent management, teaching and mentoring and motivation and self-awareness. Alongside these priorities, there is a rising focus on empathy and active listening, resource management, and customer service, highlighting a growing need for interpersonal and operational skills that can address the specific needs of an aging workforce and foster more inclusive work environments.

Increasing demand for talent management and motivation and self-awareness skills is also driven by growing working-age populations. Findings reported in Chapter 2 underscore similar patterns, where aging and growing working-age populations are major drivers of growth in jobs across Education, Sales, and Hospitality. These trends reveal the dual role demographic changes play in shaping both job availability and the types of skills needed, emphasizing the interconnectedness of workforce demographics with skills development and talent strategies across sectors.

# 3.3 Reskilling and upskilling strategies

Having anticipated significant skill disruptions, employers have increasingly invested in reskilling and upskilling initiatives to align workforce skills with evolving demands (see Section 3.1).

This section explores training trends, how employers expect to finance their training initiatives, and their expectations regarding the outcomes of these investments.

## Training needs

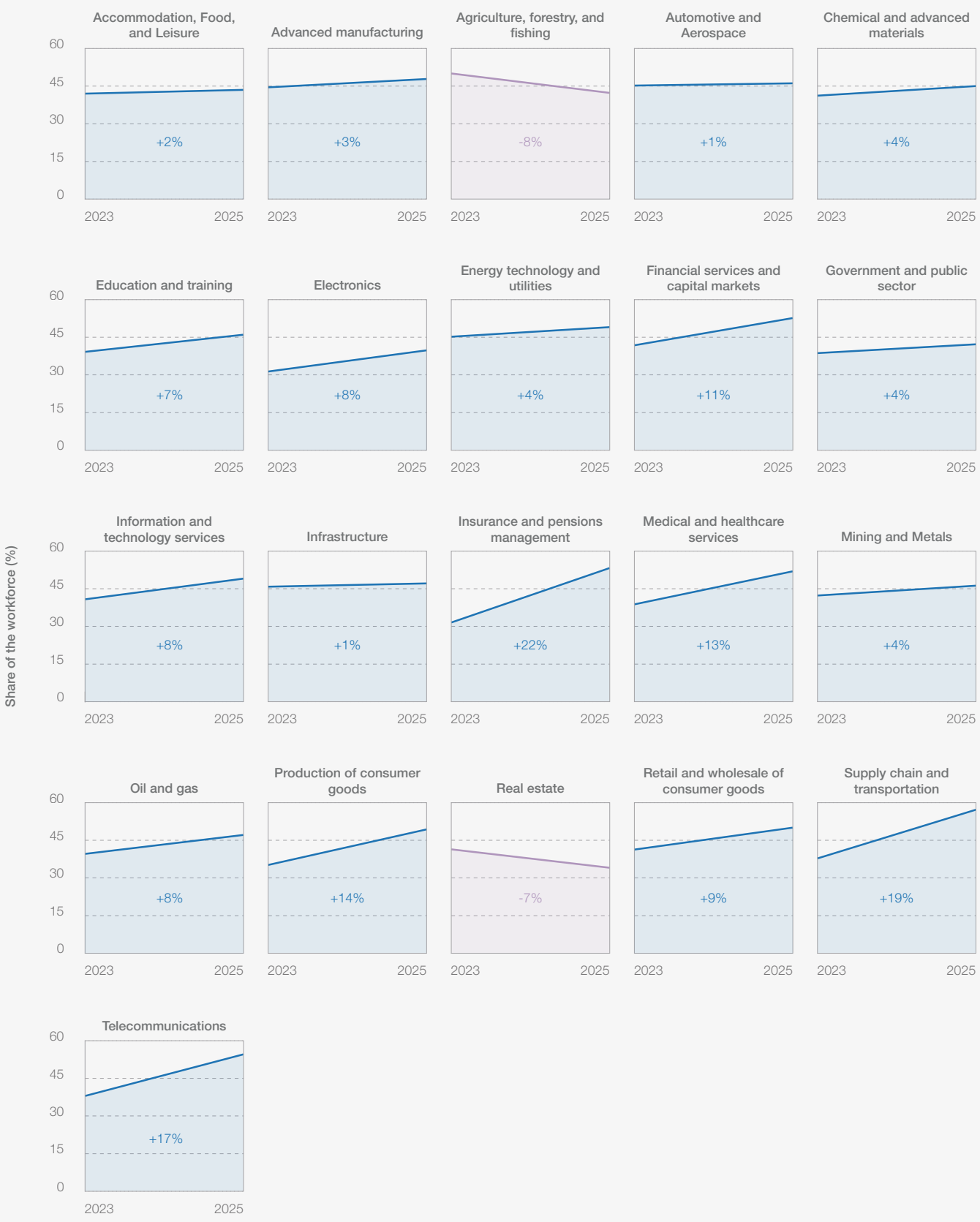
Future of Jobs Survey respondents indicate that 50% of their workforce has completed training as part of their learning and development initiatives. This reflects a positive global trend compared to 2023, when only 41% of the workforce had received training. The rise in training completion is evident across nearly all industries (Figure 3.8), suggesting a growing recognition of the importance of continuous skill development.

However, a few industries stand out from this trend. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, and Real Estate are the only sectors that have seen a decline in training completion between the two last editions of this report. On the other hand, industries like Insurance and Pensions Management, Supply

FIGURE 3.8

## Training completion as part of learning and development strategies, 2023 vs. 2025, by industry

Evolution in the share of the workforce that has completed training as part of employers' learning and development strategies. Only industries with data points for both years are included in the analysis.




Source

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024 and Future of Jobs Survey 2022.

Note

Only industries with data points for both years are included in this analysis. Professional Services has data available only for 2025.

Chain and Transportation and Telecommunications have seen the most significant rise in the share of workers completing training.

Looking ahead, Figure 3.9 provides an overview of expectations around workforce training needs by 2030. According to surveyed employers, for a representative sample of 100 workers 41 will not require significant training by 2030; 11 will require training, but it will not be accessible to them in the foreseeable future; and 29 will require training and be upskilled within their current roles. Additionally, employers anticipate that 19 out of 100 workers will require training and will be reskilled and redeployed within their organization by 2030.

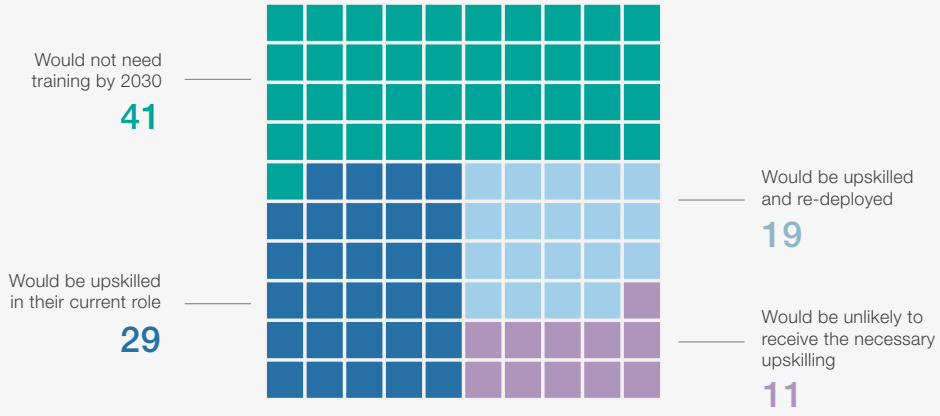
The anticipated need for training varies significantly across industries and geographies. While companies headquartered in North America estimate that 67% of their workforce will require training by 2030, those in Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa project that under 50% of their workforce will need training by 2030.

Industries, such as Telecommunications, and Information and Technology Services, which saw some of the largest uptake in reskilling and upskilling (Figure 3.8), still anticipate significant training needs, with 63% and 62% of their workforce, respectively, expected to need further training by 2030. By contrast, sectors with declining trendlines in training completion are among the sectors with the lowest projected additional training needs.

The share of employees estimated as unlikely to receive upskilling opportunities is somewhat uniform across industries and geographies, suggesting that while the demand for skills may vary, access to reskilling and upskilling opportunities remains similarly constrained globally.

FIGURE 3.9 **Upskilling and reskilling outlook, 2025-2030**

Breakdown of the typical training outlook for a representative group of 100 workers, calculated based on averages of the training requirements reported by employers surveyed.




Source

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024.

## Funding for training programmes

When it comes to funding of reskilling and upskilling initiatives, employers predominantly expect to fund their own training programmes, as shown in Figure 3.10. The second-most common funding mechanism is free of cost training, followed by government and public-private funding.

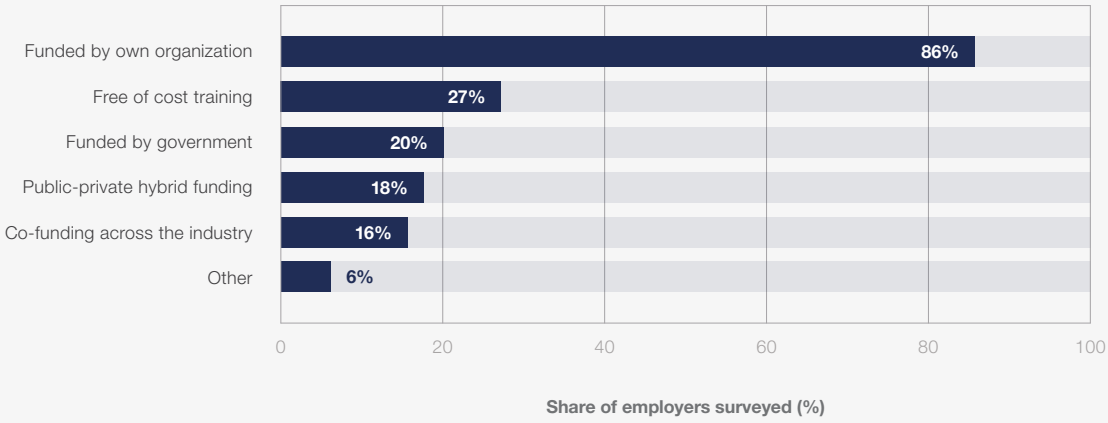
With funding for reskilling and upskilling being the most-welcomed public-policy support by Future of Jobs Survey respondents, government funding plays a more significant role in industries such as Accommodation, Food, and Leisure; Government and Public Sector; and Education and Training, where over 30% of companies expect to rely on public financing for training initiatives. On the other hand, only 3% of companies in the Insurance and Pensions Management industry expect to rely on government funding for training.

While co-funding across industries is the least utilized funding model overall, it is expected to have the largest use in industries such as Care, Personal Services and Wellbeing; Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing; and Automotive and Aerospace. This highlights the importance of cross industry collaboration in these industries.

FIGURE 3.10

## Funding for training, 2025-2030

Share of employers anticipating use of stated funding source for worker training programmes from 2025 to 2030.




Source

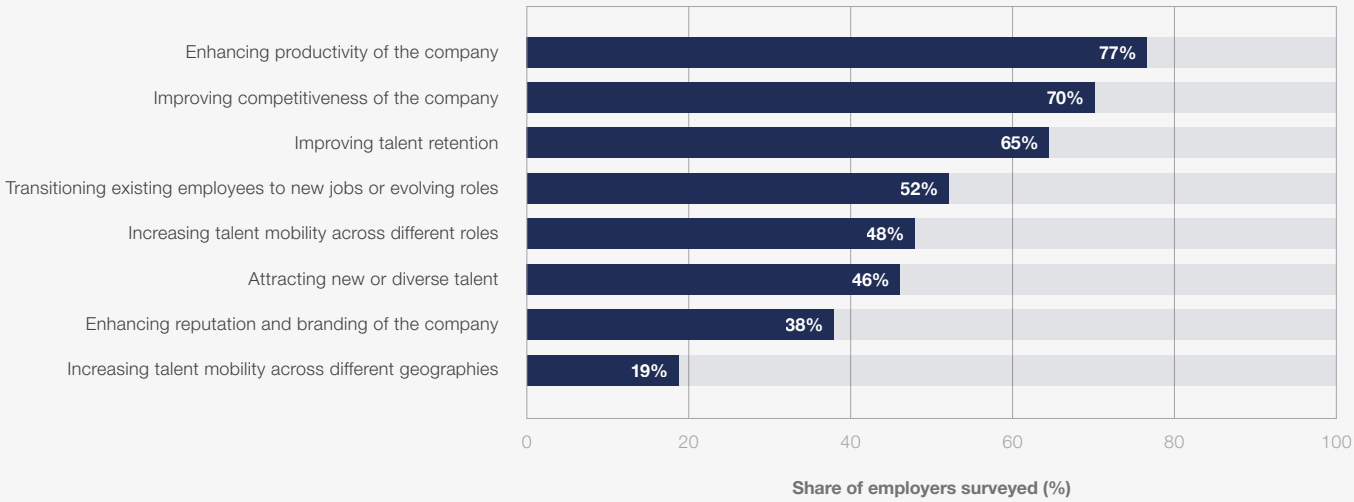
World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024.

The most common outcomes employers expect from their investment in training are enhanced productivity (cited by 77% of respondents) and improved competitiveness (70%). Talent retention ranks as the third-most important expected outcome of training programmes, though it plays a more central role in sectors such as Automotive and Aerospace, Electronics, and Production of Consumer Goods, where over 72% of employers highlight this as a key priority (Figure 3.11).

FIGURE 3.11

## Expected outcomes from investing in training, 2025-2030

Share of employers expecting the stated outcome from investing in worker training programmes from 2025 to 2030.




Source

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Surveys 2024.