ESIC

Social Innovation Intelligence report 3

Insights from the ESIC Wave 1 survey of practitioners, educators, and students

Survey period: 1 September 2025 to 31 March 2026

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1. Executive summary

What competencies matter to people working in social innovation, to those teaching it, and to those learning about it? Which areas do they expect to become more important or to develop further? The European Social Innovation Campus (ESIC) Wave 1 survey provides an initial evidence base for discussing these questions.

This report presents responses from 148 practitioners, 93 educators, and 151 students, a total of 392 respondents who passed the attention checks. They rated 35 competency statements from a current and a five-years-ahead perspective. The findings describe the people who participated. They do not estimate the views or skills of Europe's social innovation workforce or student population as a whole.

The three groups provide complementary perspectives. Practitioners rated the importance of competencies for their own roles. Educators rated their importance in their own courses or programmes. Students assessed how much their education had helped them build these competencies and how much they expected it to help in the future. Together, these complementary perspectives support the study of alignment and potential gaps between practice, educational priorities, and student development.

Three messages emerge from the analysis.

First, the responses give a broad basis for discussing social innovation learning and practice. Practitioners place trust building and an inclusive mindset among their highest current ratings. Educators give high ratings to teamwork, an inclusive mindset, and innovative thinking. Students report relatively strong educational support for an inclusive mindset and teamwork. These patterns draw attention to collaborative and relational aspects of social innovation. They do not establish that the groups have equivalent competencies or that educational provision meets every need.

Second, future-oriented responses identify useful areas for further reflection. Every competency has a higher future mean than current mean within each of the three groups. Among practitioners and educators, digital and technology-related competencies have some of the larger differences. Among students, systems thinking, cross-sector collaboration, sustainability orientation, ecosystem development, and target group engagement stand out. For students, these differences express expectations of further educational support and development. They should not be interpreted as forecasts of labour-market demand.

Third, Wave 1 provides a starting point for locally informed decisions and further evidence collection. Country coverage and group composition are uneven. The report therefore uses the participating groups' results to open questions about curricula and practice, while avoiding national rankings and claims of a Europe-wide skills shortage.

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Robust stakeholder-gap analysis within countries remains an objective that this sample cannot adequately support.

The practical contribution of the report is a set of evidence-informed discussion points. Curriculum teams can examine where learning opportunities address the competencies highlighted here. Practitioners and support organisations can consider how these opportunities relate to actual tasks, organisational conditions, and community needs. Students can contribute examples of where learning supports their development and where further opportunities would help. Such discussions can lead to small, locally justified changes whose effects can then be evaluated.

The ESIC Skills Monitor provides interactive results and links to downloadable data and documentation. The population, filters, and data version used in any further exploration should be checked against this report's attention-passed sample.

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2. Why these competencies matter

2.1 Purpose and audience

In this report, social innovation refers to new ideas, products, services, or approaches that address social needs. Competencies comprise the skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to this work. The report uses "skills intelligence" in this broad sense: evidence that can help people make informed decisions about learning and development.

The intended readers are practitioners, educators, students, and organisations that support social innovation. A practitioner may use the findings to consider the capabilities relevant to a role or project. An educator may use them to review learning objectives and opportunities for application. A student may use them to articulate development interests. A support organisation may use them to structure a discussion across these perspectives.

The research framework links competencies considered important in practice, priorities within education, and students' perceived competency development. Gap analysis explores potential mismatches between these complementary stakeholder perspectives. Its purpose is to identify areas for closer investigation and dialogue between practice and education, rather than to treat a difference in ratings as a direct measure of missing skills.

The report does not prescribe a standard curriculum for every setting. It offers a shared vocabulary and a set of observations that readers can assess against their own circumstances.

2.2 The competency framework

The survey uses 35 competency statements spanning collaboration, digital activities, ecosystems, entrepreneurship, innovation, leadership, learning, management, operations, personal development, and sustainability. The project's existing framework draws on literature and qualitative work. ESIC's earlier Explaining competence clusters publication introduces the conceptual background, including the relevance of context to competency needs.

Appendix A gives the competency descriptions and their prior conceptual categories. The categories help organise the material. They are not dimensions statistically validated by the Wave 1 survey, and this report does not combine their items into cluster scores. Each competency is analysed separately.

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This distinction matters in practice. A broad heading such as "digital" can support a conversation, but the survey distinguishes digital literacy, media skills, and technology specifics. Their applications may differ, and a response to one should not automatically be extended to the others.

2.3 The role of Wave 1

Wave 1 is the first survey data collection in this research project. It provides an initial account of the participating groups' current views and future expectations. Later comparable waves can add evidence about whether these patterns persist or change.

Both time perspectives in this report were collected during the same survey period. The five-year response is an expectation expressed at that time. It is not an observation collected five years later.

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3. Understanding the evidence

3.1 Who participated

The analysis starts from a cleaned integrated dataset containing 425 responses. The main findings use the 392 responses marked as having passed the attention checks. Table 1 shows the analysis flow by group.

Table 1. Responses in the cleaned dataset and the final analysis sample

Target group	Cleaned dataset	Excluded by attention-check flag	Included in analysis
Practitioners	152	4	148
Educators	99	6	93
Students	174	23	151
Total	425	33	392

The starting total is the number of records in the supplied cleaned dataset. It is not a count of everyone invited to take part or everyone who opened the survey.

The project distribution strategy used partners and networks. A complete invitation denominator has not been established, so no response rate is reported. Sample size alone cannot establish representativeness. The findings are descriptive results for the participating sample.

Respondents reported residence in 15 named countries. Six selected "Other" and three had no country value. Country coverage is concentrated: Spain accounts for 134 responses and Norway for 50. Country composition also differs by group. For example, 89 of the 151 students are resident in Spain. A pooled student result consequently gives considerable weight to that context. Appendix C provides a coverage table with small country categories combined.

3.2 What the ratings mean

All three surveys used the same competency statements and a seven-point response scale. The prompts reflected each group's role within the study's alignment framework, as shown in Table 2.

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Table 2. Current and future rating frames

Target group	Current perspective	Future perspective	Scale endpoints
Practitioners	Importance for the respondent's own role in social innovation today	Expected importance for that role in five years	1: Not at all important; 7: Absolutely essential
Educators	Importance within the respondent's own course or programme, considering its current content and learning objectives	Expected importance within that course or programme in five years	1: Not at all important; 7: Absolutely essential
Students	How much the course or programme has helped build the competency so far	How much the respondent believes the course or programme will help develop it further, in about five years	1: Not at all; 7: Very much

The student instructions also describe the current perspective in terms of already feeling confident in the area. Student ratings therefore combine a judgement of educational support with a reference to perceived development or confidence. They are not an independently assessed measure of proficiency.

The three perspectives are complementary and intentionally reflect different roles. Comparing them can help identify potential gaps between practice-related priorities, educational priorities, and perceived development. Such differences require contextual interpretation; they are not direct measurements of proficiency or educational effectiveness. Throughout this report, results appear in the order practitioners, educators, students, with the rating frame stated for each.

3.3 Quality checks and analysis

The surveys included instructed response items, or attention checks. This report uses the existing pass/fail field in the cleaned dataset as its inclusion rule. Passing that rule reduces one source of concern about response attention, but does not establish that every answer is accurate or that the sample is representative.

Each respondent rated 35 competencies twice: once for the current situation and once for their expectations five years ahead. This gives 70 ratings per respondent. In

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the analysis sample, checks found no missing values, non-numeric entries, or ratings outside the 1-7 scale. All reported competency results use only responses that passed the attention checks.

For each competency and group, the report summarises current ratings, future ratings, and the within-respondent difference between them. It uses means to describe average ratings and standard deviations to show how widely responses vary. The full distributions are not reduced to a single score for social innovation competence. Appendix B reports all 35 items for each group; Appendix C explains the calculations.

The figures display selected high-rated items or larger future-current differences. Selection is based on the numerical results, with ties at the selection boundary included. These are illustrations of the sample pattern, not statistically established rankings of importance. Small differences between items should not determine priorities on their own.

3.4 How to read geographic and group patterns

Combining responses across countries can help describe the people reached by ESIC. It does not remove differences in social economy structures, educational settings, sectors, or institutional conditions. Pooled group results are influenced by which countries and settings contributed respondents.

For this reason, the report discusses each group's pattern as a perspective within the sample. It does not attribute pooled differences to target-group membership alone. Country coverage indicates where responses came from; it is not evidence of national performance.

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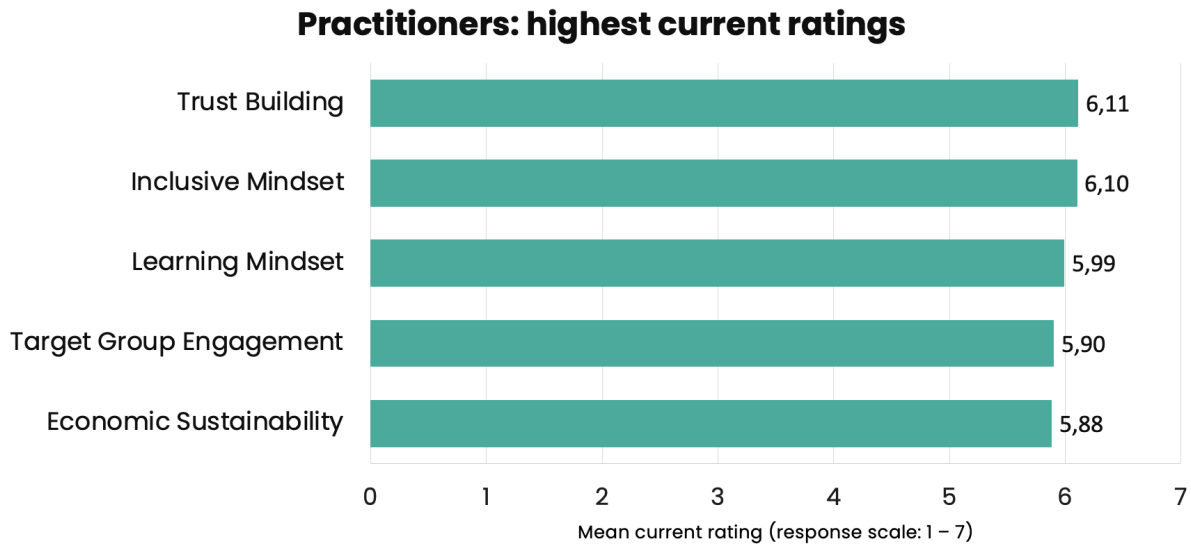
4. What respondents report today

4.1 Practitioners: importance for their own roles

Among participating practitioners, current mean ratings range from 4.78 to 6.11 across the 35 competencies. Trust building and an inclusive mindset receive the highest averages, both close to 6.10. A learning mindset, target group engagement, and economic sustainability also appear among the five highest-rated items.

These results place relationships, openness, learning, engagement, and economic continuity within the same discussion about social innovation work. A practical reading is that technical project delivery should be considered alongside the relationships and working conditions that make it possible.

The survey asks about importance, however, rather than how well respondents perform these activities. High ratings identify valued aspects of work. They do not demonstrate that practitioners already possess these competencies or have sufficient resources to apply them.



Attention-passed sample: n=148. Importance for the respondent's own role.
Highest five positions; ties included. Descriptive sample results

Figure 1. Current importance for practitioners' roles. The x-axis shows mean current ratings on the 1-7 importance scale; the y-axis lists the five highest-rated competencies. Sample: 148 attention-passed practitioners. Values are descriptive means rounded to two decimals. The figure does not measure proficiency or national priorities. Full results are in Appendix B.

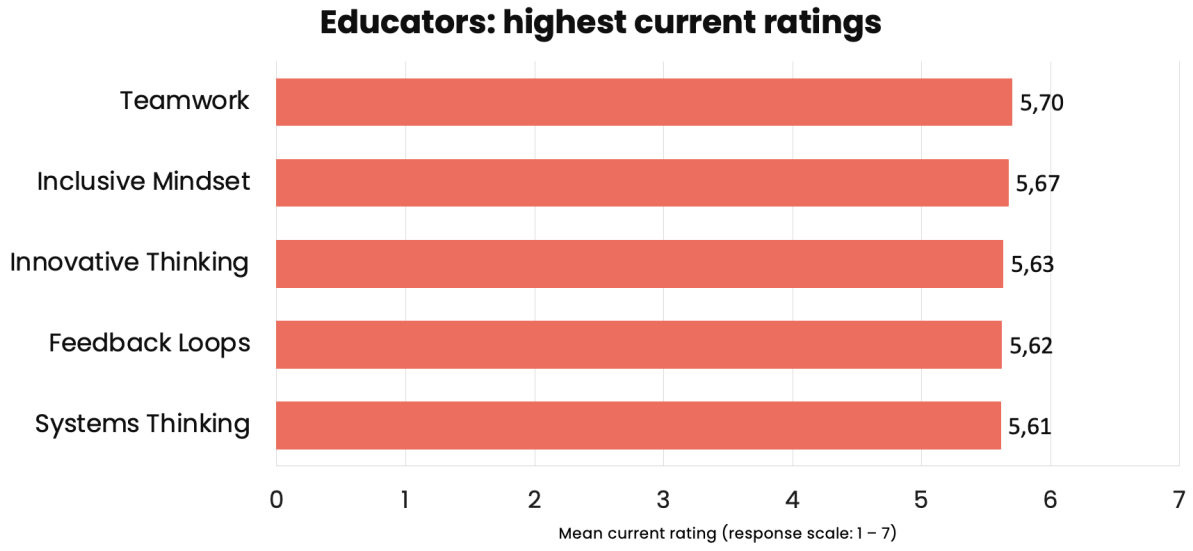
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4.2 Educators: importance within their courses or programmes

Among participating educators, current mean ratings range from 4.37 to 5.70. Teamwork, an inclusive mindset, innovative thinking, feedback loops, and systems thinking have the highest averages.

These items suggest an educational emphasis on working with others, approaching problems creatively, reviewing experience, and understanding connections. They offer a useful starting point for examining the relationship between intended learning objectives and the activities through which students can develop them.

The ratings express educators' views of importance within their own provision. They do not show how much teaching time is allocated, which pedagogical methods are used, or how successfully students learn. Establishing those points would require evidence about the course or programme itself.



Attention-passed sample: n=93. Importance for the respondent's own course or programme.
Highest five positions; ties included. Descriptive sample results

Figure 2. Current importance in educators' courses or programmes. The x-axis shows mean current ratings on the 1-7 importance scale; the y-axis lists the five highest-rated competencies. Sample: 93 attention-passed educators. Values are rounded to two decimals. The figure describes perceived importance, not teaching quality or student achievement.

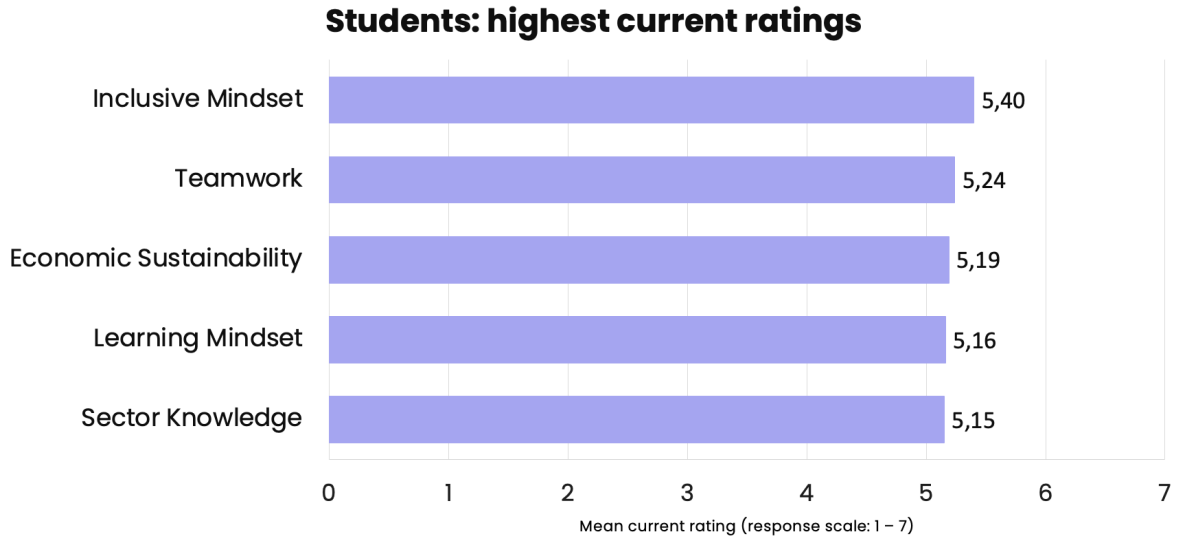
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4.3 Students: perceived educational support for development

Among participating students, current mean ratings range from 4.56 to 5.40. An inclusive mindset has the highest average, followed by teamwork, economic sustainability, a learning mindset, and sector knowledge.

These responses indicate where students perceive relatively greater support from their education. They can inform a discussion about which learning experiences students recognise as helpful and how those experiences connect to social innovation practice.

Students' responses add the learner perspective to the alignment framework. They describe perceived educational support and development, which can be considered alongside priorities reported by practitioners and educators. Wave 1's uneven coverage across groups within countries limits robust local analysis of these relationships.



Attention-passed sample: n=151. Perceived help from education in building competencies
Highest five positions; ties included. Descriptive sample results

Figure 3. Students' current perceptions of educational support. The x-axis shows mean current ratings on the 1-7 scale of how much education has helped; the y-axis lists the five highest-rated competencies. Sample: 151 attention-passed students. Values are rounded to two decimals. These are self-reports, not independently assessed competency levels.

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4.4 A shared topic for discussion, with different evidence behind it

An inclusive mindset is among the highest-rated items in all three groups. Teamwork appears prominently for educators and students, while trust building leads the practitioner results. This makes collaborative and relational competencies a useful topic for dialogue across practice and education.

The overlap in themes supports asking how these competencies are understood and developed in different settings. It does not prove that expectations, provision, and outcomes are aligned. A meaningful local discussion would bring together the people concerned and examine concrete examples of work, learning, and assessment.

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5. Looking five years ahead

5.1 Understanding future-current differences

For every competency, the future mean exceeds the current mean within each group. The mean differences range from 0.20 to 0.68 points for practitioners, 0.31 to 0.67 points for educators, and 0.57 to 0.86 points for students. These are differences between two answers collected in Wave 1.

For practitioners and educators, a positive difference indicates higher expected future importance in the respondent's own setting. For students, it indicates greater expected future educational support or development. A positive group mean does not mean that every respondent selected a higher future score.

The term "future-current difference" is used deliberately. The survey does not measure an objective skills deficit, verify that a future need will materialise, or establish that a course should expand an item by a corresponding amount.

5.2 Practitioners: digital, applied, and legal themes

Technology specifics has the largest mean difference among practitioners, increasing from 5.31 now to 5.99 in the future, a difference of 0.68 points. Digital literacy and product and service development follow, with differences of 0.64 and 0.63. Media skills and legal knowledge complete the five largest differences.

Together, these items invite reflection on the tools, applied development activities, communication channels, and legal understanding relevant to future work. They do not specify which technologies, media platforms, or legal topics respondents had in mind. Decisions about content should therefore start with the tasks and conditions of a particular setting.

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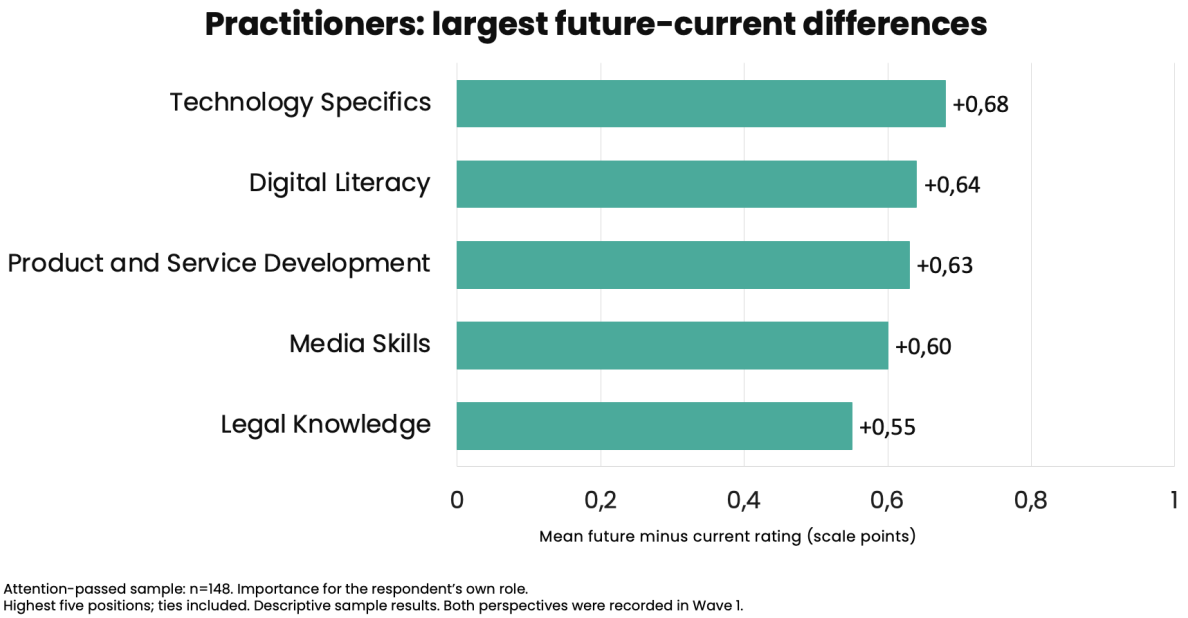


Figure 4. Practitioners' expected changes in importance. The x-axis shows the mean future rating minus the mean current rating, in scale points; the y-axis lists the five largest differences. Sample: 148 attention-passed practitioners. Both ratings concern importance for the respondent's own role. These are expectations recorded in Wave 1, not observed changes over time.

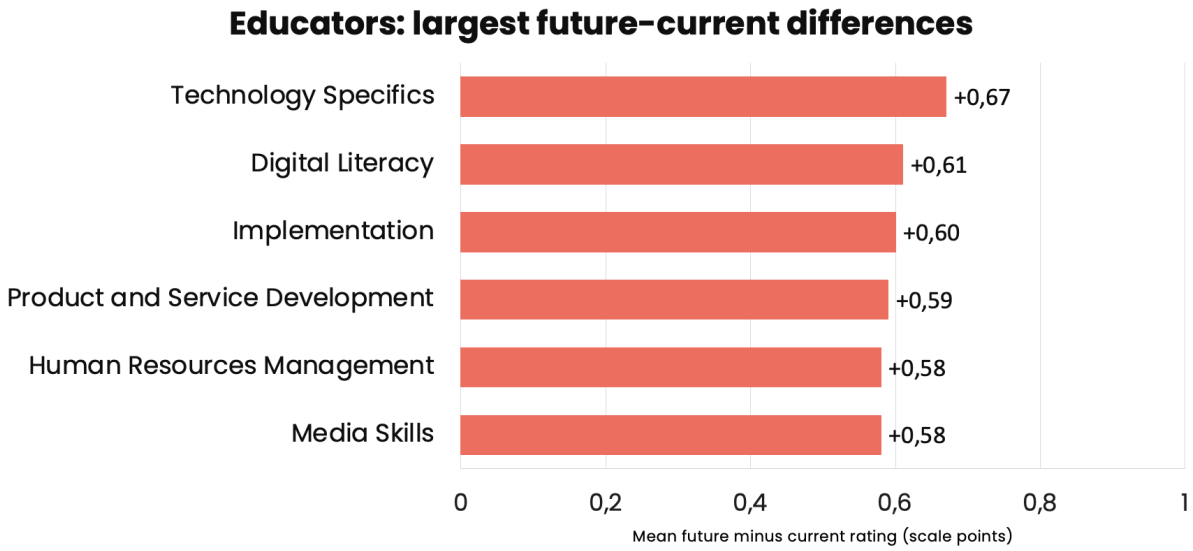
5.3 Educators: future importance and opportunities for application

Technology specifics and digital literacy also show the largest differences among educators, at 0.67 and 0.61 points. Implementation follows at 0.60, and product and service development at 0.59. Human resource management and media skills share the next position, at 0.58.

These results suggest questions about how programmes combine digital knowledge with opportunities to implement ideas, develop services, and work with people. They do not establish that these areas are currently absent. Educators may already value them while expecting their importance to grow.

Implementation illustrates why future differences and current ratings should be considered together. Its current mean is above the educators' median across competencies, yet its future-current difference is also relatively high. Attention need not be confined to items with lower current ratings.

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Attention-passed sample: n=93. Importance for the respondent's own course or programme.
Highest five positions; ties included. Descriptive sample results. Both perspectives were recorded in Wave 1.

Figure 5. Educators' expected changes in importance. The x-axis shows mean future minus current ratings, in scale points; the y-axis lists the five largest positions, including both competencies tied at the fifth position. Sample: 93 attention-passed educators. Ratings concern importance within the respondent's own course or programme. They do not measure a shortfall in teaching provision.

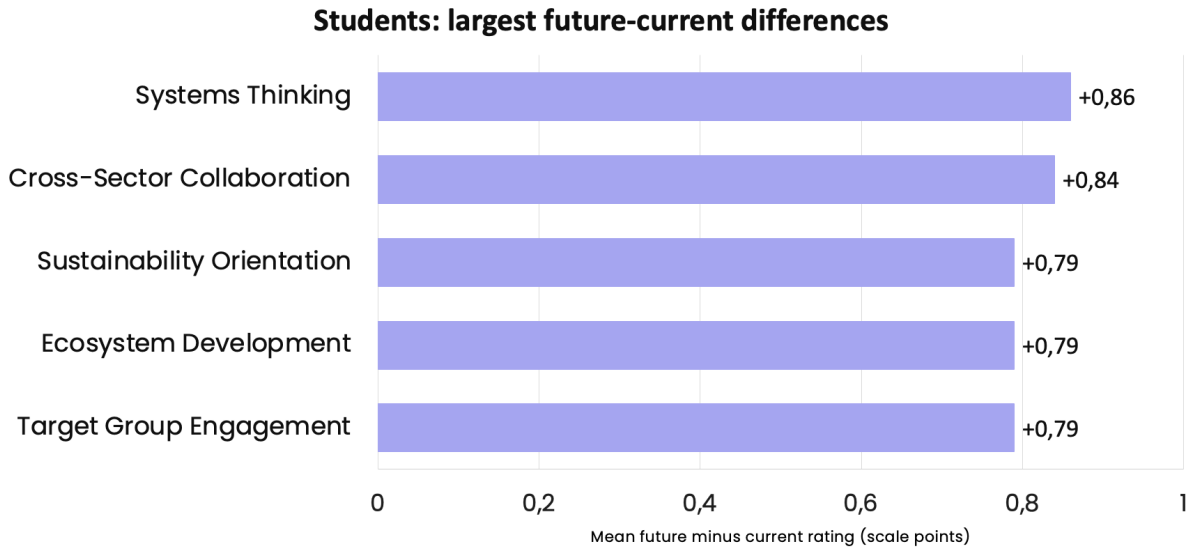
5.4 Students: expectations of further development

Systems thinking shows the largest difference among students, from 4.94 now to 5.80 in the future, a difference of 0.86. Cross-sector collaboration follows at 0.84. Sustainability orientation, ecosystem development, and target group engagement complete the five largest differences, at approximately 0.79 to 0.80 points.

These responses point towards expectations of further development in understanding systems, working across boundaries, engaging people, and connecting social innovation to sustainability. They provide a basis for asking students which experiences would help them make these connections in practice.

The interpretation must remain educational. A larger student difference may reflect an expectation that learning will continue over time. It is not evidence that a particular profession will demand that competency more strongly, or that the current programme has failed to provide it.

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Attention-passed sample: n=151. Perceived help from education in building competencies
Highest five positions; ties included. Descriptive sample results. Both perspectives were recorded in Wave 1.

Figure 6. Students' expectations of further educational support and development. The x-axis shows mean future minus current ratings, in scale points; the y-axis lists the five largest differences. Sample: 151 attention-passed students. The future prompt asks about expected help from education in about five years. It does not ask students to forecast labour-market demand.

5.5 High ratings and differences between respondents

Respondents often selected high scores, particularly when looking five years ahead. Table 3 shows how frequently they selected 6 or 7. It also shows how much their answers differed, using a measure called the standard deviation (SD). A lower SD means that answers were more similar.

Table 3. High ratings and differences between respondents across the 35 competencies

Target group	Current ratings of 6 or 7	Future ratings of 6 or 7	Average current SD	Average future SD
Practitioners	59%	75%	1.26	1.10
Educators	51%	65%	1.62	1.47
Students	40%	63%	1.52	1.38

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Percentages and SDs are calculated for each competency and then averaged across the 35 competencies. Percentages are rounded to whole numbers and SDs to two decimals. Group sizes are 148 practitioners, 93 educators, and 151 students. Table 2 explains what each group rated.

Future ratings were more similar than current ratings in all three groups. However, this partly reflects the upper limit of the scale: when many people select scores close to 7, there is less room for their answers to differ.

Most importantly, a competency near the bottom of a ranking is not necessarily unimportant. Many competencies received high ratings, and small differences between their averages should not determine priorities on their own.

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6. From findings to priorities for discussion

6.1 A descriptive matrix

The priority matrix combines an item's current mean with its future-current mean difference. Each group has its own dividing lines: the median of the 35 current item means and the median of the 35 item differences. Every competency is placed in one of four quadrants.

Table 4 shows the layout. Moving from left to right means a higher current rating; moving from bottom to top means a larger future-current difference. "Higher" and "lower" refer to the group's own medians. The matrix is an organising tool for discussion, rather than a test of which competencies require investment.

Table 4. How the four quadrants are positioned and can be used

Future-current difference	Lower current rating	Higher current rating
Larger difference	Explore where further attention or learning opportunities might be useful. A lower current importance rating is not evidence of low ability.	Examine how an already highly rated area may need to develop further. High importance does not establish that needs are met.
Smaller difference	Check the item's local relevance before deprioritising it. Its relative position does not mean that it is unimportant.	Consider continuity and context. A smaller expected difference does not show that present provision or proficiency is adequate.

For students, "current rating" means perceived educational support and the difference refers to expected further support or development. For practitioners and educators, the axes refer to importance in their own settings. Each matrix describes current and future perspectives within one group. This is separate from gap analysis between practitioners, educators, and students.

6.2 Applying the matrix to the results

The following summaries show all four quadrants for each group. Each cell gives the total number of competencies in that quadrant and two illustrative examples. The examples are the two competencies with the highest future mean within the quadrant, using unrounded values and alphabetical order for exact ties. This consistent selection rule keeps the summaries readable; it does not establish which competencies deserve investment. Appendix C provides the complete lists.

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6.2.1 Practitioners

Current rating means importance for the respondent's own role. Moving from left to right means a higher current rating. Moving from bottom to top means a larger future-current difference. Both dividing lines are the medians for this group.

Table 5. Practitioners: quadrant summary with selected examples

Future-current difference	Lower current rating	Higher current rating
Larger difference	13 competencies. Examples: Product and Service Development; Cross-Sector Collaboration.	6 competencies. Examples: Economic Sustainability; Systems Thinking.
Smaller difference	4 competencies. Examples: Self-Awareness; Sector Knowledge.	12 competencies. Examples: Inclusive Mindset; Trust Building.

6.2.2 Educators

Current rating means importance within the respondent's own course or programme. Moving from left to right means a higher current rating. Moving from bottom to top means a larger future-current difference. Both dividing lines are the medians for this group.

Table 6. Educators: quadrant summary with selected examples

Future-current difference	Lower current rating	Higher current rating
Larger difference	11 competencies. Examples: Product and Service Development; Innovation Process Management.	7 competencies. Examples: Innovative Thinking; Implementation.
Smaller difference	6 competencies. Examples: Application of Innovative Knowledge; Entrepreneurial Knowledge.	11 competencies. Examples: Systems Thinking; Feedback Loops.

6.2.3 Students

Current rating means perceived educational support and development. Moving from left to right means a higher current rating. Moving from bottom to top means a larger future-current difference. Both dividing lines are the medians for this group.

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Table 7. Students: quadrant summary with selected examples

Future-current difference	Lower current rating	Higher current rating
Larger difference	11 competencies. Examples: Systems Thinking; Sustainability Orientation.	9 competencies. Examples: Teamwork; Cross-Sector Collaboration.
Smaller difference	6 competencies. Examples: Implementation; Digital Literacy.	9 competencies. Examples: Inclusive Mindset; Economic Sustainability.

6.3 Using the matrix responsibly

The classification depends on relative positions. Two very similar items may sit on opposite sides of a median line, while two items in the same quadrant may have noticeably different scores. Ties are assigned to the higher side. The printed values are rounded, so a displayed tie may also conceal a small numerical difference.

The current mean is also part of the subtraction used to calculate the future-current difference. The two axes are therefore mathematically connected. Combined with the ceiling of 7, this can give lower-current items more room for a larger difference. The matrix should always be read alongside current and future values, not as an independent confirmation of an unmet need.

Before using a quadrant to guide a decision, readers should ask whether the competency is relevant to their setting, what evidence exists about current practice or learning, and whether the proposed response is proportionate. A position in a quadrant is a prompt for that assessment.

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7. What the findings can mean in practice

7.1 Turn observations into local questions

The following suggestions are practical interpretations of the survey findings. They have not been tested as interventions in this study. Their purpose is to help readers move from an observed pattern to a question that can be explored with the people affected.

Table 8. From survey evidence to possible local action

Theme	Survey observation	Question for local discussion	Possible action to assess locally
Collaborative and relational work	Inclusive mindset is among the highest current items for all three groups; trust building leads practitioner ratings.	Where do learners and practitioners practise inclusion, cooperation, and relationship-building ?	Review an existing activity or project for opportunities to work with others and reflect on those experiences.
Digital and technology-related activities	Technology specifics and digital literacy show relatively large future-current differences for practitioners and educators.	Which actual tools and tasks are relevant here, and what support do people need to use them?	Identify a small set of locally relevant tasks, then assess whether existing learning and support cover them.
Applying ideas	Product and service development shows relatively large differences for practitioners and educators; implementation also stands out among educators.	Can learners carry an idea through development, implementation, and feedback?	Examine whether a project-based activity could connect these stages with a real setting.
Systems, sustainability, and engagement	These themes appear prominently in students' expectations of further educational support and development.	What experiences help students understand connections and work with affected groups?	Discuss opportunities for a systems exercise or collaborative project with students and relevant partners.

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Theme	Survey observation	Question for local discussion	Possible action to assess locally
Legal and entrepreneurial knowledge	Legal knowledge appears among practitioners' largest differences; legal and entrepreneurial knowledge appear in students' lower-current/larger-difference quadrant.	Which decisions require this knowledge in the local setting?	Map those decisions and identify appropriate contextual guidance or expertise.

The table does not establish that any one programme lacks these activities. It identifies questions for review. Where a programme already addresses a theme well, the useful response may be to maintain or document its approach rather than add content.

7.2 Practitioners: connect the findings to real work

Practitioners can begin with a project, role, or organisational task and identify which of the competencies it draws on. The survey's current ratings and future-oriented patterns can then be compared with that experience. This is more informative than adopting the sample's ranking as a standard for every organisation.

For example, a team interested in digital literacy could distinguish between the skills needed to use its current tools, those needed for a planned service, and the organisational resources required to support both. Training may help with some of these needs; time, access, or organisational arrangements may be equally relevant. Wave 1 does not determine which explanation applies.

7.3 Educators: review opportunities, not only topic lists

Educators can use the framework to examine where students encounter a competency, where they apply it, and how they receive feedback. A competency appearing in a syllabus is different from a learner having an opportunity to use it in a meaningful setting.

The findings support asking how collaborative, digital, systems-oriented, and applied activities are connected within a programme. They do not justify adding every highlighted competency as a separate module. A coherent learning activity may

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address several competencies, and priorities should reflect the programme's purpose and learners' needs.

7.4 Students: make development expectations concrete

Students' future-oriented responses can be used to ask what further development would look like from their perspective. Which experiences would help them engage stakeholders, understand systems, or apply sustainability? Which examples from their current education already help?

These questions can give students a constructive role in curriculum reflection. Their self-reports should be considered alongside examples of learning, feedback, and assessment, rather than being treated as direct measures of achievement.

7.5 Support organisations: build a proportionate response

Support organisations can convene practitioners, educators, and students around a limited number of locally relevant themes. The purpose is to understand how their perspectives relate in a shared context. The survey does not establish that a common pattern has the same causes everywhere.

A practical process is to select a theme, gather local examples, agree on one feasible response, and decide how to assess it. The assessment might concern participation, learning experiences, application, or another outcome appropriate to that response. These are proposed uses of the report, not outcomes demonstrated by Wave 1.

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8. What remains uncertain and what comes next

8.1 Why stakeholder-gap analysis remains limited

The ESIC survey was designed to explore alignment and potential gaps between competencies considered important in practice, priorities within education, and students' perceived competency development. These complementary perspectives provide a basis for examining how practice and education relate.

In Wave 1, insufficient and uneven coverage across target groups within countries limits robust analysis of these relationships. The sample does not adequately support the planned local comparison of all three groups. Combining countries does not replace this local evidence: social economy structures, education systems, and institutional conditions differ, and countries contribute unevenly to each group.

Gap analysis remains a central objective for subsequent waves, supported by stronger recruitment across the relevant groups in shared national or local contexts. The aim is to identify potential mismatches for closer investigation and dialogue. A difference in survey ratings should be interpreted in that context, rather than as a direct measurement of missing skills or educational effectiveness.

8.2 Other limits to interpretation

Participation through partner and network distribution may favour people connected to the project or interested in the subject. The findings cannot be assumed to represent the wider population, and no overall response rate is reported. Geographic coverage should therefore not be used to describe national or European prevalence.

The ratings are self-reports. They capture perceptions, expectations, and, for students, a reference to confidence in development. They do not directly observe workplace performance, teaching quality, employment demand, or learning outcomes. The high concentration of scores near the top of the scale further limits fine distinctions between competencies.

The surveys were designed for multilingual use. Auto-translation and local review were part of the project approach, but their use does not establish that all language versions were interpreted equivalently. Language and contextual differences remain relevant when results are discussed together.

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Attention checks reduce concerns about response attention, but passing them does not establish that every answer is accurate. The analysis uses the recorded attention-check result rather than an independent reassessment of the original attention-check answers. Complete ratings in the cleaned dataset also do not establish that all original responses were complete.

8.3 Strengthening the next wave

Subsequent waves can strengthen gap analysis by recruiting practitioners, educators, and students within shared national or local contexts. Recruitment should focus on underrepresented groups, monitor country and group coverage during fieldwork, and document the channels used. Translation review and clear version records can help identify how respondents encounter the instrument.

The core survey structure should remain stable after launch. Any proposed structural change for a later version requires explicit approval and documentation of its rationale, timing, affected version, and implications for comparability. This report does not propose changes to a live survey.

A comparable later wave would allow examination of repeated patterns over time. If different people participate, observed differences may reflect sample composition as well as changing perceptions. Claims about individual development would require an appropriate follow-up design and data that support that inference.

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9. Conclusions and further exploration

Wave 1 contributes three useful things to ESIC's skills intelligence work. It describes which competencies participating practitioners and educators consider important, and where students perceive educational support. It identifies future-oriented patterns that can guide local questions about further learning and support. It also establishes the boundaries of what this first sample can answer and where future evidence collection should focus.

The results are most useful when combined with knowledge of the setting in which a decision will be made. Collaborative and relational competencies, digital and applied activities, and systems, sustainability, and engagement themes all warrant consideration. The report gives reasons to examine them; the appropriate response depends on local tasks, educational purposes, resources, and the people involved.

Readers can explore interactive results and access linked data resources through the ESIC Skills Monitor. Appendix A explains every competency, Appendix B gives complete group-level descriptive results, and Appendix C documents methods, coverage, and the priority matrix. When using the Monitor, readers should check sample filters and versions and apply the same care to small subgroups and differences in question meaning.

Sources and further reading

The quantitative evidence comes from the ESIC Wave 1 cleaned integrated dataset, competency codebook, and practitioner, educator, and student questionnaires. The study's alignment framework is described in the conference abstract Aligning Social Innovation Competencies Among Practitioners, Educators, and Students: A Longitudinal Study in Nine European Countries. Appendix C describes the survey instruments, recruitment, and analysis methods.

Public project resources:

- ESIC. Skills Monitor. Interactive results, data links, and background information.
- ESIC. Explaining competence clusters. Intelligence report 1 publication page and download.
- ESIC. Emerging profiles. Intelligence report 2 publication page and download, provided as further reading.

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