Internet job postings: employability skills

By Ian White

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This infographic compares how frequently employability skills were requested in internet job postings across different industries and occupations from 2014 to 2017. The data are supplied by Burning Glass Technologies (2018).

Employability skills can be defined as a set of non-technical skills, capabilities and attributes that contribute to an individual's likelihood of gaining employment.

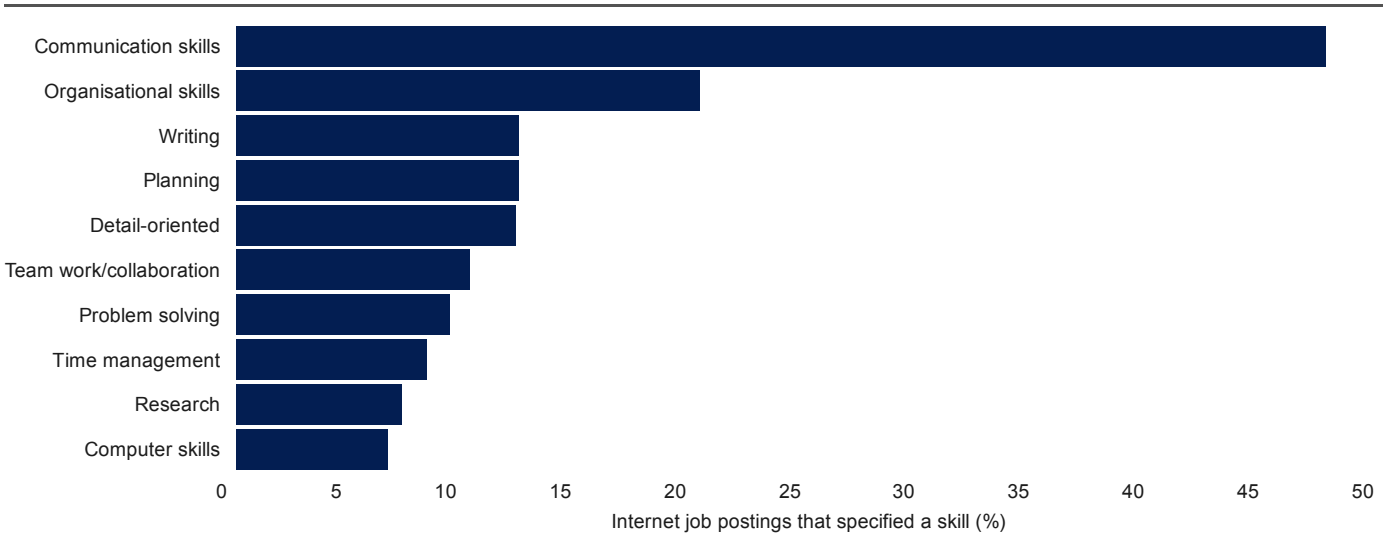
The vocational education and training (VET) sector has an important role in developing these skills, and preparing learners for the workforce. According to the National Student Outcomes Survey, 84% of VET graduates undertook training for employment related reasons (NCVER 2017b) .

The VET sector helps students develop employability skills in several different ways. Essential foundational skills are embedded in all subjects and are identified in every subject according to the Standards for Training Packages. There is also a standalone training package and qualifications for foundational skills. The VET sector also supports many learners with lower levels of prior education, and those seeking to gain employment. Employability skills are then (both explicitly and implicitly) a part of VET.

What are the top employability skills requested?

These are the top 10 most frequently requested employability skills across all internet job postings in Australia between 2014 and 2017 and are used as the baseline for comparison against different occupations and industries. Mouse over the bars in the figure to see an example of how that skill has been requested in a job posting.

Top 10 most requested employability skills across internet job postings, 2014–17

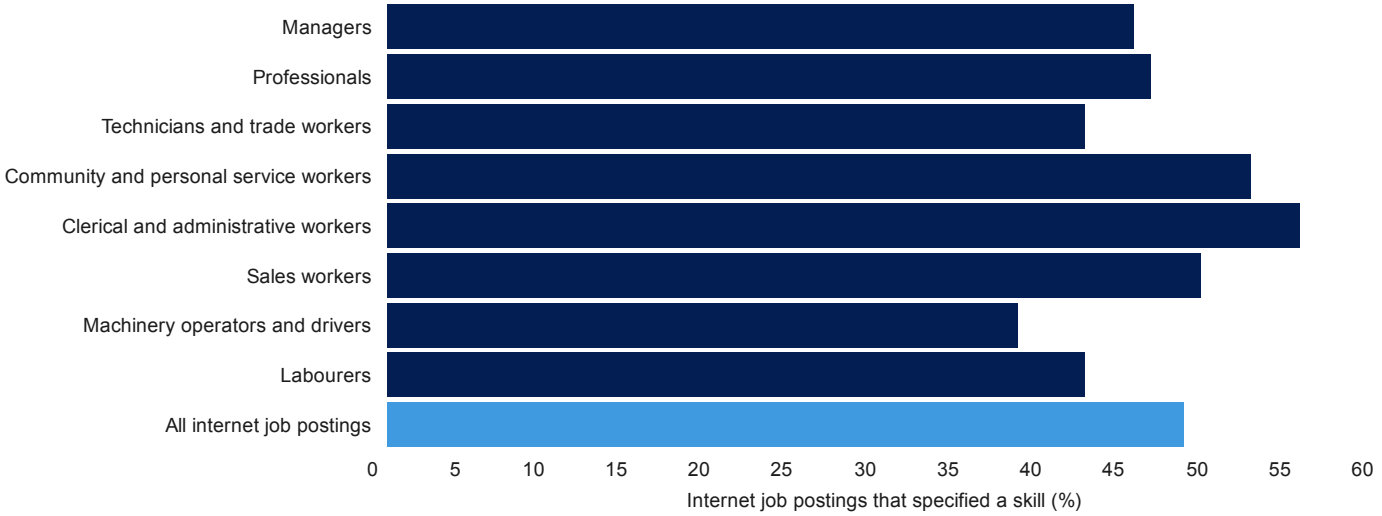


What are the top employability skills by occupation?

The chart below compares the percentage of internet job postings in each occupation (ANZSCO Major Group) that requested each of the top 10 employability skills identified above. The percentage of all internet job postings that requested each skill is included for comparison.

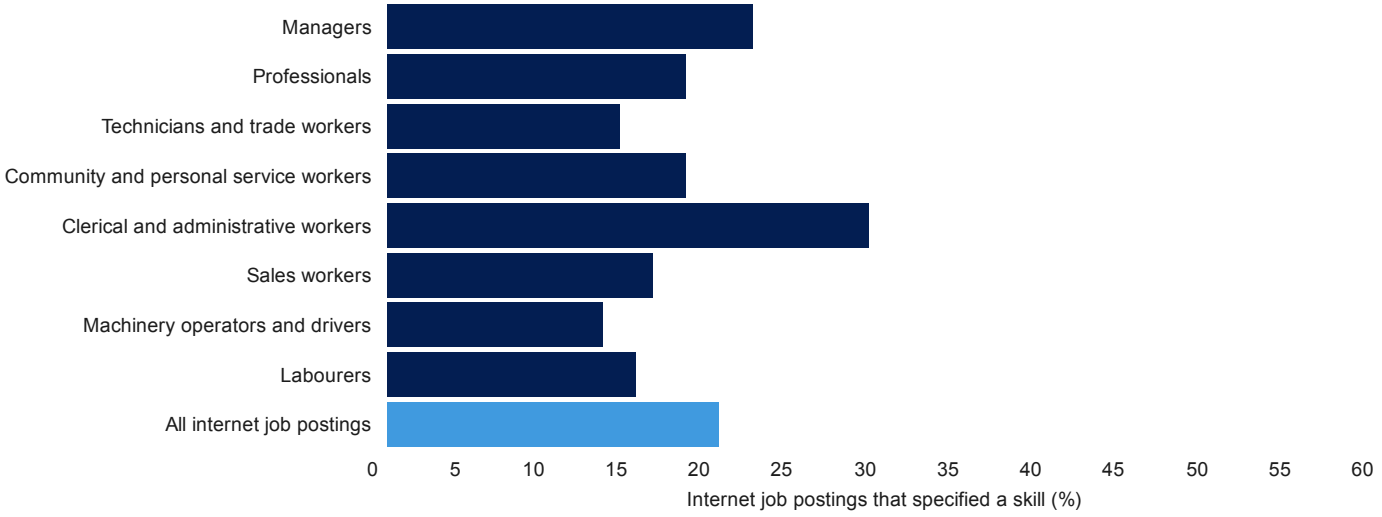
The top 10 employability skills by occupation, 2014–17

Communication skills

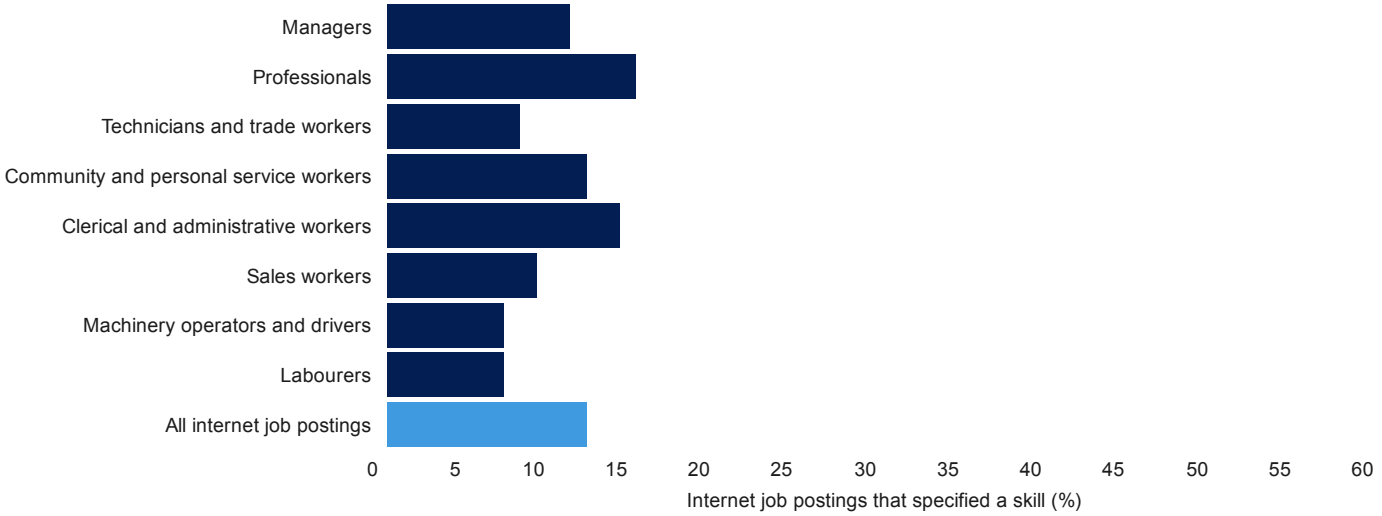


Download data

Organisational skills



Writing



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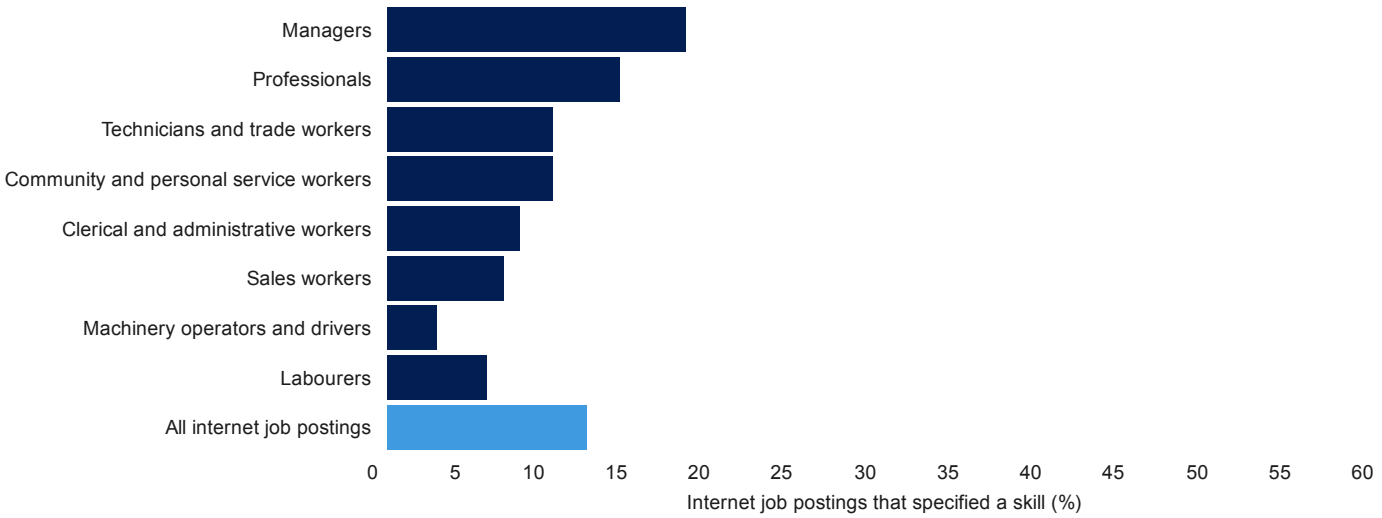
Planning



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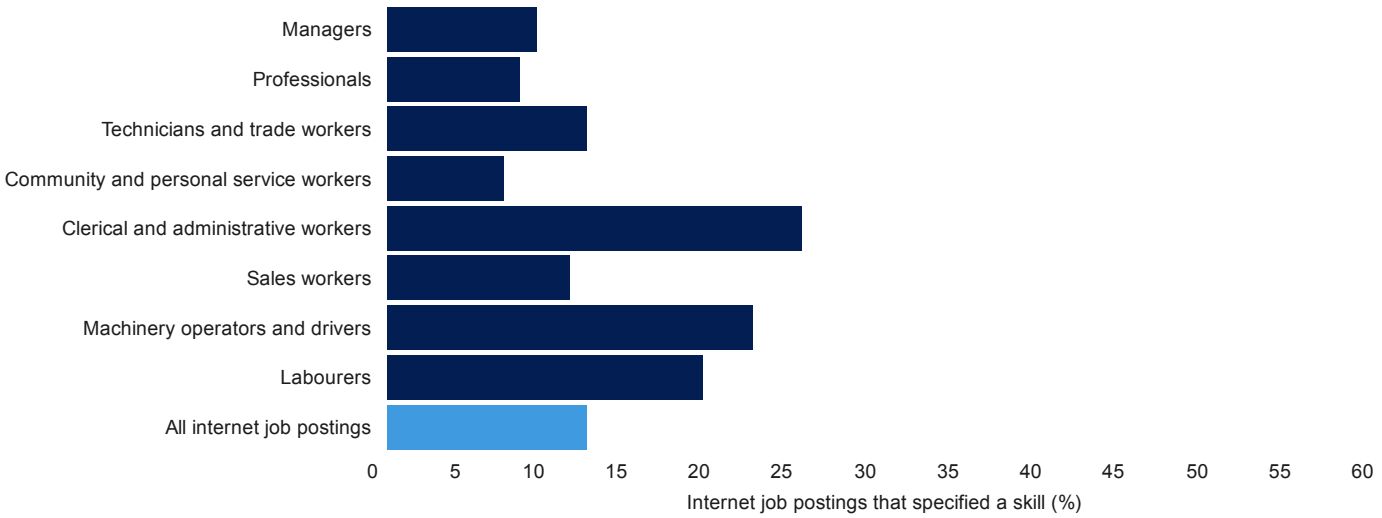
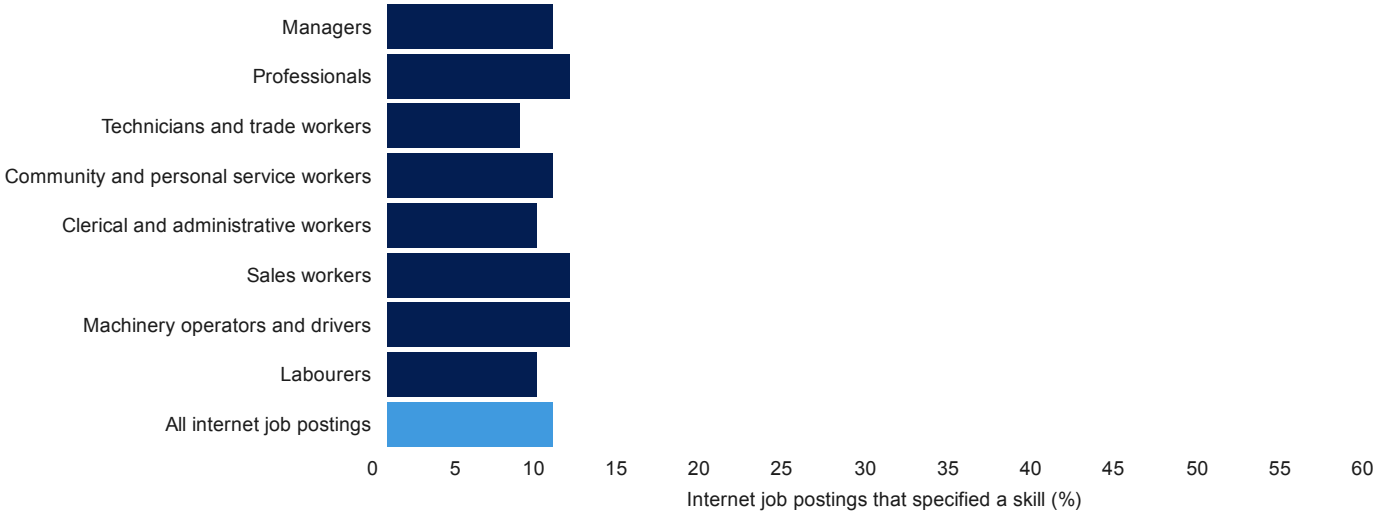
Detail-oriented



Team work/collaboration



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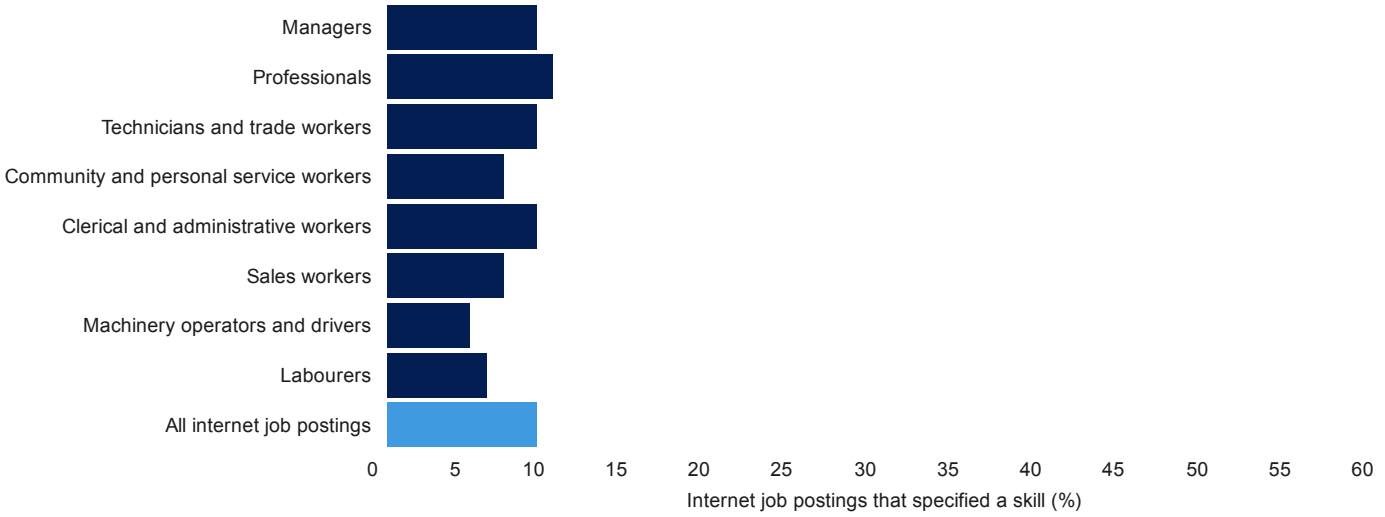
Problem solving



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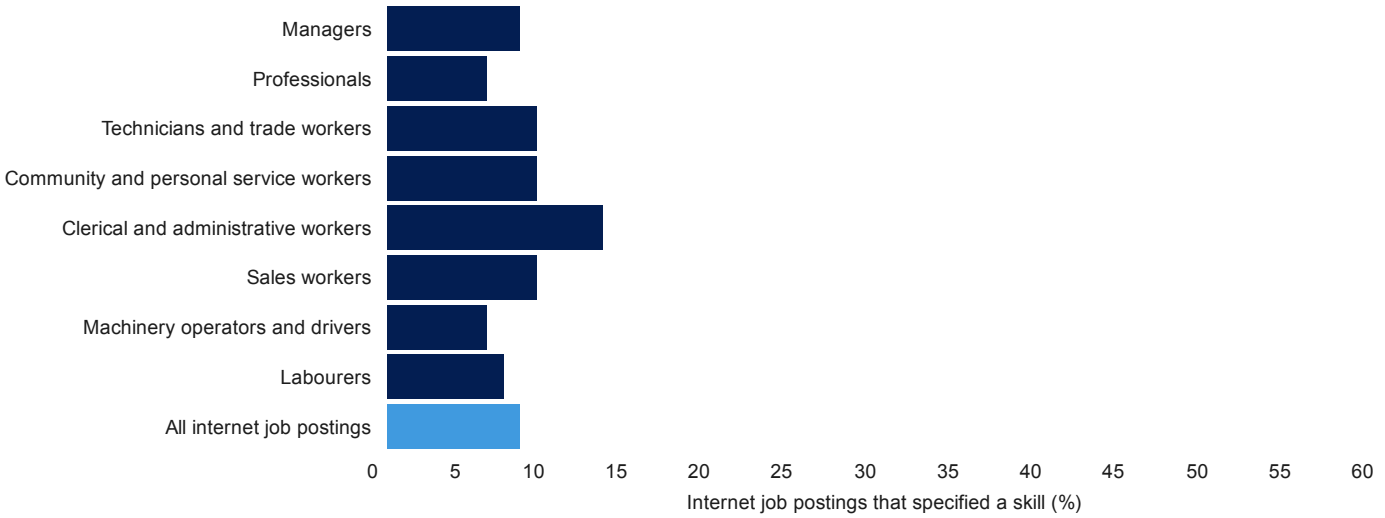
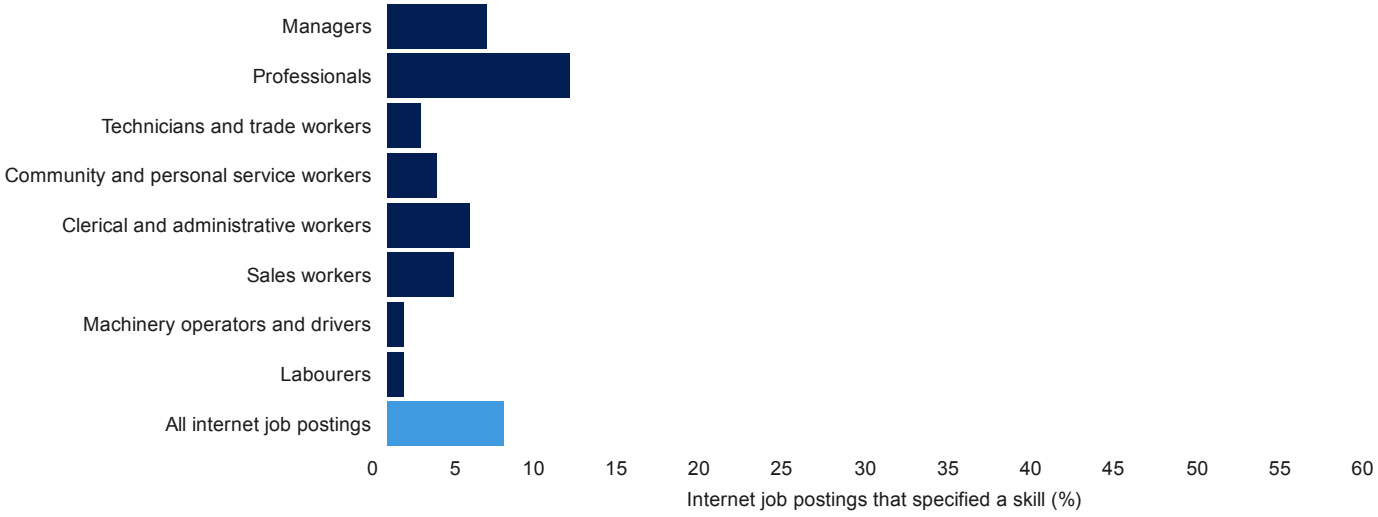
Time management



Research



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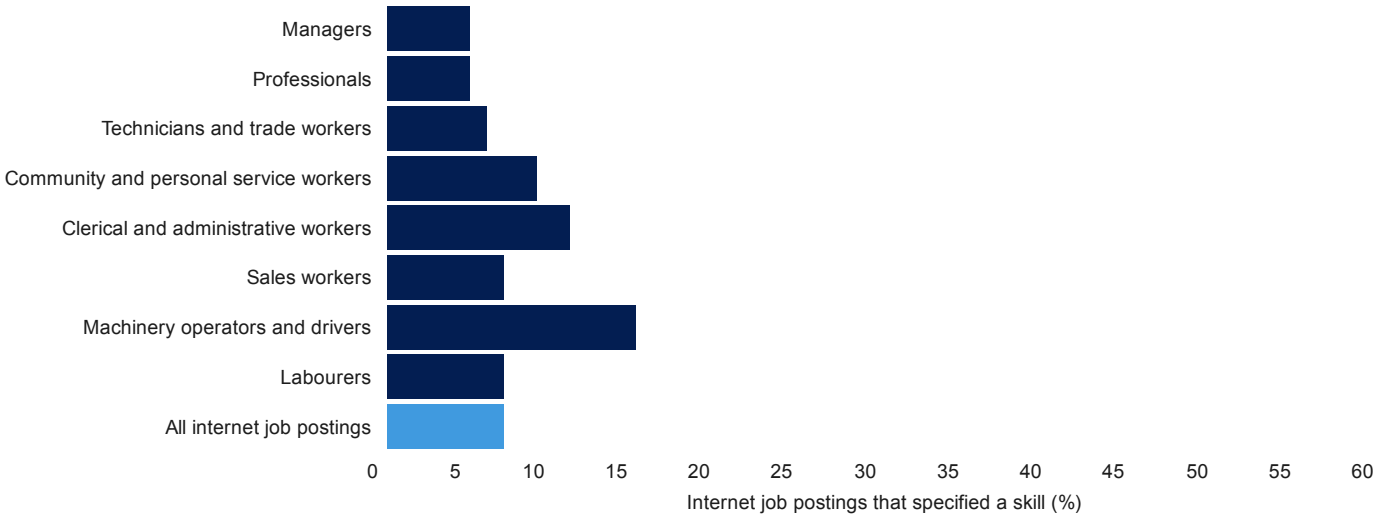
Computer skills



Download data

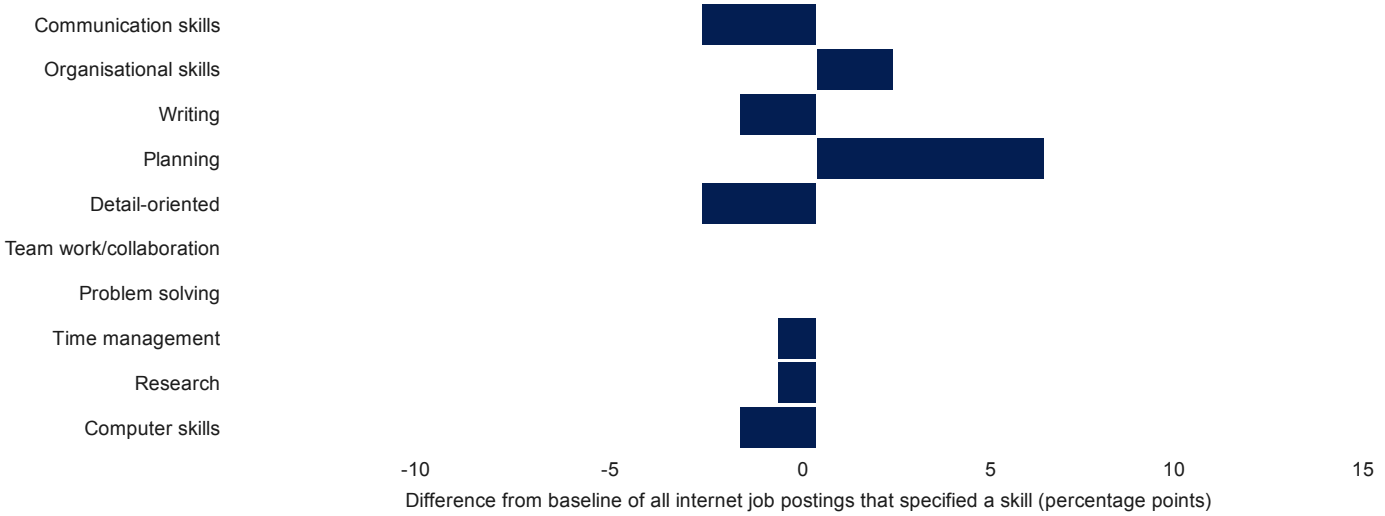
The chart below uses the same source of data, but compares the difference between percentage of employability skills requested in internet job postings for each occupation (ANZSCO Major Group) against the baseline percentage of all internet job postings (expressed as a percentage point difference).

Positive values indicate the skill was requested more frequently in internet job postings for an occupation relative to the baseline of all internet job postings, and negative values indicate that it was requested less frequently. For example, the first graph below shows that communications skills were requested less frequently for Managers than the baseline (45% compared with 48% - a difference of 3 percentage points), but planning was requested more frequently (6 percentage points higher).

It is important to note that in absolute terms, communication skills were the most requested employability skill by employers for all occupations. This means that employers placed a great deal of importance on effective communication skills across all occupations.

The top 10 employability skills by occupation relative to the baseline of all internet job postings, 2014–17

Managers



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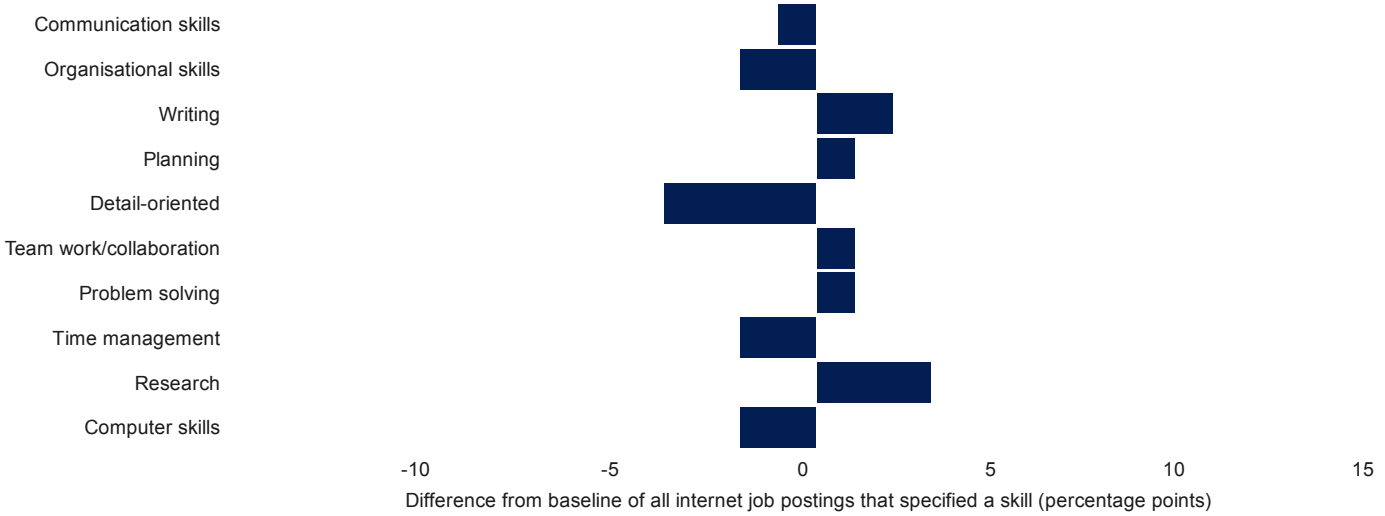
Professionals



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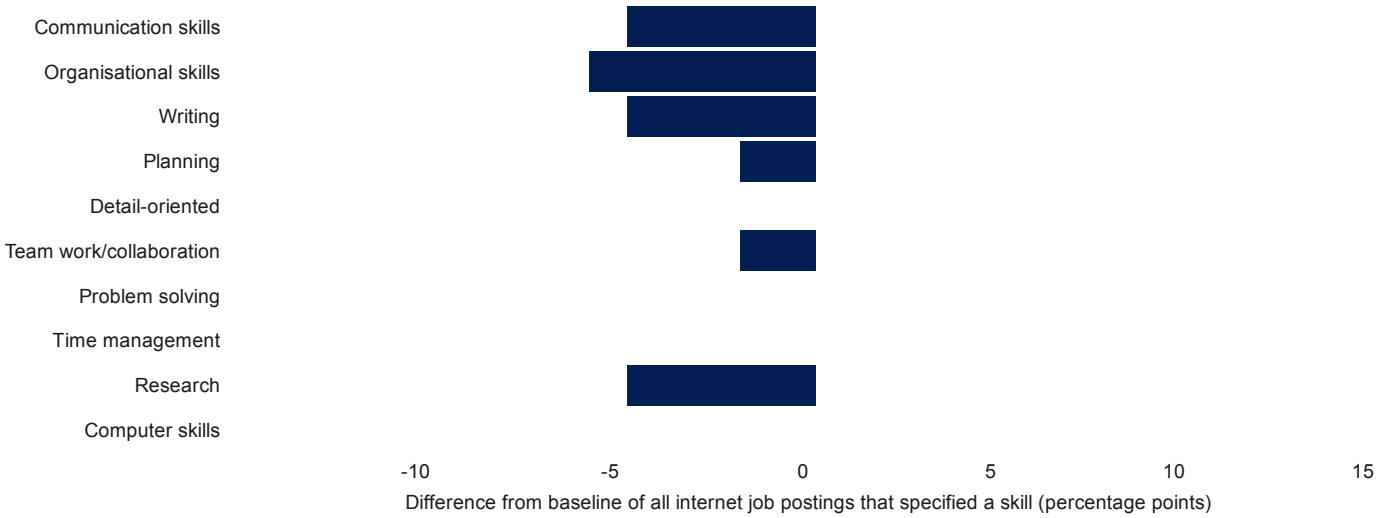
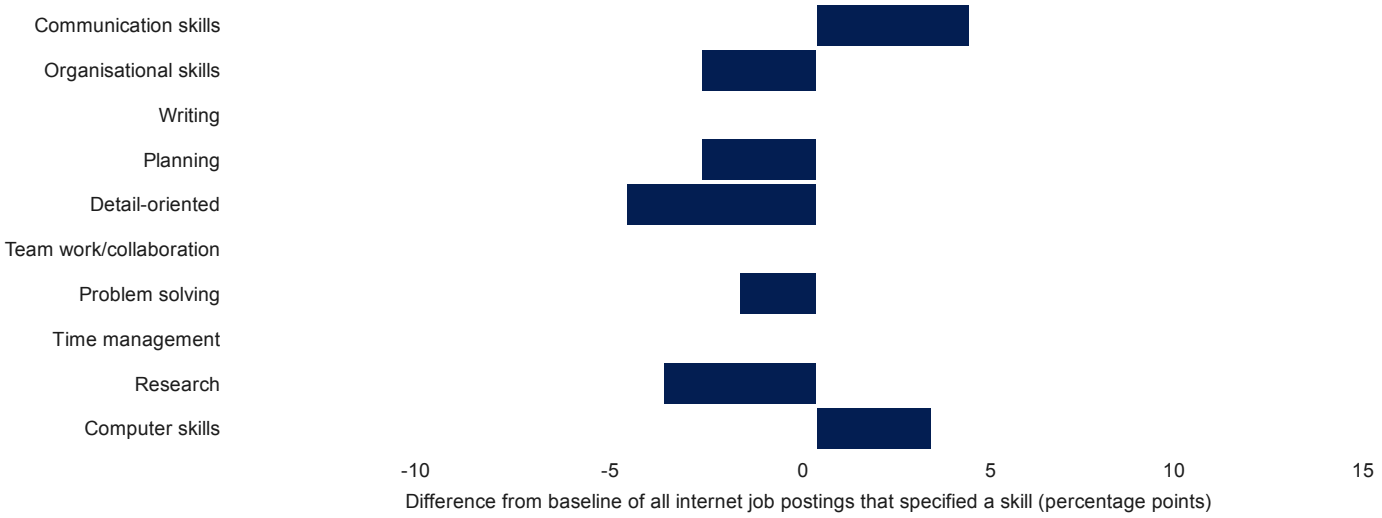
Technicians and trade workers



Community and personal service workers



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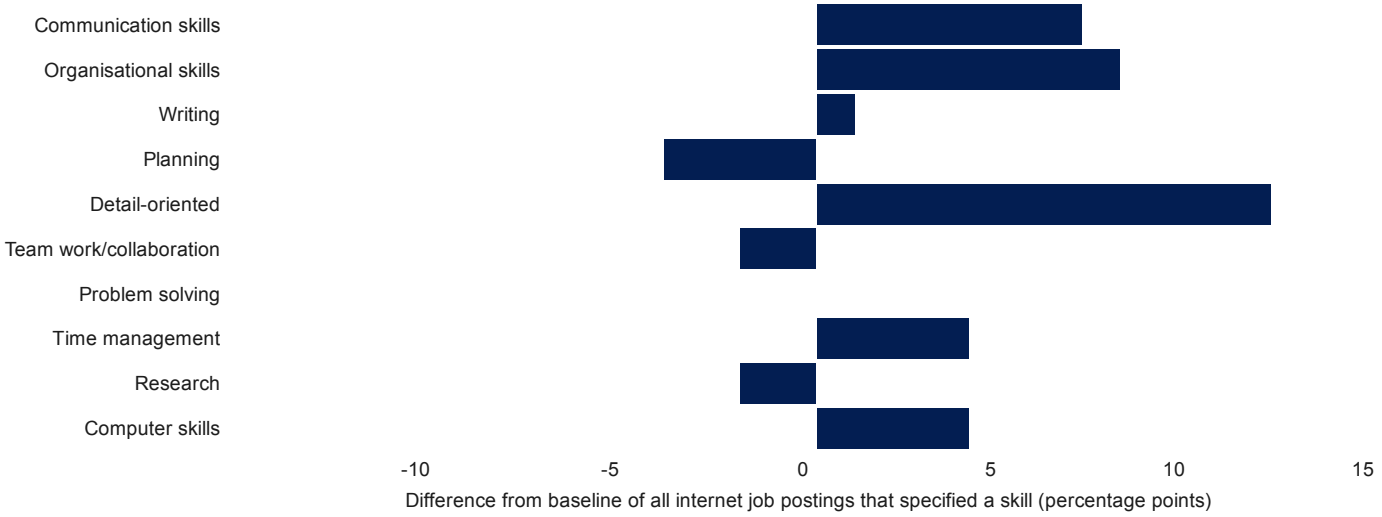
Clerical and administrative workers



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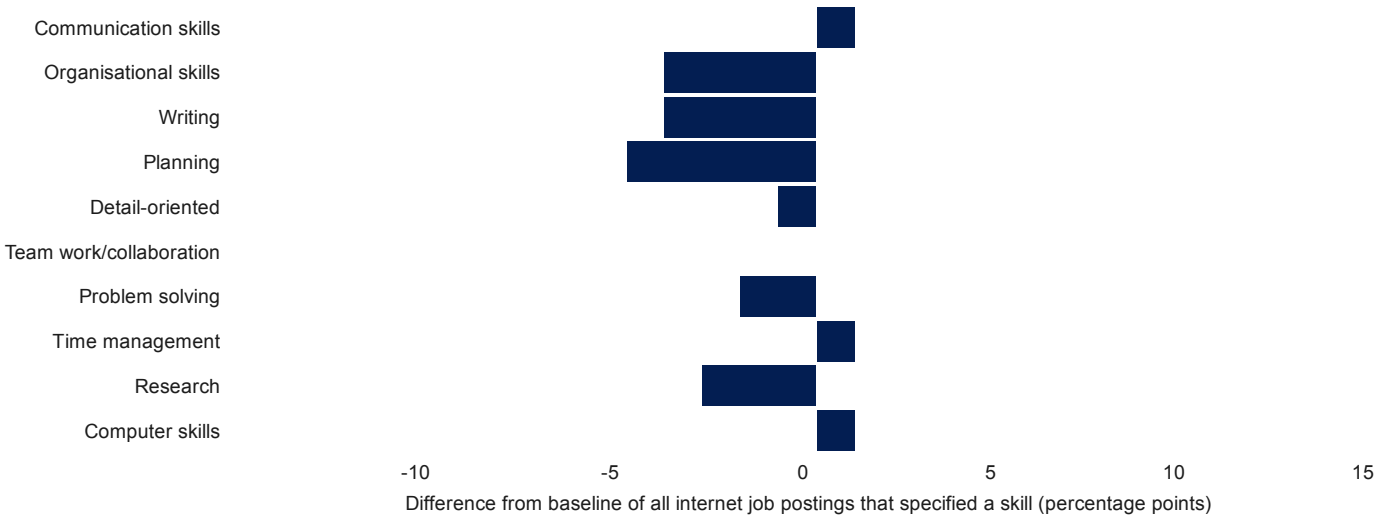
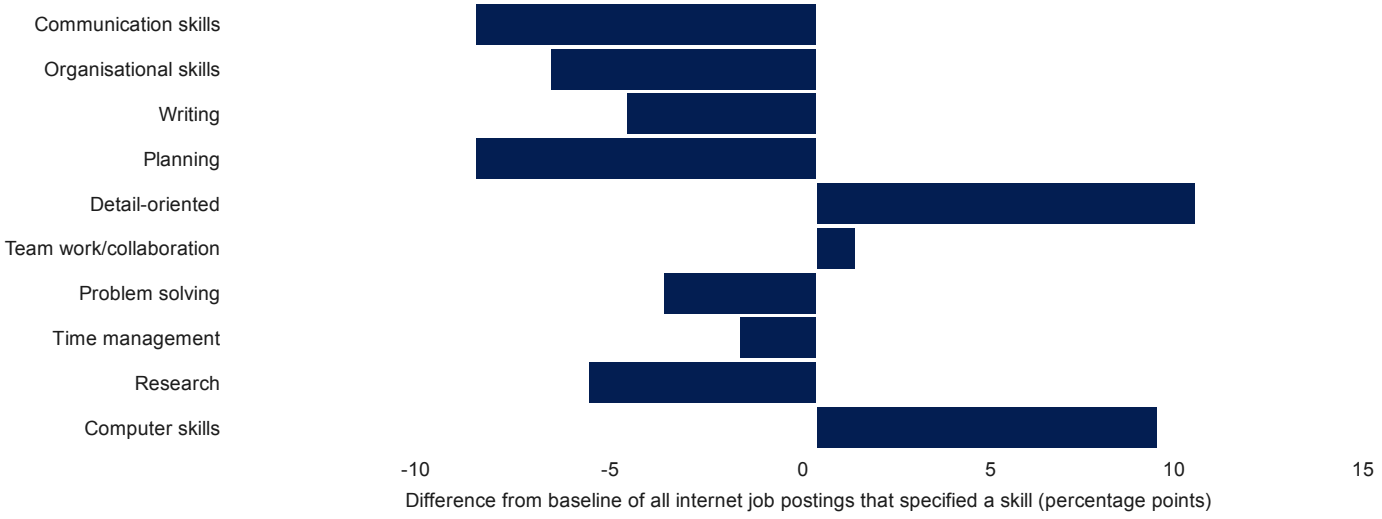
Sales workers



Machinery operators and drivers



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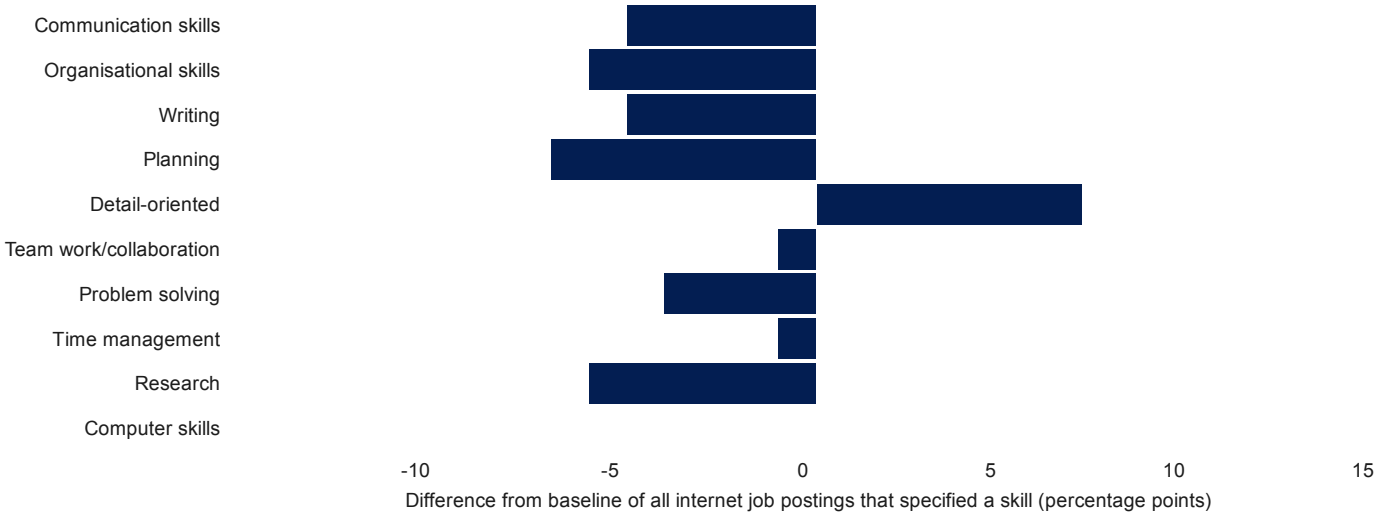
Labourers



Download data

Note: no coloured bar in the chart indicates that the percentage of employability skills requested in internet job postings for an occupation is the same as the baseline percentage of all internet job postings (e.g. team work/collaboration and problem solving for Managers).

The above chart compares the emphasis employers placed on different skills for an occupation, relative to the baseline for all internet job postings. For example, internet job postings for Clerical and administrative workers placed a greater emphasis on attention to detail, communication skills, and organisational skills, and less emphasis on planning.

Placing greater emphasis on a skill for an occupation may mean employers identify the skill as particularly important for the occupation, or that there is a demand for that skill in the workforce.

Placing less emphasis on a particular skill for an occupation does not necessarily mean that employers identify the skill as less important. For example, less emphasis relative to the baseline for all internet job postings was placed on communication skills for Managers. A possible explanation for this could be that employers assumed prospective candidates for Manager positions would be implicitly aware that good communication skills were required for the job and therefore they did not need to explicitly request them in the job posting.

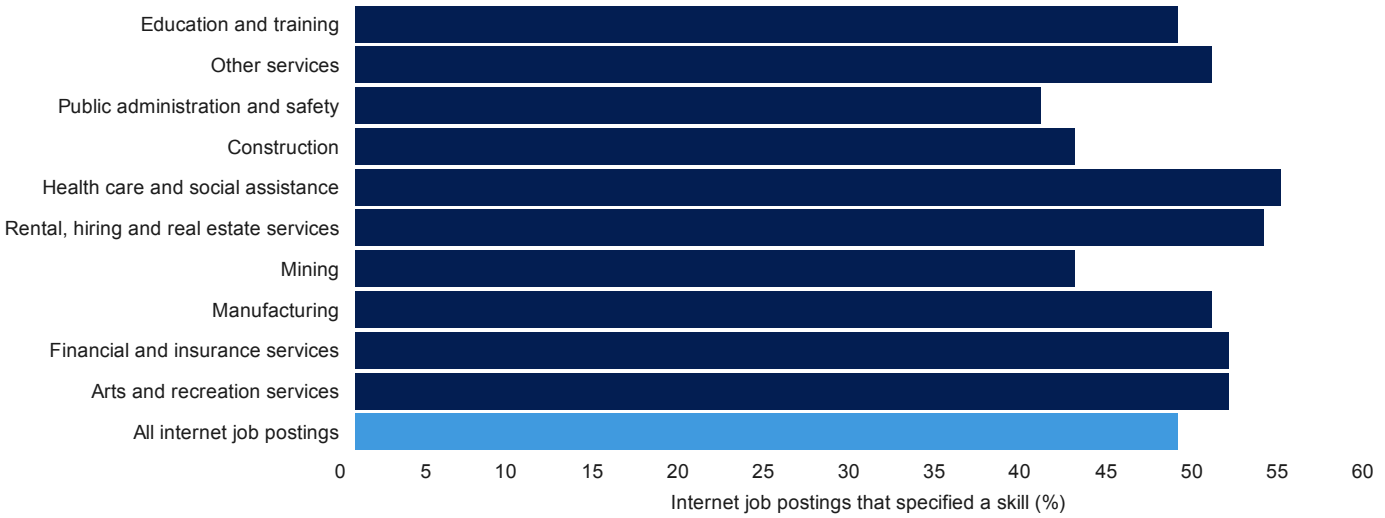
For some occupations, such as Technicians and trade workers, employers placed less emphasis on most of the top 10 employability skills. This may indicate that employers identify specific specialised skills as more important for those occupations when posting jobs online.

What are the top employability skills by industry?

The chart below compares the percentage of internet job postings in selected industries (ANZSIC divisional level) that requested each of the top 10 employability skills identified above. The percentage of all internet job postings that requested each skill is included for comparison. The selected industries had the highest percentage of employers with vocational qualifications as a job requirement according to the Survey of Employer's Use and Views of the VET System (NCVER 2017a).

The top 10 employability skills for selected industries, 2014–17

Communication skills



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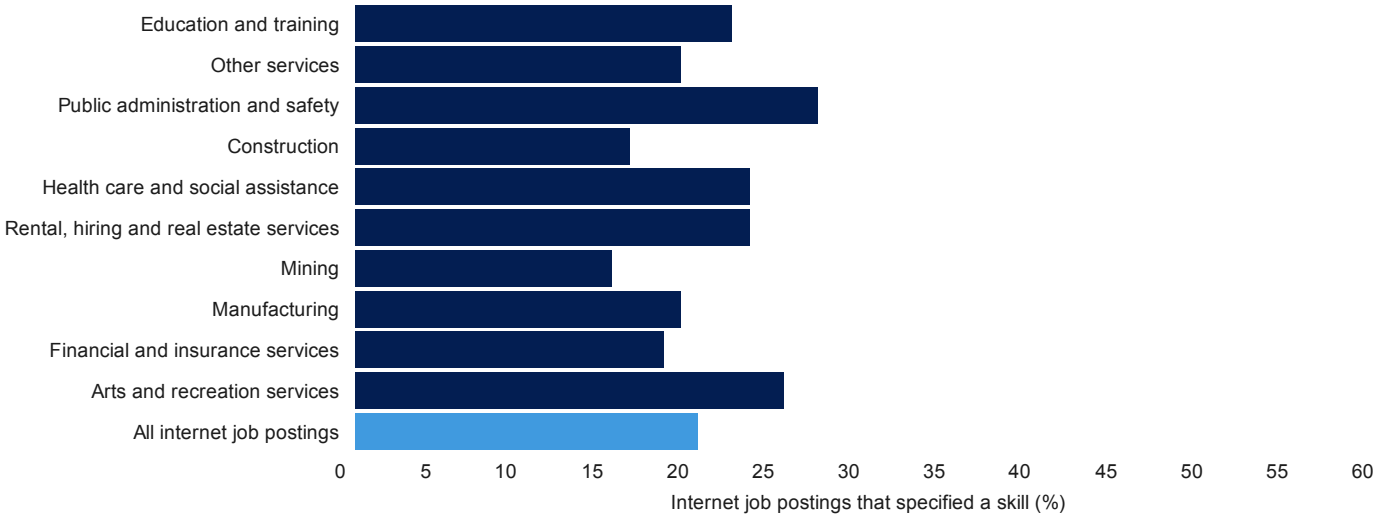
Organisational skills



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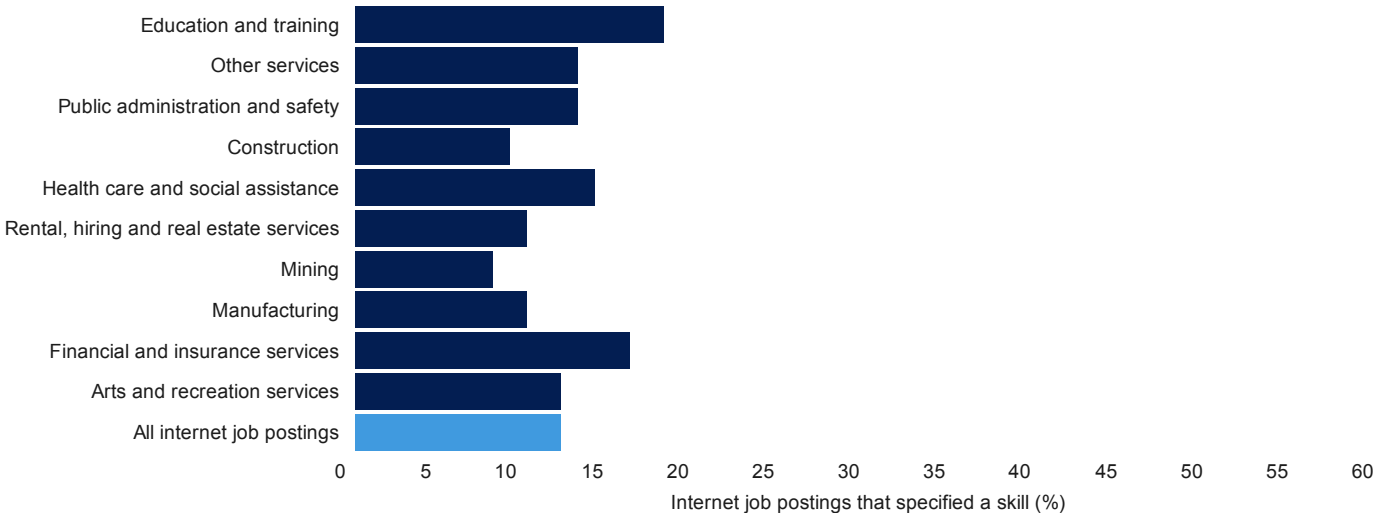
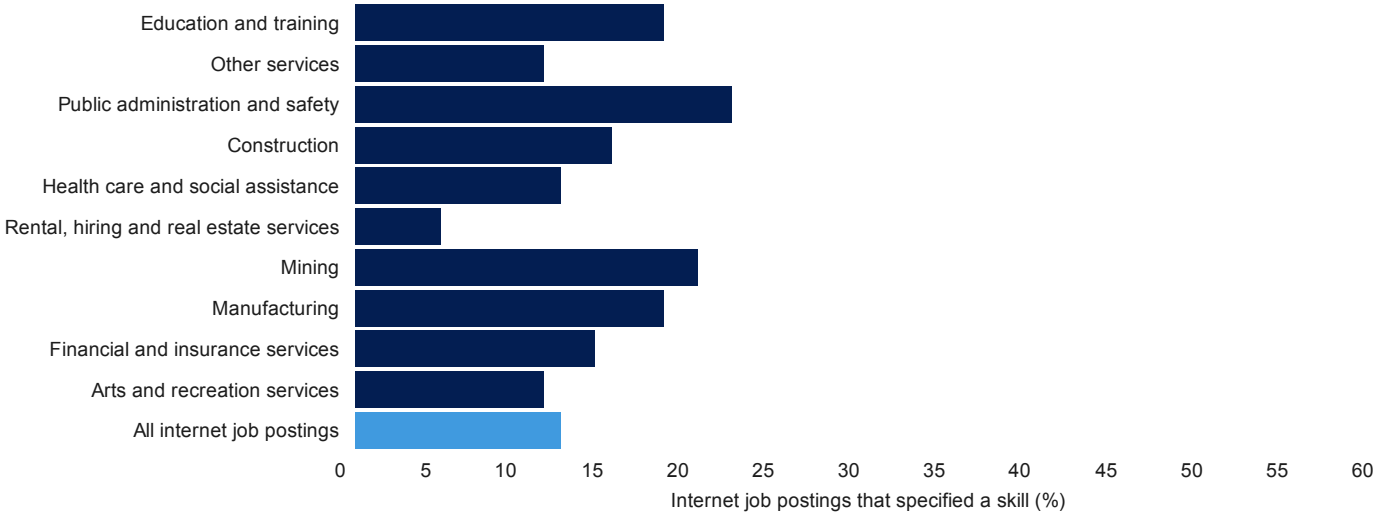
Writing



Planning



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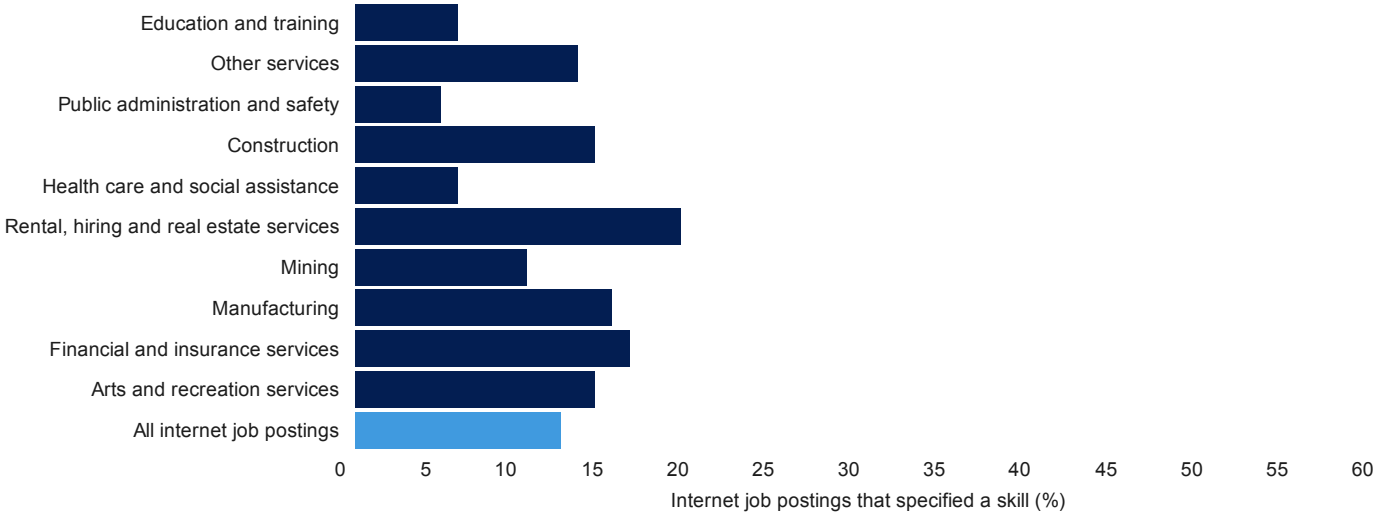
Detail-orientated



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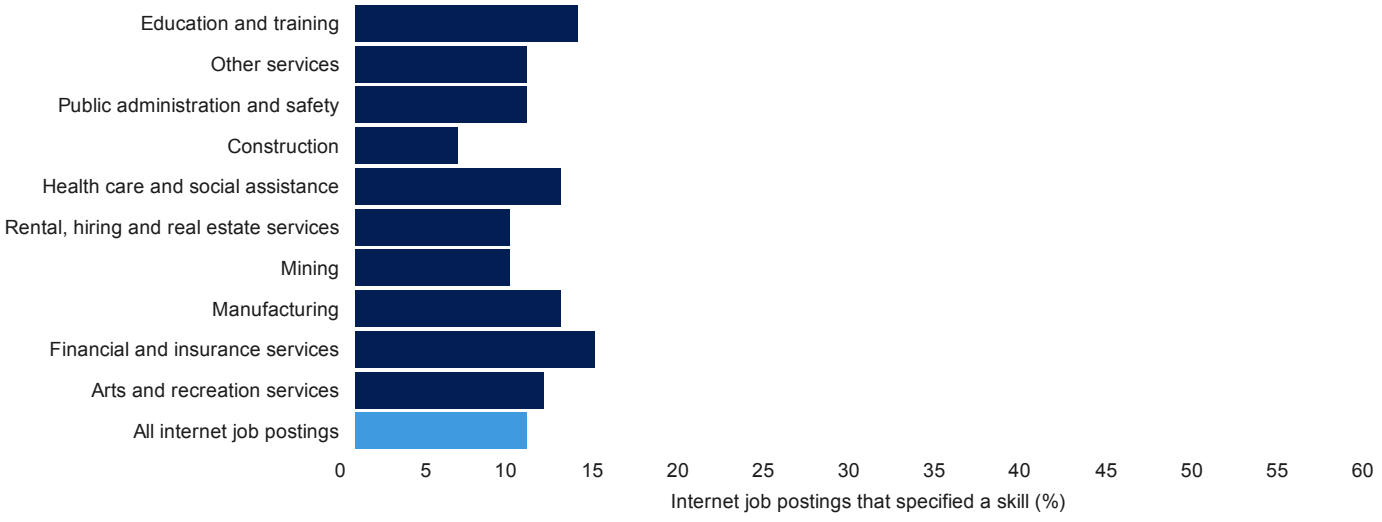
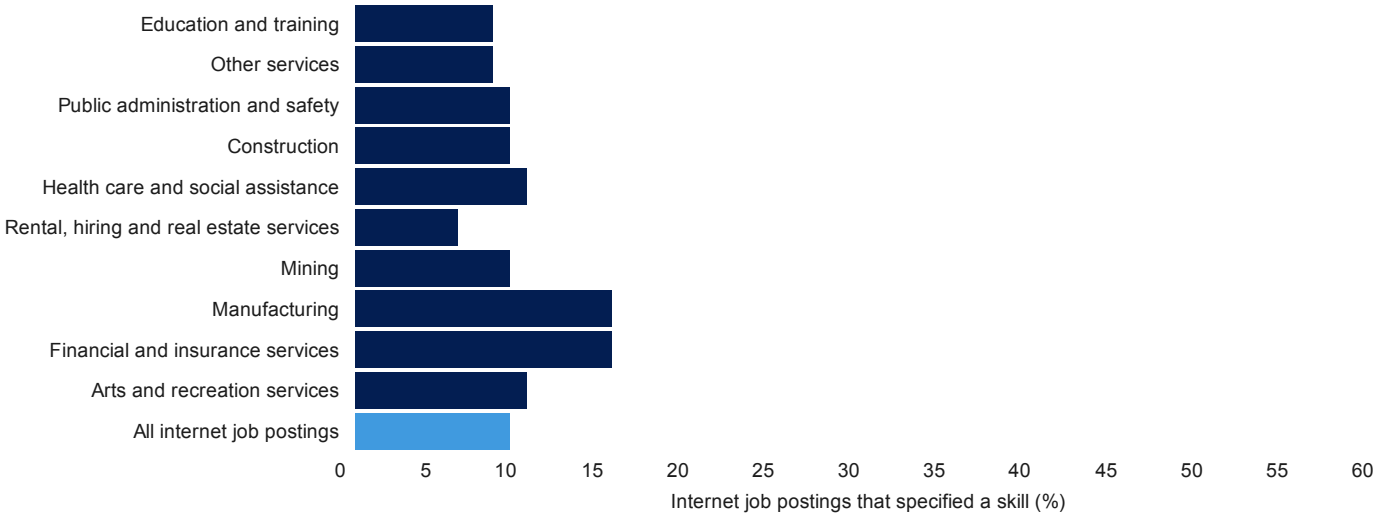
Team work/collaboration



Problem solving



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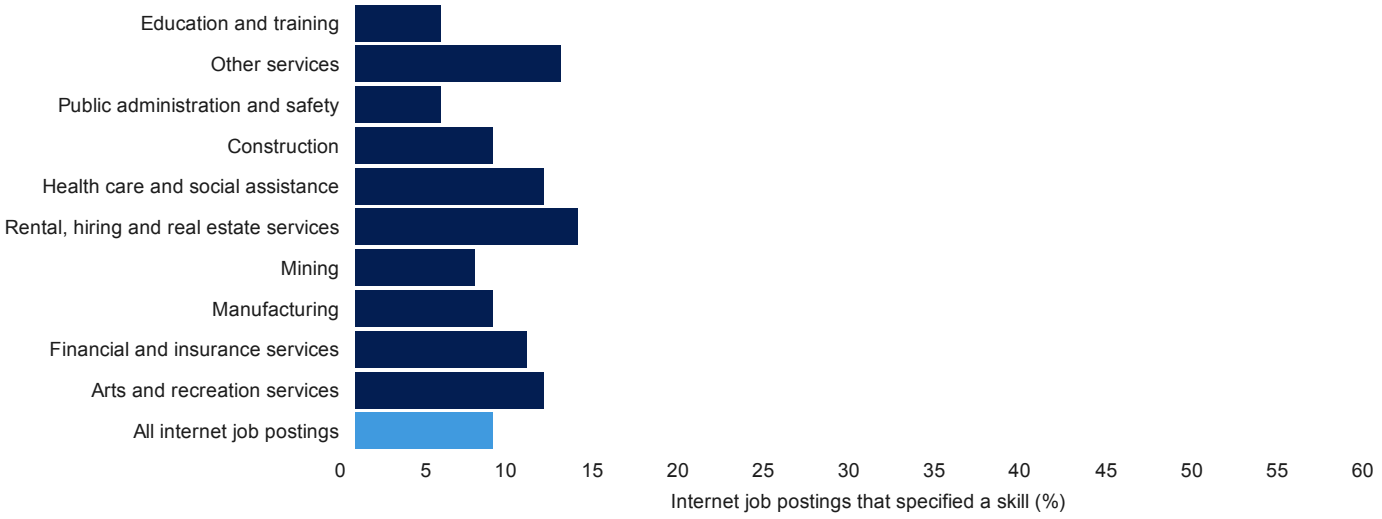
Time management



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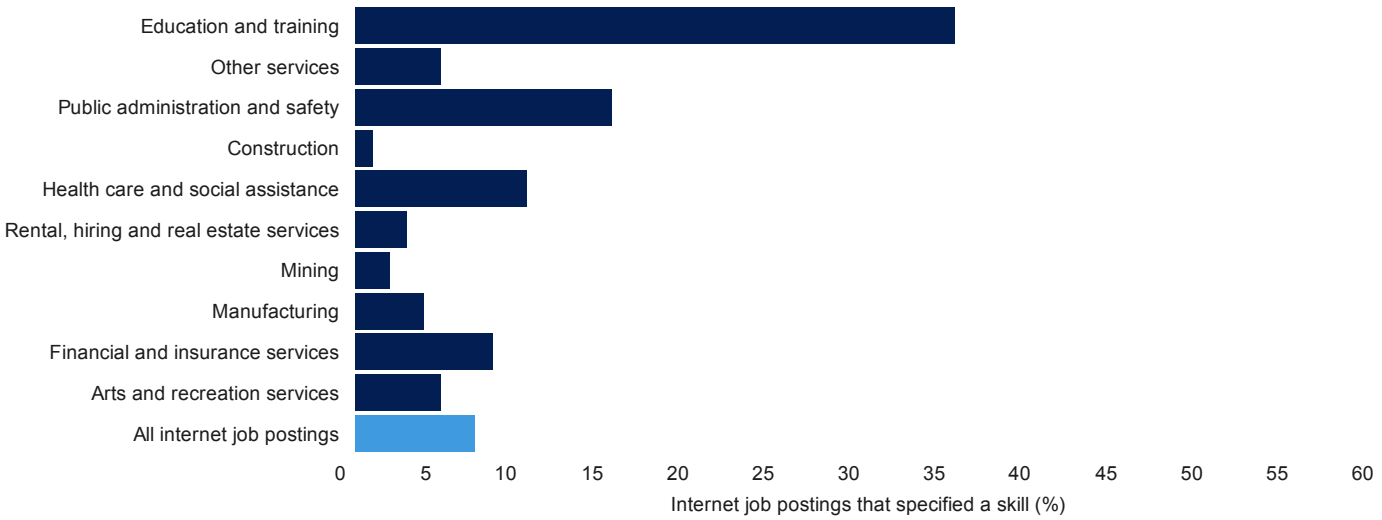
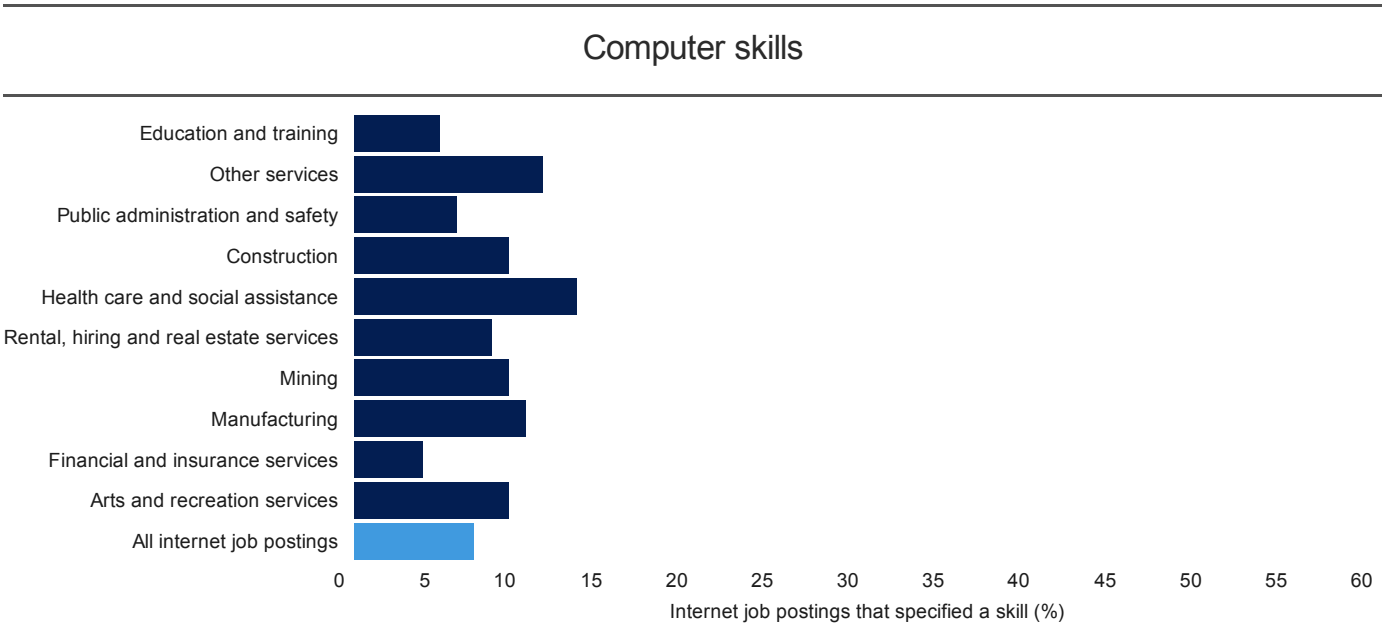
Research





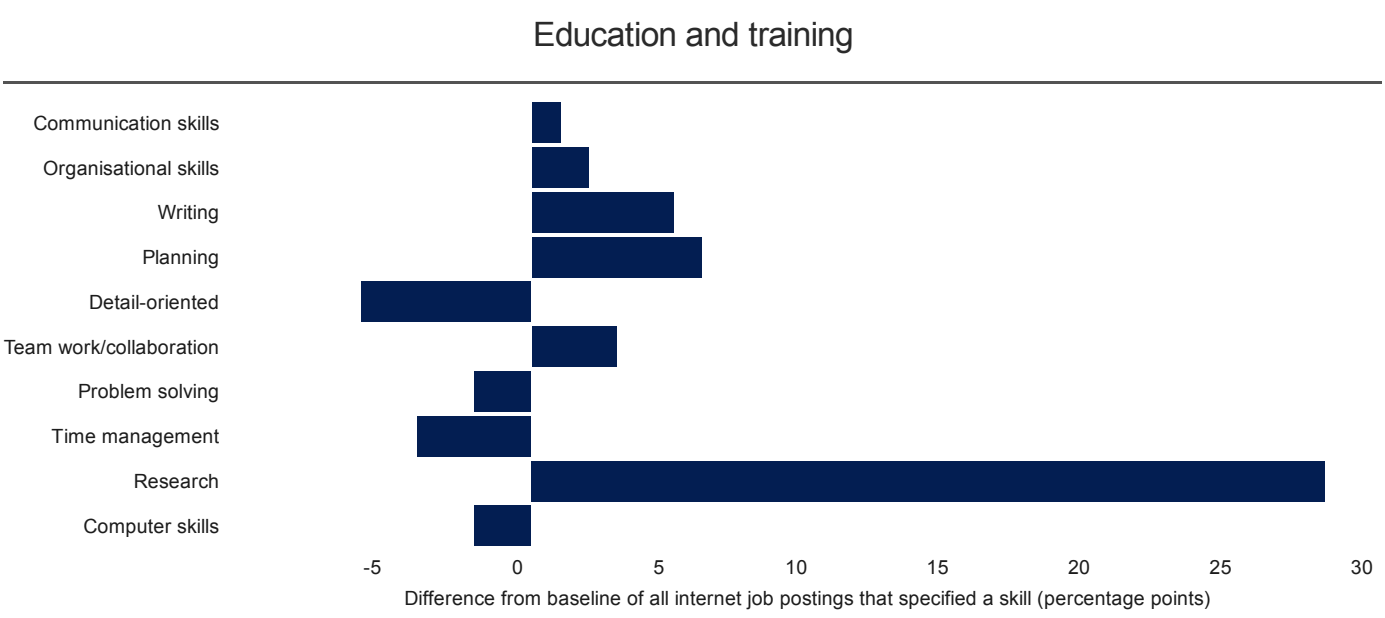
Download data

The chart below uses the same source of data, but compares the difference between the percentage of employability skills requested in internet job postings for each selected industry (ANZSIC divisional level) against the baseline percentage of all internet job postings (expressed as a percentage point difference).

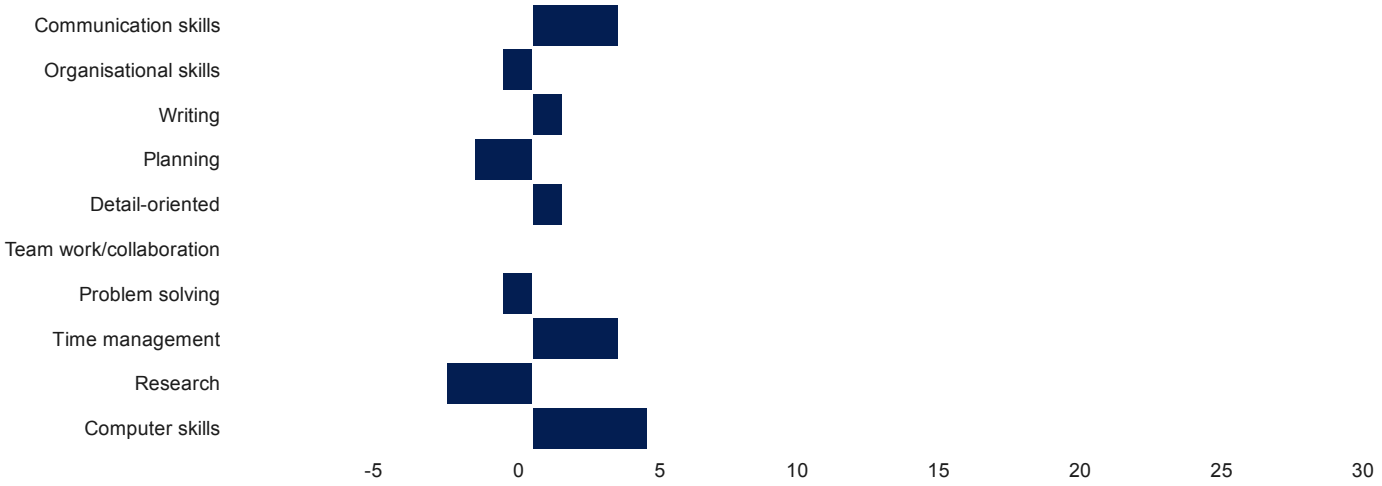
Positive values indicate the skill was requested more frequently for an industry relative to the baseline for all internet job postings, negative values indicate that it was requested less frequently. For example, the first chart below shows that research skills were requested more frequently in the Education and training industry than the baseline (35% compared with 7% - a difference of 28 percentage points), but time management skills were requested less frequently (a difference of 4 percentage points).

It is important to note that in absolute terms, communication skills were the most requested employability skill by employers for all industries. This means that employers across all industries placed a great deal of importance on effective communications skills.

The top 10 employability skills by selected industries relative to the baseline percentage of all industries, 2014–17



Other services



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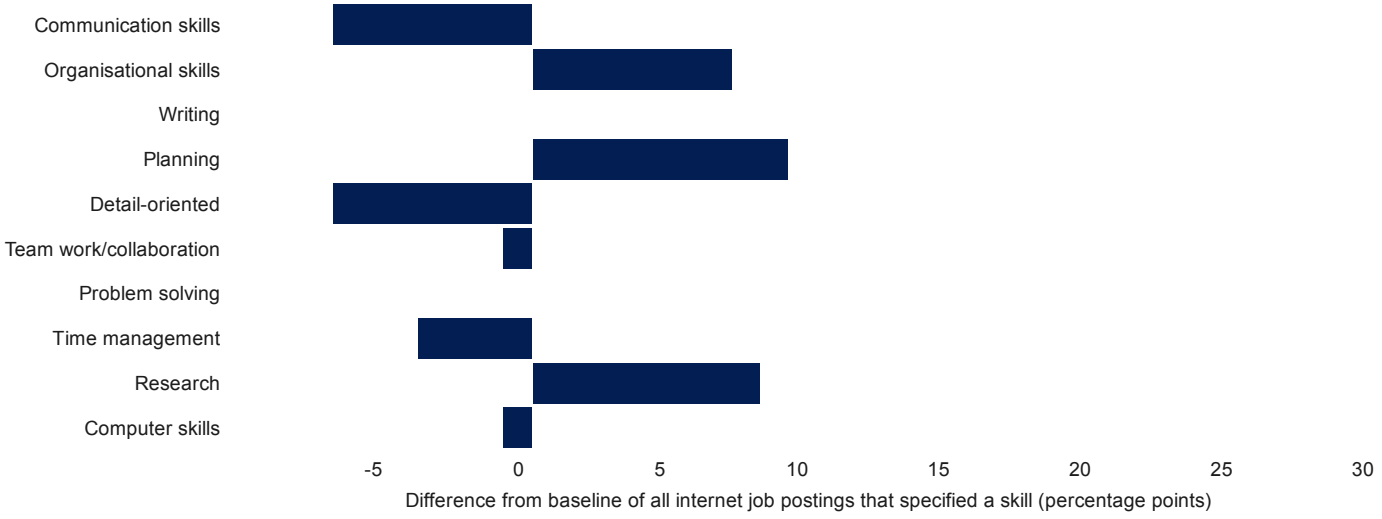
Public administration and safety



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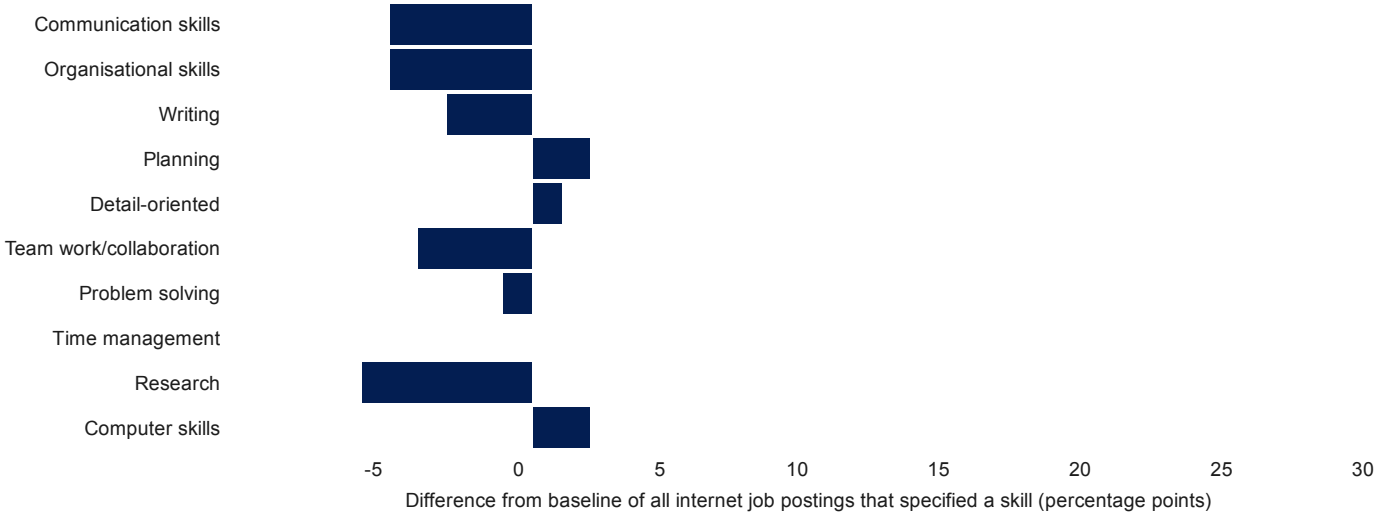
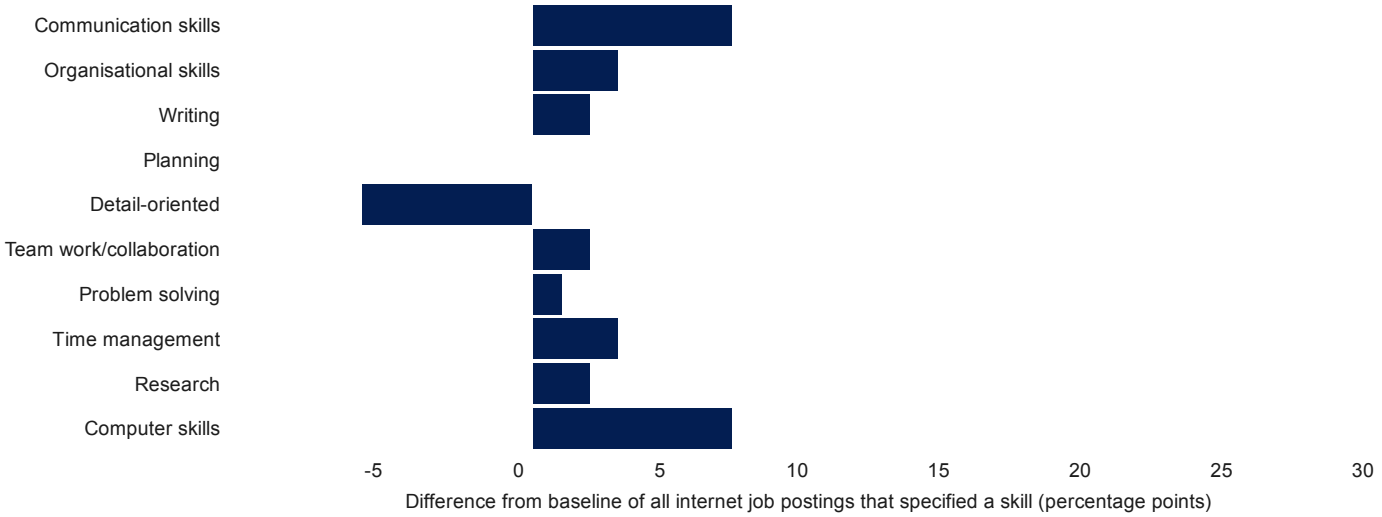
Construction



Health care and social assistance



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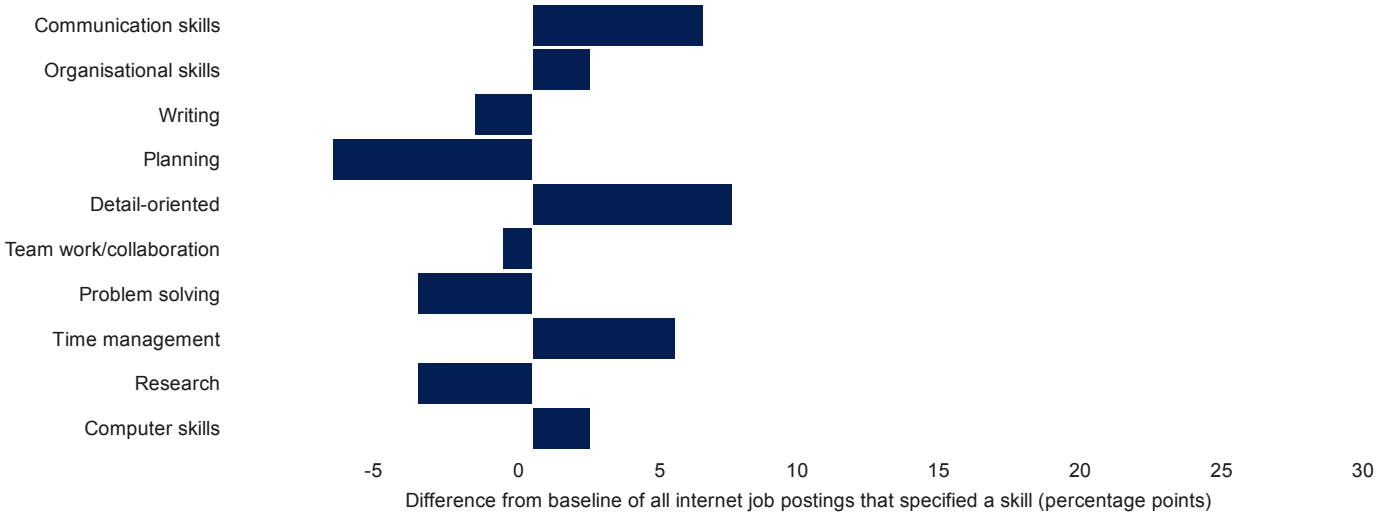
Rental, hiring and real estate services



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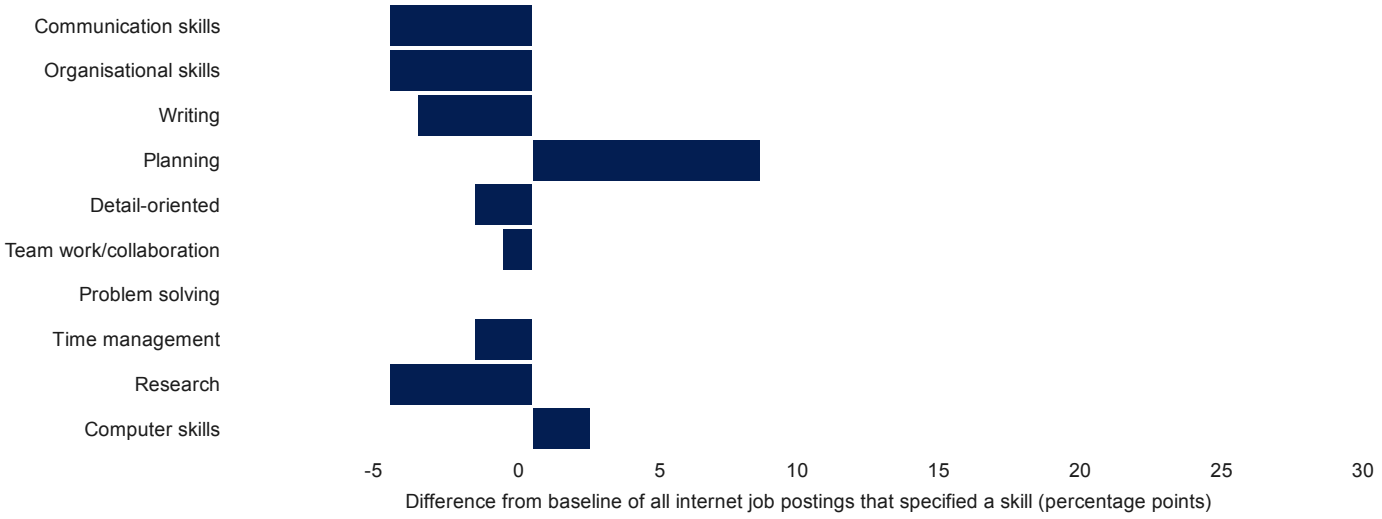
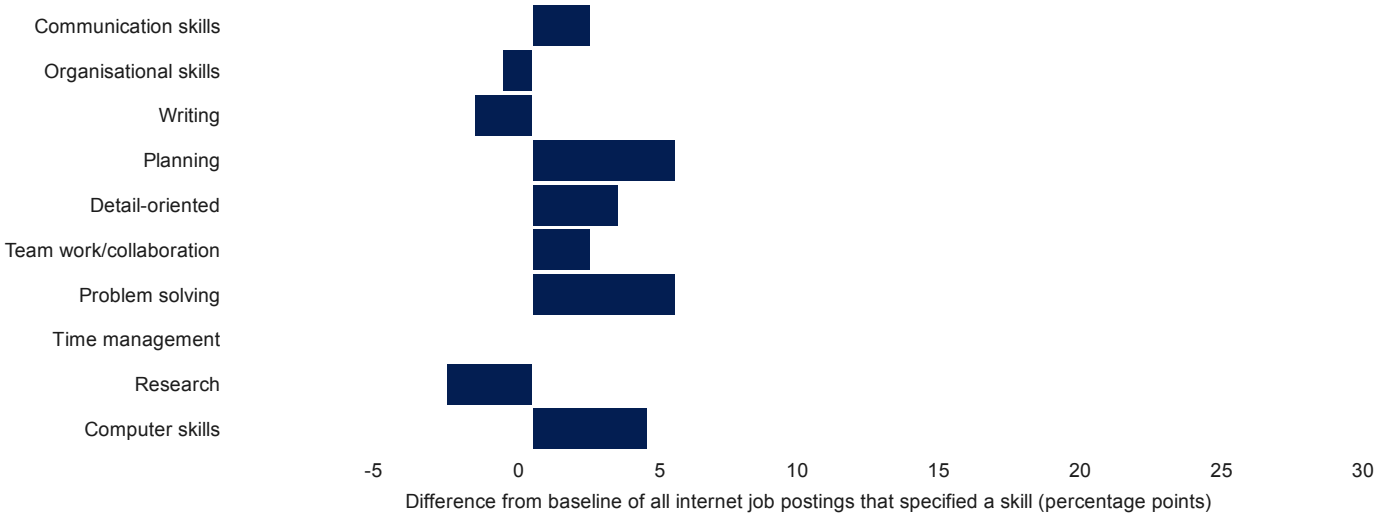
Mining



Manufacturing



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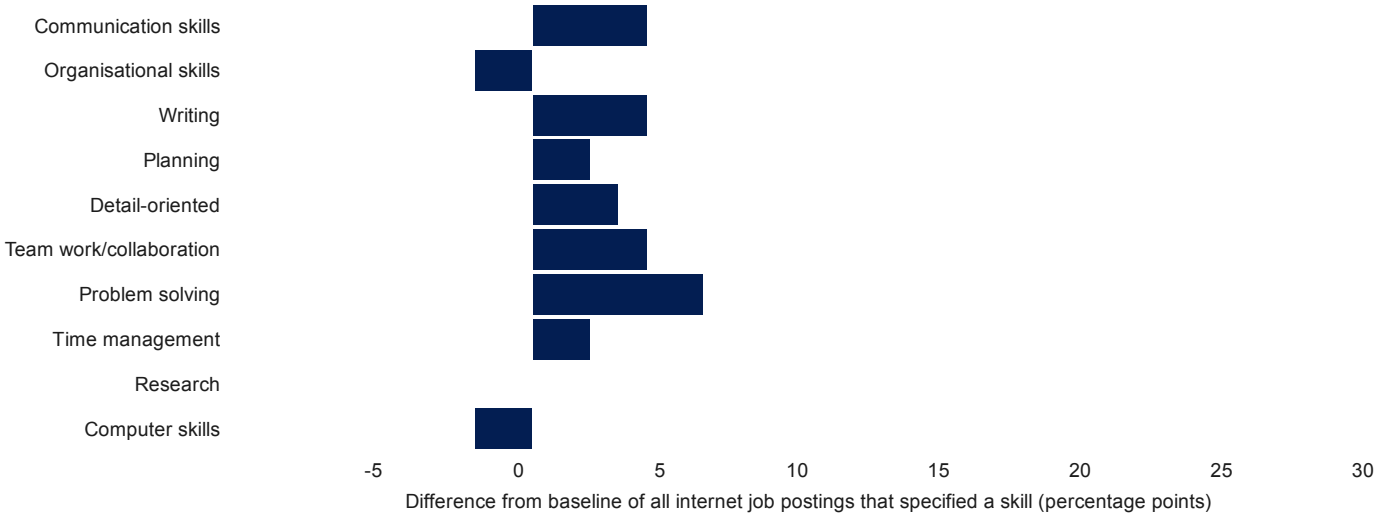
Financial and insurance services



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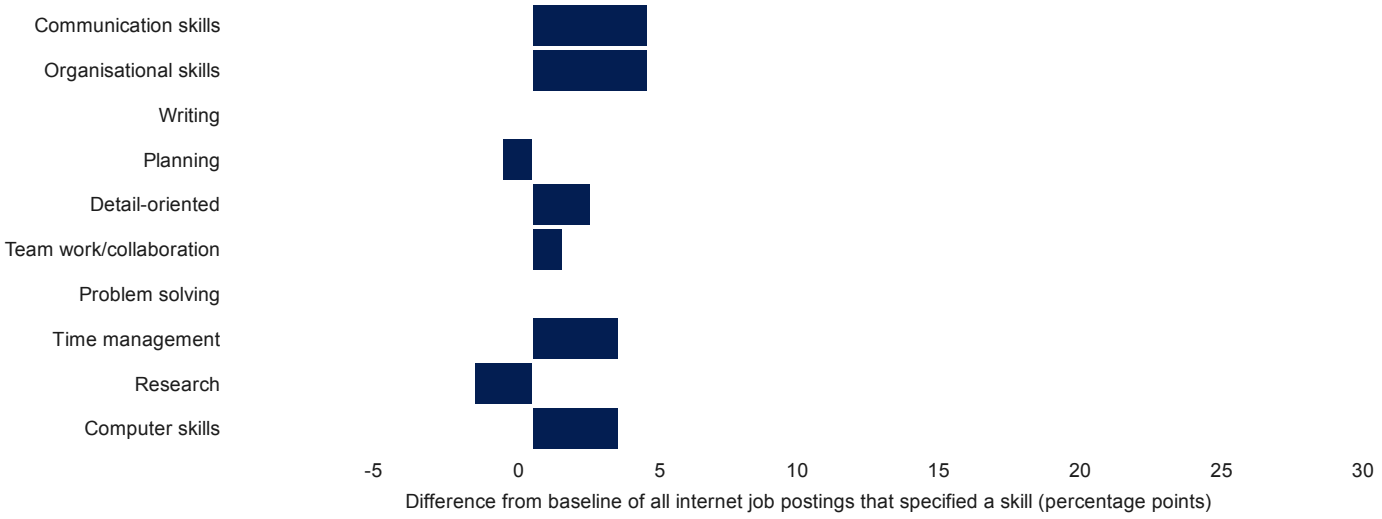
Arts and recreation services



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Note: no coloured bar in the chart indicates that the percentage of employability skills requested in internet job postings for an occupation is the same as the baseline percentage of all internet job postings (e.g. writing and problem solving for Public administration and safety).

The above chart compares the relative emphasis employers within an industry placed on different employability skills relative to the baseline for all internet job postings. For example, employers in the Mining industry placed a greater emphasis on planning skills and less emphasis on skills such as communication, organisation, research and writing.

Placing greater emphasis on a skill, may mean employers within the industry identify the skill as particularly important, or that there is a demand for that skill in the industry workforce. The industry Other services includes ANZSIC sub-divisions that are large employers of VET graduates such as Automotive repair and maintenance, and Personal care services. Employers in these industries placed emphasis on communication, time management and computer skills when posting jobs online.

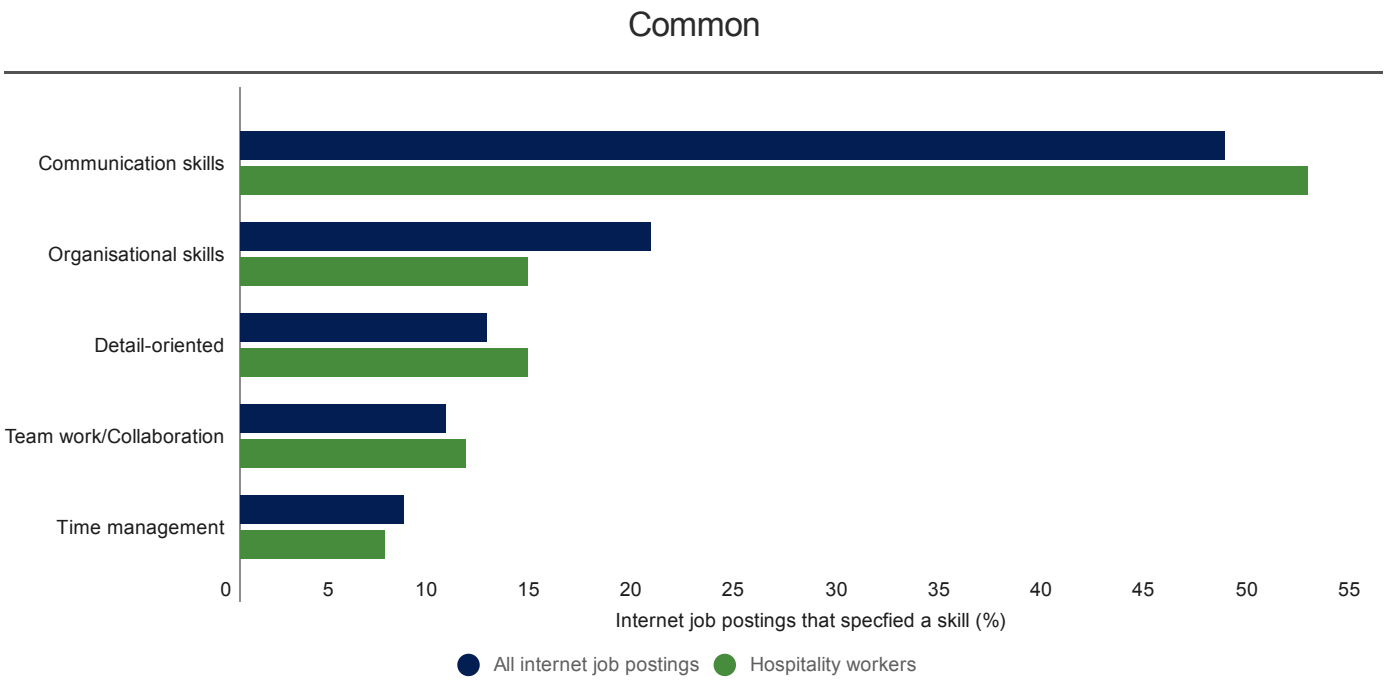
Employers within an industry placing less emphasis on a particular skill does not necessarily mean they identify the skill as less important. For example, less emphasis relative to the baseline for all internet job postings was placed on communication skills in the Public administration and safety industry. A possible explanation for this could be that employers in the Public administration and safety industry assumed that prospective candidates for jobs were implicitly aware that good communication skills were required and therefore did not explicitly request them in the internet job posting.

What skills are requested for Hospitality workers?

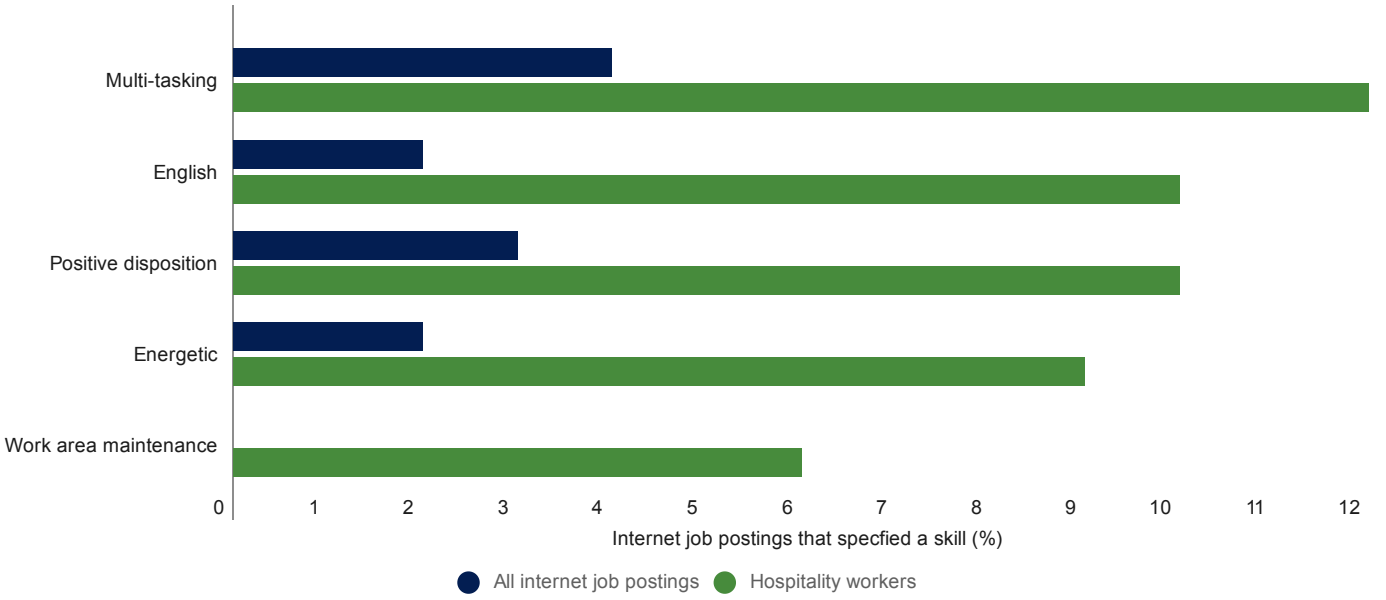
The VET system plays an important role in the training of Hospitality workers (ANZSCO 431). The charts below compare the top 10 ranked employability skills requested in internet job postings for Hospitality workers against the top 10 ranked employability skills requested in all internet job postings.

'Common' lists the skills requested in internet job postings that were ranked in the top 10 for both Hospitality workers and for all job postings. 'Higher ranked' lists skills requested in internet job postings that were ranked in the top 10 for Hospitality workers but not for all internet job postings. 'Lower ranked' lists skills that were not ranked in the top 10 for Hospitality workers but were ranked in the top 10 for all internet job postings.

Comparison of the top 10 employability skills for Hospitality workers with all internet job postings, 2014–17



Higher ranked



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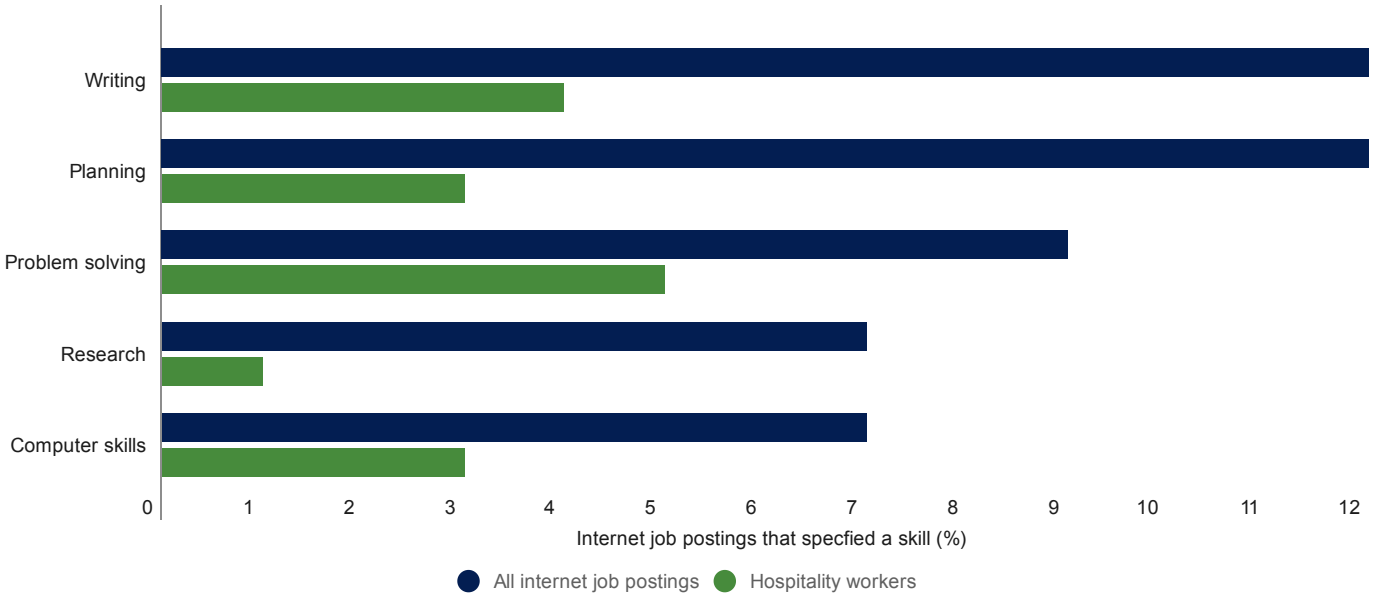
Lower ranked



Download data

Communication and organisational skills both remained in the top 10 ranked skills for Hospitality workers, however employers requested communication skills more frequently and organisational skills less frequently relative to all internet job postings. Employers advertising for Hospitality workers requested skills in multi-tasking and English more frequently, as well as attributes such as a positive disposition and being energetic. Skills in planning, writing, and research were requested less frequently, which makes sense considering the type of work involved in this occupation.

Are these skills provided by VET?

Hospitality worker positions are likely to be sought by graduates of the Certificates I, II, III and IV in Hospitality (see the entry on training.gov.au for more information). The following table lists the subjects by qualification level that could be relevant to the top 10 ranked employability skills requested in internet job postings for Hospitality workers.

Matches between the top 10 employability skills for Hospitality workers in internet job postings and subjects in Certificates I to IV in Hospitality, 2014–17

Skills in internet job postings	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV
Communication skills	Provide customer information and assistance*; Work effectively with others*	Communicate in the workplace; Interact with customers*; Work effectively with others*	Coach others in job skills*; Communicate in the workplace; Work effectively with others*; Work effectively in hospitality service*	Coach others in job skills*; Manage conflict*; Work effectively in hospitality service*
Organisational skills	Organise and complete daily work activities	Use hospitality skills effectively*	Work effectively in hospitality service*	Work effectively in hospitality service*
Detail-oriented	-	-	-	-
Multi-tasking	-	Use hospitality skills effectively*	Work effectively in hospitality service*	Work effectively in hospitality service*
Team work/collaboration	Work effectively with others*	Work effectively with others*	Work effectively with others*	Manage diversity in the workplace
English	-	-	-	-
Positive disposition	-	-	-	-
Energetic	-	-	-	-
Time management	Organise and complete daily work activities	Use hospitality skills effectively*	Work effectively in hospitality service*	Work effectively in hospitality service*
Work area maintenance	Participate in safe work practices*	Maintain cleaning storage areas; Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices; Participate in safe work practices*; Use hospitality skills effectively*	Work effectively in hospitality service*; Identify hazards, assess and control safety risks; Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices; Participate in safe work practices*	Work effectively in hospitality service*; Identify hazards, assess and control safety risks; Implement and monitor work health and safety practices*; Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices

Download data

* denotes a core subject at qualification level

- denotes skill had no directly corresponding subject at qualification level

Data note: matching of skills to corresponding subjects was manually determined based on the title and description of the subject. It is possible that a number of subjects covering technical skills for the job may also indirectly lead to the acquisition of employability skills. Only the subjects that directly related to an employability skill have been included here.

Skills in communication, and work area maintenance are well covered by subjects on offer across all Hospitality qualification levels. Multi-tasking, team work/collaboration and time management skills also have corresponding subjects at each qualification level (with exception of multi-tasking at certificate I).

Employability skills that could be defined as attributes such as detail-oriented, positive disposition and energetic are not directly covered by a relevant subject. However, the requirement of these traits for Hospitality workers may be taught implicitly when undertaking training. Skills in English would be covered in a foundation course and a prerequisite to undertaking a hospitality qualification.

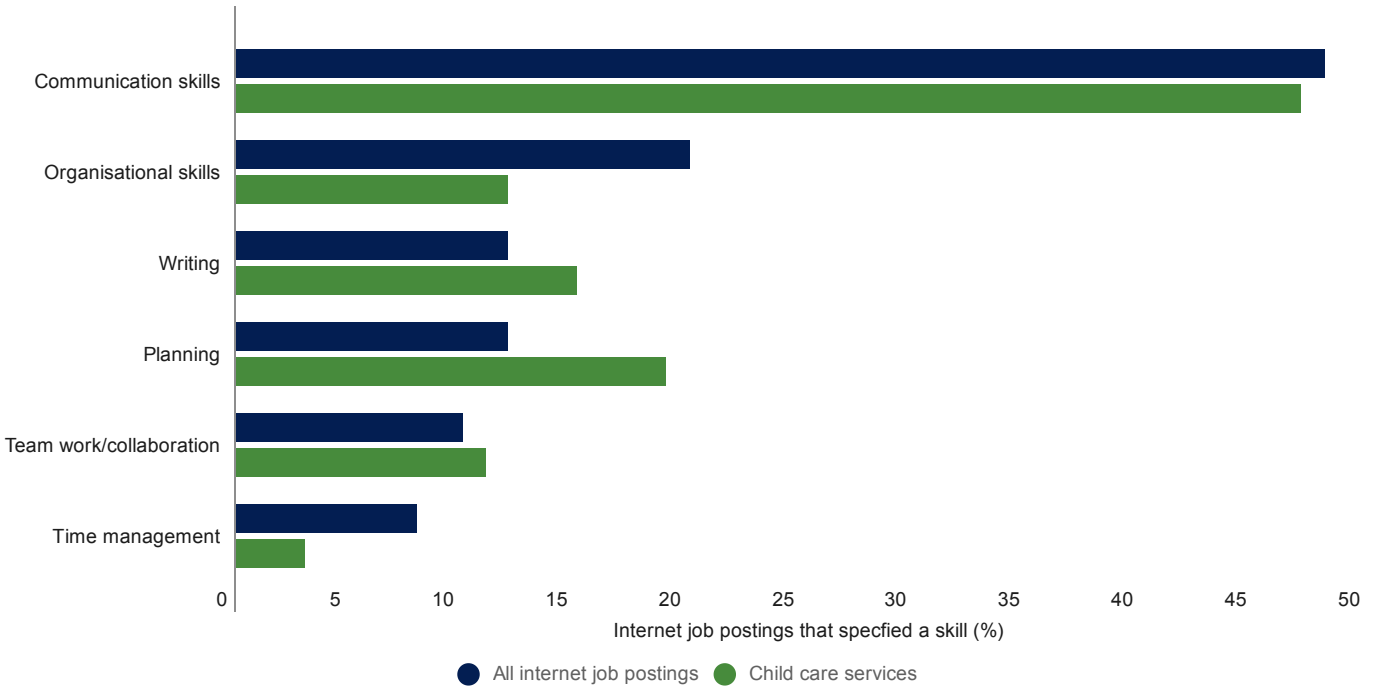
What skills are requested in Child care services?

The VET system also plays an important role in training the workforce for the Child care services industry (ANZSIC Group 871). The charts below compare the top 10 ranked employability skills requested in job postings for the Child care services industry against the top 10 ranked employability skills requested in all internet job postings.

'Common' lists the skills requested in internet job postings that were ranked in the top 10 for both the Child care services industry and for all job postings. 'Higher ranked' lists skills requested in internet job postings that were ranked in the top 10 for the Child care services industry but not for all internet job postings. 'Lower ranked' lists skills that were not ranked in the top 10 for the Child care services industry but were ranked in the top 10 for all internet job postings.

Comparison of the top 10 employability skills for the Child care services industry with all internet job postings, 2014–17

Common



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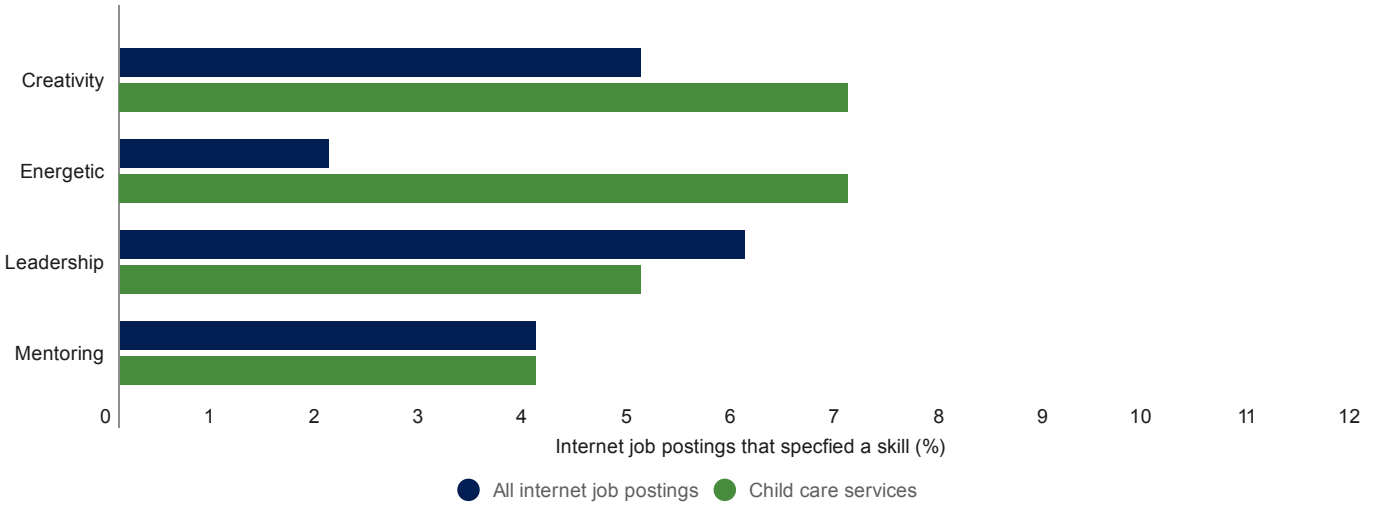
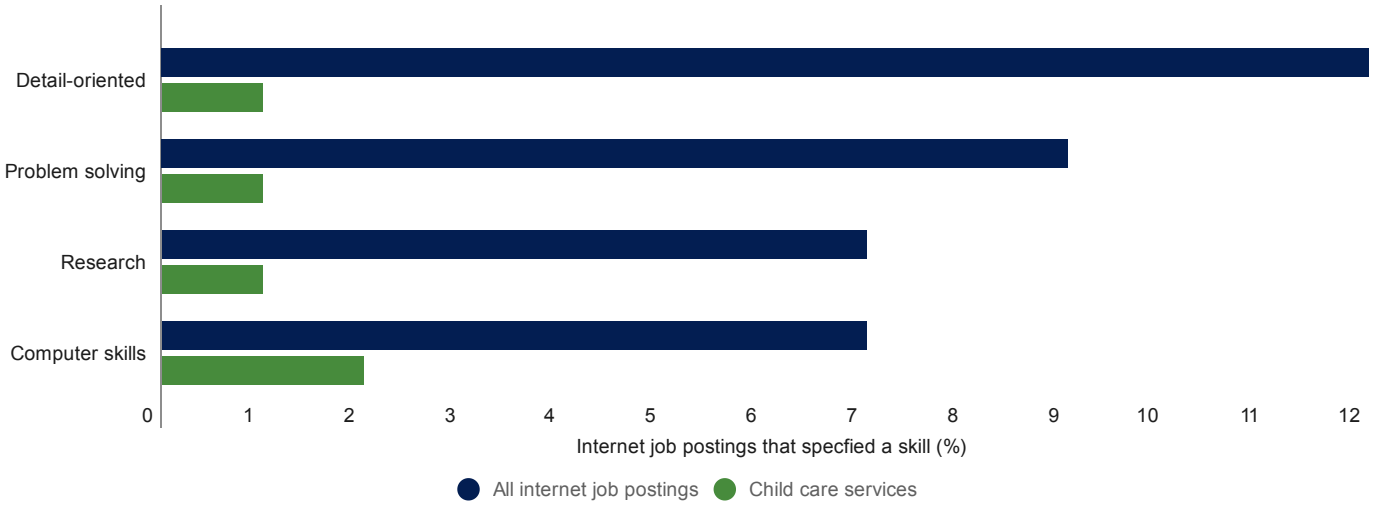
Higher ranked



Lower ranked



Download data

Of the skills that remained ranked in the top 10 for internet job postings in the Child care services industry, planning and writing skills were more often requested by employers relative to all internet job postings. Employers requested organisational and time management skills less frequently, while communication and team work/collaboration skills were requested in a similar percentage of internet job postings for workers in the Child care services industry. Employers requested attributes such as being energetic and creative more frequently. Attention to detail and problem solving skills were less frequently requested.

Mentoring was ranked higher in internet job postings for workers in the Child care services industry than the baseline for all internet job postings. However, a closer inspection of the job postings revealed the term mentoring was being used in different contexts. Internet job postings for more senior positions in the Child care services industry requested mentoring as a skill required for the job, for junior positions mentoring was offered as part of the job. The data did not distinguish between internet job postings referring to mentoring in these different contexts, therefore requests for mentoring skills in internet job postings in the Child care services industry are overstated.

Are these skills provided by VET?

Jobs in the Child care services industry are likely to be sought by graduates of the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care, and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (see the entry on training.gov.au for more information). The following table lists the subjects within these qualifications that could be relevant to the top 10 ranked employability skills requested in internet job postings for the Child care services industry.

Matches between the top 10 employability skills in internet job postings for workers in the Child care services industry and subjects in community services qualifications, 2014–17[1]

Skills in internet job postings	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma
Communication skills	Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety*; Promote innovation in a team environment; Work with diverse people	Communicate and work in health or community services; Promote innovation in a team environment; Use communication to build relationships; Work with diverse people*	Build and sustain an innovative work environment; Manage diversity; Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety*; Work with diverse people
Planning	Develop cultural competence*; Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in early childhood; Organise personal work priorities and development	Assist with planning and evaluating meals and menus to meet recommended dietary guidelines; Conduct non-instructional sport, fitness or recreation sessions; Coordinate planning, implementation and monitoring of leisure and health programs; Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care*; Develop cultural competence*; Implement strategies for the inclusion of all children; Organise personal work priorities and development; Plan and provide sport, fitness and recreation services	Design and implement the curriculum to foster children's learning and development*; Develop cultural competence*; Establish and implement plans for developing cooperative behaviour*; Facilitate compliance in an education and care service*; Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in early childhood*; Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care; Implement strategies for the inclusion of all children*
Writing	-	-	Develop and implement policy; Research and apply evidence to practice
Organisational skills	Organise personal work priorities and development	Organise personal work priorities and development	-
Team work/collaboration	Promote innovation in a team environment	Promote innovation in a team environment	Build and sustain an innovative work environment; Develop teams and individuals
Creativity	Promote innovation in a team environment	Promote innovation in a team environment	Build and sustain an innovative work environment
Energetic	-	-	-
Leadership	-	Provide leadership across the organisation	Build and sustain an innovative work environment; Develop teams and individuals; Lead the work team; Provide leadership across the organisation
Mentoring	-	-	Develop teams and individuals
Time management	Organise personal work priorities and development	Organise personal work priorities and development	-

Download data

1 Qualifications are: Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care, and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care.

* denotes a core subject at qualification level

- denotes skill had no directly corresponding subject at qualification level

Data note: matching of skills to corresponding subjects was manually determined based on the title and description of the subject. It is possible that a number of subjects covering technical skills for the job may also indirectly lead to the acquisition of employability skills. However, for the purposes of this infographic, only the subjects that directly related to an employability skill have been included.

The top employability skills requested by employers in the Child care services industry in internet job postings are well covered by the subjects on offer in the relevant VET qualifications. The employability skills covered are also tailored to the level of qualification. For example, at the certificate III and IV levels, the relevant subjects cover team work/collaboration skills from the point of view of 'contributing to a team'. At the diploma level, the corresponding subject covers ‘leading and developing a team’. This is evidence that the same employability skills are being taught across the qualifications, but at levels that correspond to the job level to which it leads.

Further information

For more information, please refer to the accompanying technical paper: <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/Internet-job-postings-preliminary-skills-analysis>

Data source:
Burning Glass Technologies 2018, Labour Insight Real-time Labour Market Information Tool, Burning Glass Technologies, Boston, viewed April 2018, <https://www.burning-glass.com>.

References:

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 2017a, Australian vocational education and training statistics: employers’ use and views of the VET system 2017, NCVER, Adelaide.

-- 2017b, Australian vocational education and training statistics: VET student outcomes 2017, NCVER, Adelaide.

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For details and exceptions visit the NCVER Portal.

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