

Transferable Skills Survey Results 2023



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1. Introduction

In order to gather a comprehensive understanding of the situation regarding the development of transferable skills among PhD candidates at Norwegian institutions and to take action based on the results, we released a survey about transferable skills in spring 2023.

1.1. Background

According to the [Cambridge Dictionary](#), transferable skills are applicable across different jobs and careers. In the context of our survey, we define transferable skills as those that a PhD candidate develops during their doctoral studies and carries forward into their next career stage, whether it be in academia, industry, start-ups, the public sector, or elsewhere. In the introduction to the survey, we provided examples of transferable skills, such as effective communication and presentation skills, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Furthermore, to exemplify transferable skills we used an infographic created by The European interest organization for early career researchers (Eurodoc). This infographic highlights the skills and competencies relevant for early career researchers to acquire during their doctoral studies and beyond, enhancing their employability in various work sectors. These skills are categorized into nine groups: research, career development, digital, communication, cognitive, interpersonal, teaching & supervision, enterprise, and mobility. In total, 66 transferable skills and competences are presented. For more details, we refer the reader to the [report by Eurodoc](#).

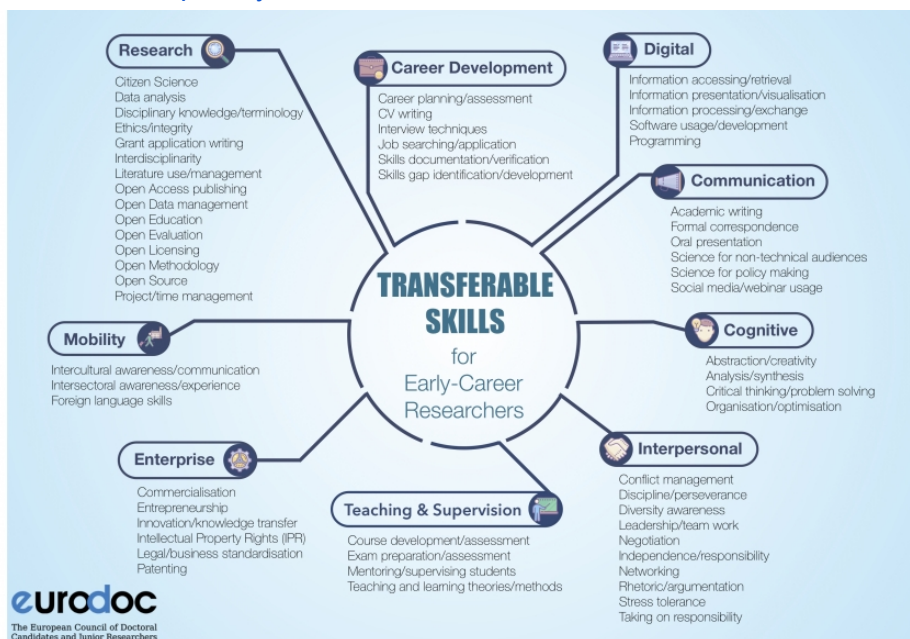


Figure 1: Transferable skills categories for early-career researchers by Eurodoc.

The motivation behind conducting this survey stems from the observation made by SiN board members pursuing their PhDs at different Norwegian institutions. They noted disparities among faculties in terms of the availability of courses that foster the development of transferable skills. Additionally, there are differences whether these courses can provide ECTS credits or not.

We believe that it is essential to encourage PhD candidates/students to invest time and effort in such courses, as the acquired tools are necessary for the successful completion of doctoral studies and pave the way for diverse career opportunities.

1.2. Goal of the study

The current study has two main objectives. First, we aim to collect information regarding the current situation on transferable skills courses at the Norwegian institutions. This involves getting an overview of the available courses related to transferable skills, their nature, and whether they are considered mandatory coursework or can be recognized as such. Additionally, we would like to identify potential differences between different faculties within the same institution.

Second, we would like to gain insights into the demands of PhD candidates. This entails determining whether there is a desire for courses focusing on transferable skills, identifying the specific areas they are most interested in, and understanding which skills PhDs perceive as important for their future. We also would like to establish whether PhD candidates prefer transferable skills courses to be obligatory or optional, with the option to incorporate them into their PhD coursework.

1.3 Data collection

This report is based on data from an electronic survey sent to PhD candidates at Norwegian universities and university colleges. SiN distributed the survey to all member organizations who disseminated the survey through their local channels. SiN itself promoted the survey in its own social media channels as well.

SiN received a total of 178 responses to the survey, which were all complete since partial survey responses were not accepted. Not all questions were mandatory such that the respondent sample size for some questions is lower than the total sample.

In general, the survey is a small sample from all PhD candidates in Norway such that the application to the entire current PhD population at Norwegian universities and university colleges is limited. Although, the report can express the current status and the wishes of the respondents.

The survey was conducted between 9th of May and 8th of June 2023.

1.4 Strengths and weaknesses

SiN represents approximately 70% of all PhD candidates and postdocs working in Norway, a proportion that is constantly decreasing. This is mainly due to an increasing number of PhD candidates and postdocs working outside universities and university colleges. We can assume that PhD candidates who are not employed at a university or a university college may have different experiences and challenges regarding transferable skills. This is not captured by the data, and thus represents a weakness of the survey.

The response rate of the survey relative to the entire PhD candidate population represented by SiN is low. Thus, it is possible that the survey contains a selection bias where the PhD candidates with strong dissatisfaction of transferable skills courses at their institutions incline to answer compared to the ones who are invariant. This is important to consider when interpreting the results.

This survey has respondents from all of SiN's member organizations representing a strength of the survey. This allows SiN some insight into the transferable skills courses at each of the member institutions. Since the research fields are very different between some of the institutions, it is very valuable to have responses from all members to investigate the needs of different research fields. At the end of the survey, there was also a comment field where respondents were free to express their opinion on the current situation of transferable skills courses at their institutions as well as on the survey itself. This field was used by 152 respondents (82%). This gives the survey a quantitative and qualitative basis.

2. Results

2.1 Highlights

The participants of the survey represent all SiN member organizations (NTNU, UiT, UiS, UiO, UiB, UiA, USN, OsloMet, NiH, NMBU, NHH, with the majority of respondents from NTNU (46.6%). Most respondents have started their PhD education in the years 2021 (24.2%) and 2022 (28.7%). 45.5% of respondents see themselves continuing their career in academia after completion of their PhD. On the other hand, 31.5% of respondents plan to work in the private sector. Other areas named are public sector, start-up and other.

The most respondents are affiliated with NTNU (46.6%). We can see that there are significant differences between the faculties, e.g., transferable skills courses are mandatory at some faculties as Medicine and Health Sciences (MH), but not recognized at other faculties, such as Natural Sciences (NV) and Faculty of Engineering (IV).

Most respondents (55.6%) know about institutional offers of transferable skills courses. Only 14% of respondents answered that their institution does not have an offer of transferable skills courses and 30.3% of the respondents do not know if their institution offers transferable skills courses.

As the SiN board believes that transferable skills courses are important for the development of a PhD candidate as a researcher, one of the first questions in the survey was whether the transferable skills courses can be recognized towards the mandatory ECTS credits. The majority of respondents (58.5%) is able to include transferable skills courses in their mandatory academic training/individual study plan. However, almost $\frac{1}{3}$ of the respondents (32.6%) do not get ECTS for transferable skills courses and thus cannot include them in their mandatory academic training/individual study plan.

42.1% of the respondents noted that their PhD programs incorporate mandatory transferable skills courses, which are credited with ECTS, while 43.3% of the respondents said that their programs do not include such courses. A minority of the respondents (14.6%) was uncertain about whether their PhD program included these mandatory courses. In terms of optional transferable skills courses with the possibility to be ECTS credited, respondents were nearly evenly divided. Specifically, 36.5% reported that their PhD program offered optional courses, while 31.5% stated that none were available. A further 32% of respondents were unsure about the availability of optional transferable skills courses.

The preferences among respondents regarding mandatory transferable skills courses with ECTS credits are balanced, with 36% in favor and 37.1% preferring not to have such courses. Additionally, 27% of respondents expressed that it doesn't make a difference to them. As for optional transferable skills courses, a significant majority of respondents, 78.7%, is in favor of such courses, which can be integrated into their individual study plans as ECTS credits. 12.4% of respondents are indifferent towards optional transferable skills courses, 6.2% would prefer not to have these, and 2.8% believe that these courses should be pursued in one's free time.

Roughly half of the respondents (49.4%) have not approached their supervisor for support, leaving it uncertain whether they can allocate time and project resources for transferable skills courses. On the other hand, 40.4% of participants have received support from their supervisor to partake in these courses, with the possibility of utilizing project resources and time. A small fraction, comprising 6.2%, lack their supervisor's endorsement for such courses, while 3.9% either don't wish to partake or are uncertain about their supervisor's stance.

Regarding the potential acquisition of ECTS credits for successfully completed courses at other Norwegian or international institutions within their mandatory academic training/individual study plan, a majority of respondents (55.1%) remain uncertain. Only 27% of respondents are aware that they can incorporate ECTS credits from transferable skills courses offered by other institutions, while 18% are certain that such courses cannot be included in their mandatory academic training/individual study plan.

2.2 Detailed survey results

2.2.1 Background information of the respondents

Q1: At which institution are you enrolled in a PhD program?

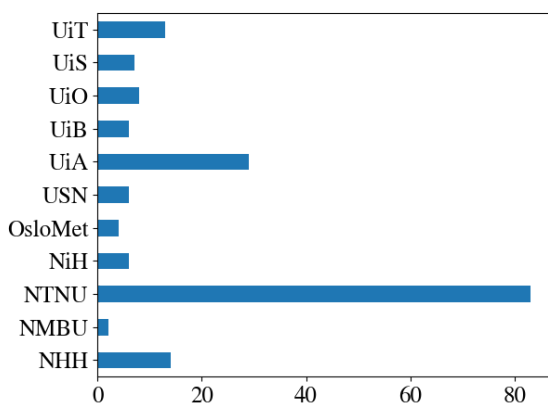


Figure 2: Institution of the respondents (N=178).

This survey had a total of 178 respondents, with a majority of respondents enrolled in a PhD program at NTNU (83 – 46.6%). The survey had respondents from all SiN member institutions, with UiT (13 – 7.3%), UiS (7 – 3.9%), UiO (8 – 4.5%), UiB (6 – 3.4%), UiA (29 – 16.3%), USN (6 – 3.4%), OsloMet (4 – 2.2%), NiH (6 – 3.4%), NMBU (2 – 1.1%), NHH (14 – 7.9%).

Q2: At which faculty are you enrolled in the PhD program?

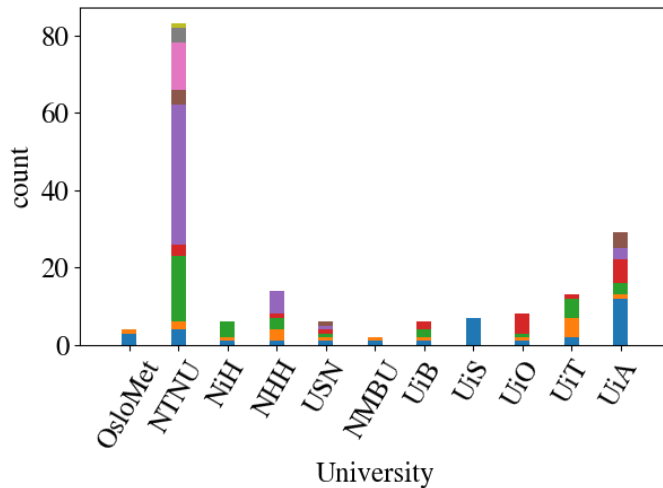


Figure 3: Faculties of the respondents per institution (N=178).

The number of respondents per university and faculty are shown in Figure 3 and Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents per institution and faculty (N=178).

University	Faculty	Counts
OsloMet	Faculty of Social Sciences	3
	Faculty of Technology, Art and Design	1
NTNU	Faculty of Architecture and Design	4
	Faculty of Economics and Management	2
	Faculty of Engineering	17
	Faculty of Humanities	3
	Faculty of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering	36
	Faculty of Medicine and Health Science	4
	Faculty of Natural Sciences	13
	Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences	4
NIH	Department of Sports Medicine	2
	Doctor of Philosophy	4
NHH	Accounting, Auditing and Law	1
	Business and Management	3
	Economics	3

	Finance	1
	Strategy and Management	6
USN	Faculty of Technology, Natural Sciences and Maritime Sciences	3
	School of Business	2
	Pedagogical resources and learning processes	1
NMBU	Bioscience	1
	Landscape and Society	1
UiB	Faculty of Humanities	1
	Faculty of Law	1
	Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences	2
	Faculty of Medicine	2
UiS	Faculty of Science and Technology	7
UiO	Faculty of Social Sciences	1
	Faculty of Educational Sciences	1
	Faculty of Humanities	1
	Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences	5
UiT	Faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics	2
	Faculty of Engineering Science and Technology	5
	Faculty of Health Sciences	5
	Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education	1
UiA	Faculty of Engineering and Science	12
	Faculty of Fine Arts	1
	Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences	3
	Faculty of Humanities and Education	6
	Faculty of Social Sciences	3
	School of Business and Law	4

Q3: When did you start your PhD?

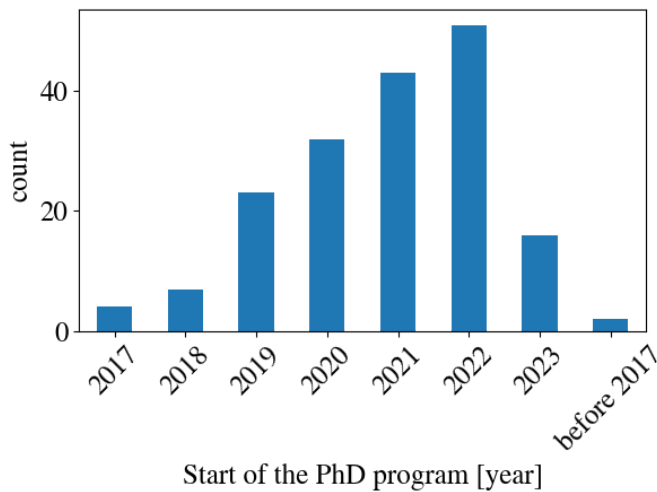


Figure 4: Start of the PhD program of the respondents (N=178).

Most respondents have started their PhD program in 2022 (52 – 28.7%). The remaining years are before 2017 (2 – 1.1%), 2017 (4 – 2.2%), 2018 (7 – 3.9%), 2019 (23 – 12.9%), 2020 (32 – 18%), 2021 (43 – 24.2%), and 2023 (16 – 9%).

Q4: When is the defense of your PhD planned?

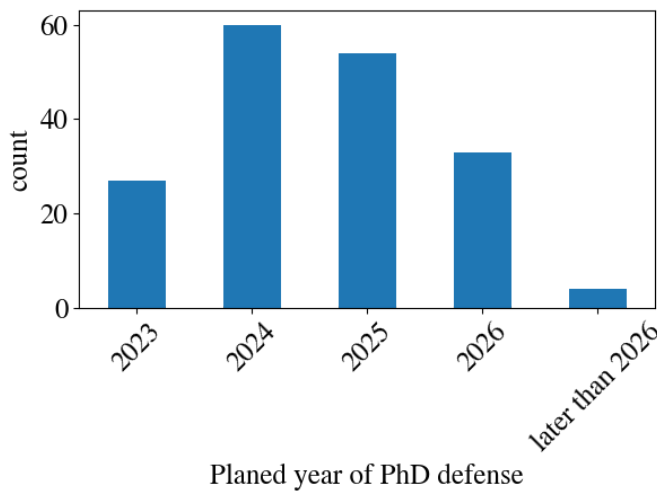


Figure 5: Planned year of the PhD defense of the respondents (N=178).

Most respondents plan to defend their PhD thesis in 2024 (60 – 33.7%), followed by 2025 (54 – 30.3%), 2026 (33 – 18.5%), 2023 (27 – 15.2%), and later than 2026 (4 – 2.2%).

Q5: After my PhD, I see myself work in

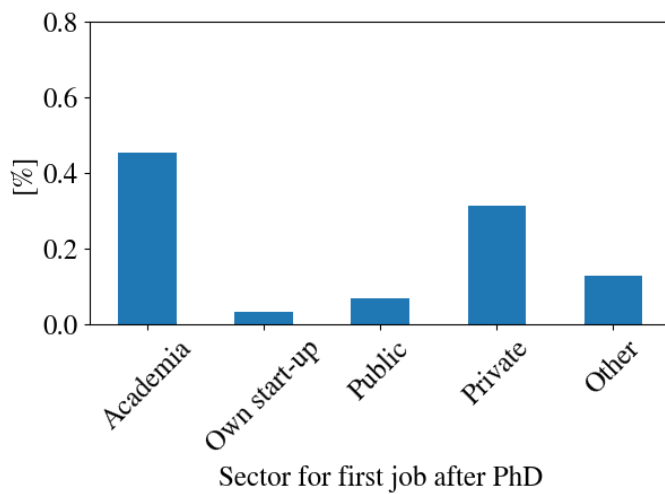


Figure 6: Sector of the first job after the PhD of the respondents (N=178).

45.5% of respondents (absolute 81) see themselves work in the academic sector after defending their PhD. This is followed by 31.5% of respondents (absolute 56) who plan to take a position in the private sector. Public sector resembled 12.9% (absolute 23), founding an own start-up 3.4% (absolute 6) and other 6.7% (absolute 12).

2.2.2 Transferable Skills question

Q6: Do you know if your institution offers courses on transferable skills?

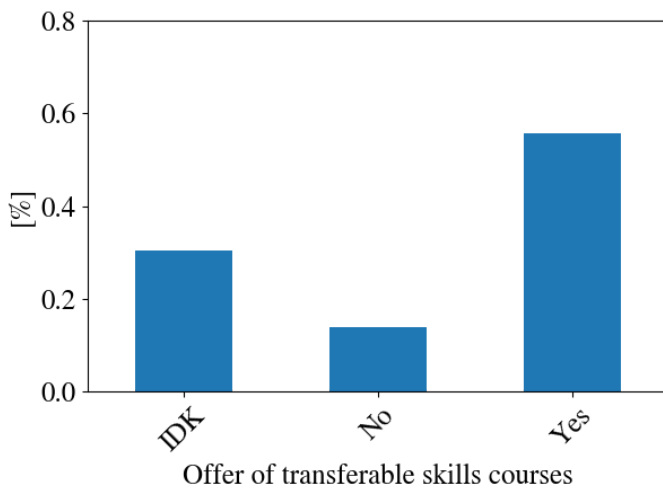


Figure 7: Transferable skills courses offered at the institution; IDK: I don't know (N=178).

Most respondents (99 – 55.6%) know about institutional offers of transferable skills courses. Only 14% of respondents (absolute 25) answered that their institution does not have an offer of transferable skills courses and 30.3% (absolute 54) of the respondents do not know if their institution offers transferable skills courses.

Q7: Does your institution recognize transferable skills courses taken at other institutions (in Norway or abroad) with ECTS points which can be included in your mandatory academic training/individual study plan?



Figure 8: Recognition of transferable skills courses taken at other institutions; IDK: I don't know (N=178).

Most respondents (98 – 55.1%) do not know if they can get ECTS points from courses successfully completed at another Norwegian or international institution in their mandatory academic training/individual study plan. Only 27% (absolute 48) of respondents know that they can include ECTS points of transferable skills courses from other institutions while 18%

(absolute 32) are sure that they cannot include such courses in their mandatory academic training/individual study plan.

Q8: If your institution offers courses on transferable skills, are you able to include these courses in your mandatory academic training/individual study plan?

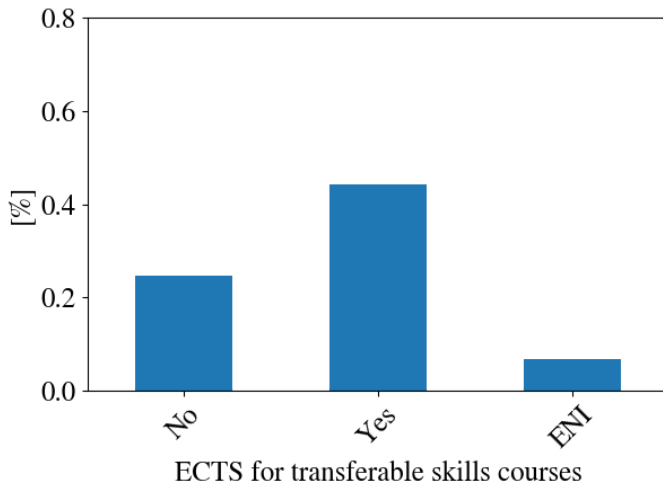


Figure 9: Inclusion of ECTS from transferable skills courses in the mandatory academic training/individual study plan; ENI: earned ECTS, but not able to be included in the study plan (N=135).

The majority of respondents (79 – 58.5%) are able to include transferable skills courses in their mandatory academic training/individual study plan. Some respondents (12 – 8.9%) receive ECTS points for transferable skills courses, but they cannot be included in their mandatory academic training/individual study plan. Almost 1/3 of the respondents (44 – 32.6%) do not get ECTS for transferable skills courses and cannot include them in their mandatory academic training/individual study plan.

Q9: If your institution offers transferable skills courses to which area do they belong?

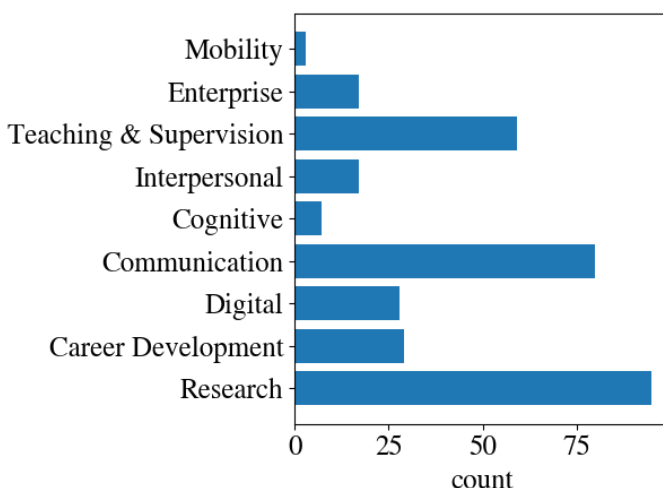


Figure 10: Categories of transferable skills courses offered at the institutions (N=118).

80.5% of the respondents (absolute 95) answered that their institution offers transferable skills courses in the category of Research. There was at least one respondent from each

institution who ticked this category, thus each institution is offering transferable skills courses in this area. Other categories with the majority of respondents included in the institutional course offer are Communication (67.8% – 80) and Teaching & Supervision (50% – 59). The remaining categories are in decreasing order Career Development (24.6% – 29), Digital (23.7% – 28), Interpersonal (14.4% – 17), Enterprise (14.4% – 17), Cognitive (5.9% – 7), and Mobility (2.5% – 3) (N = 118).

Q10: Select the skills which you think are important for the different career paths?

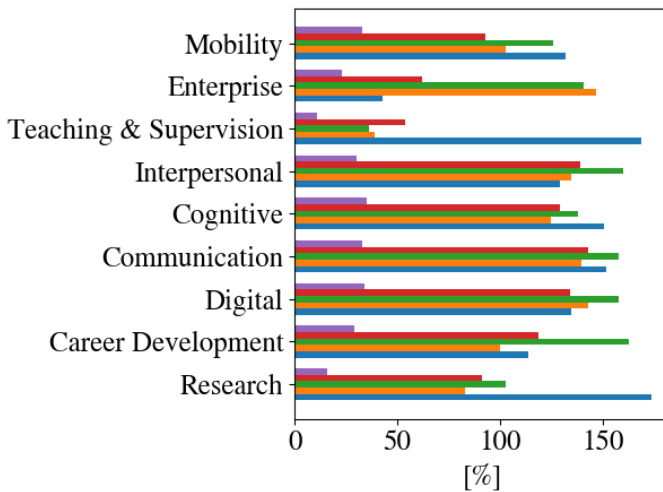


Figure 11: Skills which are important for different career paths; academia (blue), private sector (yellow), public sector (green), own start-up (red), and other (purple) (N=178).

Table 2: Important skills per sector (N=178).

	Academia		Private Sector		Public sector		Own start-up		Other	
	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%
Research	174	97.8	103	57.9	91	51.1	83	46.7	16	9.0
Career Development	114	64.0	163	91.6	119	66.9	100	56.2	29	16.3
Digital	135	75.8	158	88.8	134	75.3	143	80.3	34	19.1
Communication	152	85.4	158	88.8	143	80.3	140	78.7	33	18.5
Cognitive	151	84.9	138	77.5	129	72.5	125	70.2	35	19.7
Interpersonal	129	72.5	160	89.9	139	78.1	135	75.9	30	16.8
Teaching & Supervision	169	94.9	36	20.2	54	30.3	39	26.9	11	6.2
Enterprise	43	24.2	141	79.2	62	34.8	147	82.6	23	12.9
Mobility	132	74.2	126	70.8	93	52.2	103	57.8	33	18.5

A large majority (>75%) selected the categories Research, Digital, Communication, Cognitive, and Teaching & Supervision as important for an academic career. Also the other

skills fields Mobility (74.2%), Interpersonal (72.5%), and Career Development (64%) were considered to be important for academia. Enterprises (24.2%) was considered to be the least important skills field in academia. Skills which are important for careers in any sector are Digital, Communication, Cognitive, and Interpersonal. In the private sector, Career Development was the most important skill (91.6%) while it was Communication in the public sector (80.3%) and Enterprise for an own start-up (82.6%).

Q11: Does your supervisor(s) support your wish to participate in formal training of transferable skills?

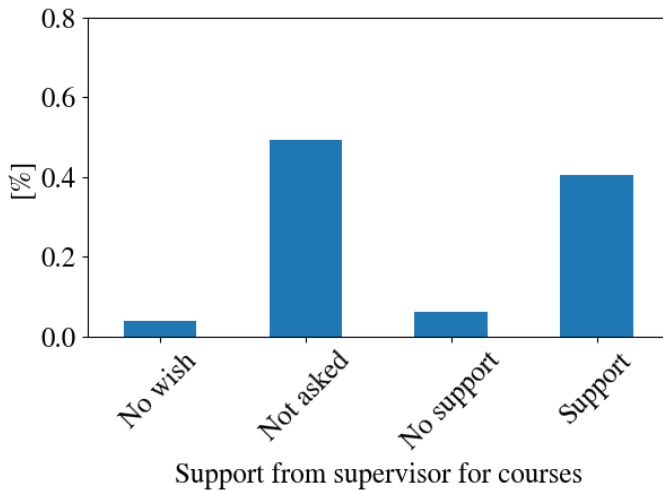


Figure 12: Supervisor support for attending transferable skills courses; options were that there is no wish in participating, that the respondent has not asked for supervisor support, that there is no supervisor support, or that there is supervisor support

Approximately half of all respondents (88 – 49.4%) have not asked their supervisor for support such that it is unclear if they could spend time and project money on transferable skills courses. 40.4% of the respondents (absolute 72) have the support of their supervisor to attend transferable skills courses. These respondents are also able to use project money and time on transferable skills courses. There are only a few respondents (11 – 6.2%) who do not have the support of their supervisor for transferable skills courses or who do not wish to participate in such courses (7 – 3.9%) such that they do not know if they would have their supervisor’s support.

Q12: Does your PhD program already include mandatory transferable skills courses which are ECTS credited?

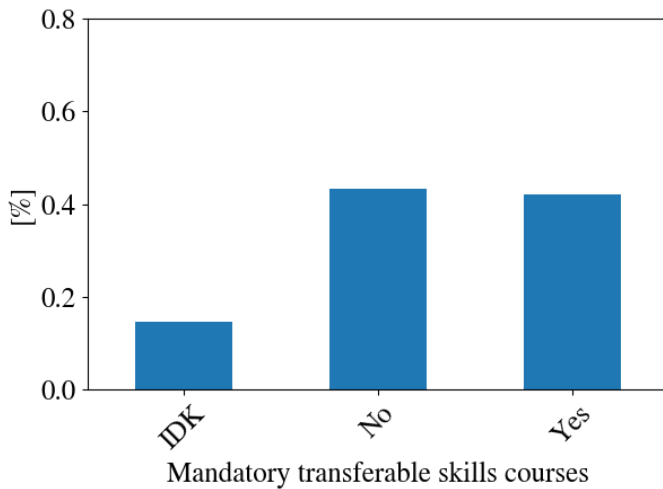


Figure 13: Already mandatory transferable skills courses in the PhD program; IDK: I don't know (N=178).

There is an approximate equal split between PhD programs which already include mandatory transferable skills courses which are ECTS credited (75 – 42.1%) and those which do not include mandatory transferable skills courses (77 – 43.3%). A small number of respondents (26 – 14.6%) did not know if their PhD program includes mandatory transferable skills courses which are ECTS credited.

Q13: Does your PhD program offer optional transferable skills courses which are ECTS credited?

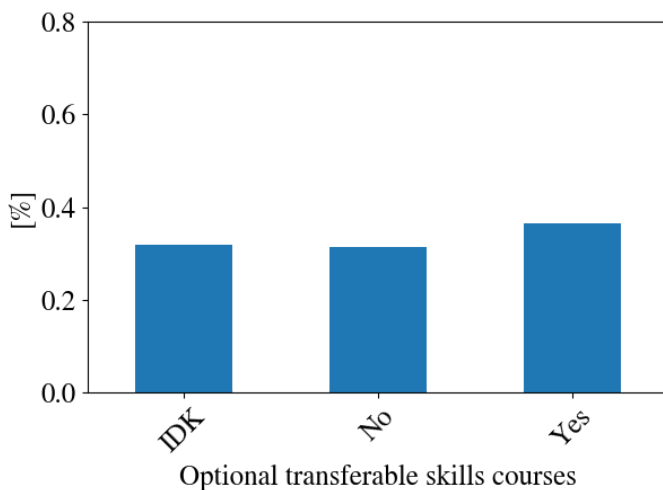


Figure 14: Already optional transferable skills courses which are ECTS credited in the PhD program; IDK: I don't know (N=178).

There was an approximately equal split between all respondents regarding if their PhD program offers optional transferable skills courses which are ECTS credited. The numbers for optional transferable skills course offer was 36.5% (absolute 65), while no optional transferable skills course offer was 31.5% (absolute 56), and 32% (absolute 57) of the respondents did not know about optional transferable skills offers.

Q14: Do you wish for mandatory transferable skills courses which are ECTS credited?

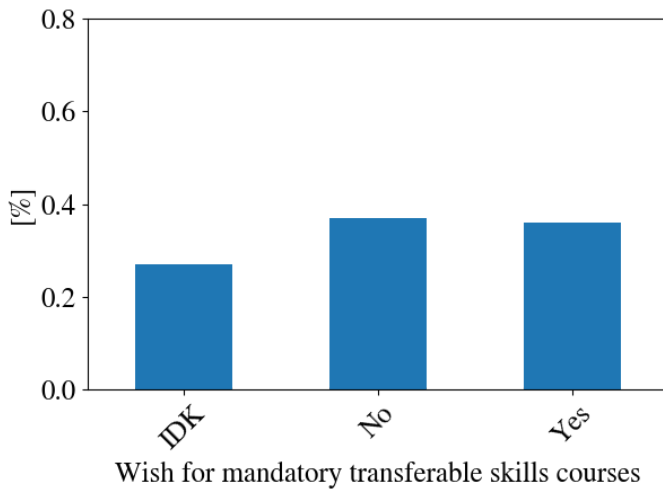


Figure 15: Wish of the respondents for mandatory transferable skills courses in the PhD program; IDK: I don't know (N=178).

There is an equal distribution between respondents who wish for mandatory transferable skills courses which are ECTS credited (64 – 36%) and those who prefer not to have such mandatory courses (66 – 37.1%). A slightly lower number (48 – 27%) answered that it doesn't matter to them.

Q15: Do you wish for optional transferable skills courses which have ECTS and can be included in your individual study plan?

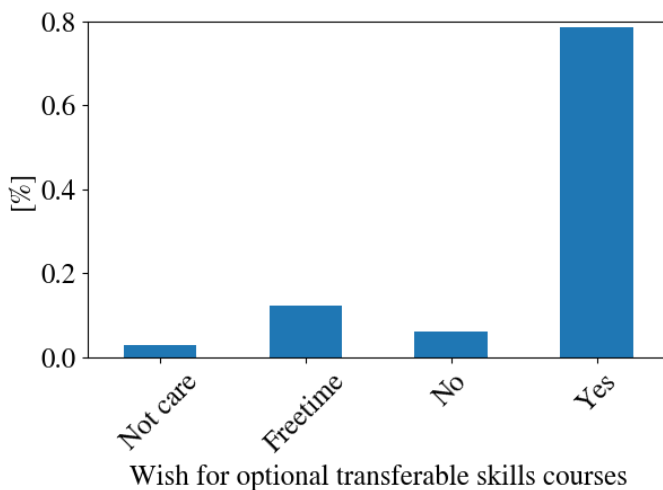


Figure 16: Wish of the respondents for optional, ECTS credited transferable skills courses; options were that the respondent doesn't care, that such courses should be attended in one's free time, no wish or wish for optional courses (N=178).

A clear majority of respondents (140 – 78.7%) is in favor of optional transferable skills courses which have ECTS and can be included in the individual study plan. There are small numbers of respondents (22 – 12.4%) who do not care about optional transferable skills courses, who do not prefer to have optional transferable skills courses (11 – 6.2%), or who think that optional transferable skills courses should be done in one's freetime (5 – 2.8%).

2.2.3 General comments

“The survey does not explain what transferable skills are. To understand what transferable skills are I would first like to understand which skills are not transferable. They must be very specialized I suppose.”

“The quality of the transferable skill courses at NTNU is quite low.”

“I'm sorry, but what does any of this supposed to mean?”

“I think a very important one is research communication/dissemination”

“All transferable skills courses are focused exclusively on academia and research careers. Even in the courses, there is no mention of other career possibilities or how these skills could apply to other courses”

“You could include a question on evaluation of the actual course that is offered. For example NTNU has this ethics course that is obligatory for phds at least in my faculty. It contains material relevant to transferable skills but it is actually only a couple of presentations, hardly in depth. Other than that, there are available courses, with no credits but only a few phd students take them because that would be in expence of phd work (= yet to meet a supervisor that supports/motivates a phd student to follow them).”

“The info graphic is a little to general for me. I like hard facts much more, so it would be great if you could give a concrete example. In order to clarify this: "Research" does not sound like research to me at all. The only thing there is "data analysis". Under research I'd consider reading and understanding papers, formulating theses, innovative solution concepts and ways of thinking... But I rarely have seen courses for something like this, even though I'd like to take theses, whereas I'm not the least bit interested in these courses, where they talk about useless stuff, instead of actually researching... I think you got my point.”

“The courses were incredibly unnecessary. It was just empty discussions and talking leading to nowhere, and no real life skills such as computer programming languages. ”

“Like in other countries, it would be great to not have any mandatory course work in your PhD. If there is a course that is truly relevant, one will take it anyway. Otherwise, it first and foremost feels like loosing time that could be spend on research.”

“The trasferable skills courses I took were a waste of time and I attended only because they were mandatory. I don't think we should have mandatory courses at PhD level. Specially if one is taking a PhD in math and will not deal with sensitive data or experiments, and will teach math. ”

“Many of these things would be great, but courses are often quite the high threshold. Also it can be seen as a distraction from the phd project if one tries to get too many skills :) important initiative though!”

“Though some transferable skills can be relevant for some PhD projects and future career paths (such as Enterprise) it is not relevant for all and should therefore not be mandatory for all PhDs. However, they could of course be optional for interested / relevant PhDs. ”

“I think transferable skills to some extent will vary depending on the field you are working in. Also, to clarify, I am enrolled in a PhD program in a different institution to where I am employed (however at the same uni)- so I do not really know what my own institution offers in their PhD-programs. ”

“In my study plan, transferable skills credits are limited to 10 ECTS, 6 of which are already spent on a mandatory philosophy of science and ethics course. I am against this practice, as it only allows me to take maximum 4 ECTS on transferable skills of my own choosing. ”

“PHDs and postdocs are treated as second class citizens. Our future is irrelevant for the university. The only thing that matters is finishing on time”

“I'm not really sure what you mean by it, I'm not really familiar with the concept. ”

“It's hard to define what to consider transferable. Most things are one way or another. Question 10 makes little sense to me.”

“I think transferable skills are undervalued in our education. Especially with a Phd it is likely to get a position where we have to take responsibility for others as teachers or group leaders and is very important to be trained in this. Also economic and administrative facts can be come very important. Generally, it is good to get trained in efficient working, time management and healthy work habits, as I see more and more PhD colleges struggle with this and developing mental problems. Good communication and presentation of our work is a necessity nevertheless. ”

“Most transferable skills courses I have taken at NTNU have not contributed anything to my personal development in any way, shape or form. People only take them because they have to and for 'easy ECTS'.”

“free seminars about it would be nice, it doesn't have to be a course”

“fyi I already have a research job to go to at a research institute so my needs for increasing skills apart from doing the phd itself is limited.”

“I found these to be ridiculous questions and completely irrelevant for transferring skills. I have worked outside academia for 20 years successfully utilizing my academic training, before I went on to take a phd. However I find it almost an insult to suggest that there is a need for courses in cognitive? in career development? in mobility? in communication? and so forth. Really?! ”

“More of them especially now to make transition to non academia easier for us. Academia will not be able to provide enough jobs so they should support our switching to private and public sectors or making of start ups”

3. Discussion

To conclude our survey, we aim to discuss the key findings and present actionable suggestions.

The survey offers insights into the landscape of the current transferable skills courses across 11 Norwegian institutions, with the majority of the replies from NTNU (46.6%). Despite a possible selection bias, we believe that the trends identified in the survey reflect the current situation on transferable skills courses at Norwegian institutions and are worth discussing.

Strikingly, almost a $\frac{1}{3}$ of the respondents are unsure whether their institution offers transferable skills courses, indicating a communication gap within PhD programmes. We recommend that the institutions clearly communicate the availability of transferable skills courses at the start of a PhD programme, e.g., during an introductory seminar or conversation with a PhD consultant. It is also crucial to emphasize the benefits of participating in such courses.

Furthermore, survey results reveal that while the majority can include transferable skills courses in their individual study plan (i.e., these courses are ECTS credited), nearly one-third cannot. Considering that only half of doctoral graduates in 2021 (with admission to PhD programme in the period 2005-2015), as per January 20, 2023 report by [Statistics Norway](#), pursue a career in academia, the importance of offering courses applicable beyond one's research field becomes evident. We highlight that 4 out of 10 respondents note mandatory inclusion of transferable skills courses in their PhD programme, while an equal proportion does not. Given the significant number of PhDs not entering academia after their graduation, we advocate for possible incorporation of transferable skills courses into individual study plans.

Notably, almost a quarter of doctoral candidates were unsure whether their program includes mandatory courses on development of transferable skills, reinforcing the need for transparent communication. Additionally, as will be explained further, the existing course offer appears somewhat limited. Thus, we propose expanding the course offer to meet the diverse needs of doctoral candidates and the evolving development of future career paths.

The survey also showed that there is a clear demand for transferable skills courses at Norwegian universities and university colleges. Notably, a majority of PhD candidates is in favor of optional courses in transferable skills, while only a third is in favor of introducing mandatory courses in this area. Given that a significant number of PhD candidates are going to work outside academia after their defense, there is a strong desire for courses in transferable skills, which are essential for career development.

At the moment, the available transferable skills courses are mainly focused on research, communication, and teaching & supervision, while the offer in all other categories (see Figure 1) is very sparse. Thus, there is a pressing need for institutions to diversify their course offer. Recognizing the potential challenges, particularly by smaller institutions, it becomes essential to allow PhD candidates taking transferable skills courses at other

institutions and to facilitate a mechanism for an easy and straightforward transfer of ECTS credits between both national and international institutions.

In summary, the demands of PhD candidates at Norwegian universities and university colleges with respect to transferable skills courses encompass the following key points:

1. **Consistent crediting:** Transferable skills courses have to be uniformly credited with ECTS across Norwegian institutions and faculties. The inclusion of transferable skills courses in the individual study plan should be optional for a PhD candidate, but may also be mandated.
2. **Diverse and qualitative offer:** Institutions are urged to provide diverse transferable skills courses, spanning all categories defined by Eurodoc (see Figure 1). Emphasis should be placed on the categories Career Development, Digital, Interpersonal, Enterprise, Cognitive, and Mobility.
3. **Effective communication:** Establishing effective communication channels between institutions and PhD candidates on transferable skills is essential. This includes dissemination of information about transferable skills courses, their ECTS crediting and the optional or mandatory nature of participation.
4. **Seamless ECTS credit transfer:** Simplifying the procedure for recognizing ECTS credits earned through a transferable skills course at another Norwegian or an institution abroad is important. This will allow for PhDs having access to a variety of courses in transferable skills and provide additional opportunities for networking.
5. **Guidelines Establishment:** Institutions should collaboratively develop guidelines emphasizing the significance of transferable skills courses. These guidelines should underscore their role in shaping PhD candidates into responsible, qualified, and competitive researchers.

4. Acknowledgments

SiN would like to thank all PhD candidates who participated in the survey. The survey was designed after identifying a need for mapping out the current situation on transferable skills offered at Norwegian universities with representatives from the local PhD and postdoc interest organizations.

Regina Paul (DION) and Friederike Schäfer (DION) were responsible for conducting the survey and analyzing the results. This report is part of the SiN Working Group on Careers. Useful comments were provided by all members of the SiN 2023 board and representatives from the local PhD and postdoc organizations.