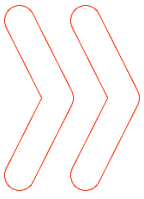




Enhancing career readiness for international students

John Knott and Cathy Jones

October 2025



“ Career opportunities are the driving force behind international students’ decisions to pursue a foreign education. ”

Instead, Connecting the Dots Report, 2024 (PIE News)

87%

of students prioritize employability when choosing a university.

Only 50%

of graduates feel their degree prepares them for the workforce.

QS Enrolment Solutions, 2024

» Career Outcomes Drive Student Choice

Students are driven by career development, job outcomes and return on their investment.

- » 'Career development' remains the primary motivator to study internationally.
- » Students now judge education quality by graduate employment rates - more than rankings or academic quality.
- » For 58% of international students, job outcomes are the top non-academic factor in choosing a university.

(IDP, March 2025)



» Employability Drives Student Recruitment

International student graduate employment is not just a metric - it's a core component of university recruitment.

- Enhances reputation & global ranking.
- Increases student satisfaction & alumni engagement.
- Builds relationships with employers seeking diverse talent.
- Fulfils the university's mission of educating global citizens.
- Fulfils university's mission of helping students achieve their full potential.



» Graduate Employability Trends

In today's competitive global job market, these are the key trends shaping graduate employability:

- The importance of soft skills alongside technical proficiency.
- The need for practical, real-world experience.
- The advantage of industry-specific knowledge.
- The critical role of networking and professional connections.
- The changing nature of work.



The Graduate Market in 2023 - High Fliers Research.
Graduate job market trends in 2024 - TargetJobs



>44%

Of employers estimate workers' skills will be disrupted in the next five years.

World Economic Forum 2023

The **fastest-growing** roles are driven by technology, digitalisation and sustainability.

The **fastest-declining** roles are driven by technology, digitalisation and sustainability.



One billion people will
need reskilling by 2030,
as work adjusts to
emerging technologies.

World Economic Forum 2023

Jobs of the future?

AI Prompt Engineer

Commercial drone pilot

Algorithm Bias Auditor

XR Immersion Counsellor

Distraction Prevention Coach

Cyber Calamity Forecaster

Space Tourism Guide

Digital Detox Specialist

X The New Reality for Graduates



» Reality Check | Beyond the Buzzwords

- › **Graduate Competition is at an all time High**
1.2 million applications for just 17,000 graduate roles (ISE, 2024).
- › **The Experience Paradox**
82% of 'Entry-level' jobs demand 3+ years of experience (HBR, 2023).
- › **Debt, Underemployment & Career Delays**
50%+ of graduates work in non-degree jobs 5 years after graduating (ONS, 2023).



“Neijuan...no matter how hard you work, success feels impossible.
UK graduate (FT, 2025)

» US Graduates Have the Degree. But Not the Job.

52%

Underemployed one year after graduation

200+

Applications per entry-level role

61%

Of jobs require 3+ years experience

5 years

Many in a none-degree job this long



I've got the degree and the debt. But not the job I trained for.

— US Graduate, CNN 2025



» The Hidden Cost | The Graduate Struggle

› Degrees, but Detours

Graduates face uncertainty and limited opportunities - no clear path forward.

› The Application Trap

Hundreds of applications, few responses. Financial strain, debt, and moving back home.

› Skills Decay & Stalled Careers

Without early opportunities, skills fade and confidence drops - careers stall before they start.



Employers want work-ready talent.

McKinsey, 2025

» Employer Struggle | The Skills Shortage is Real

› The Talent Shortage & Catch-22 of Hiring

74% of firms can't find talent - experience requirements limit the pool (BCC, 2024).

› The High Cost of Getting It Wrong

A wrong hire costs up to 30% of an employee's salary, while long hiring cycles slow growth (SHRM, 2024).

› The Shift to Skills-Based Hiring

54% of employers now prioritize skills over degrees (ISE, 2024).



» What do Employers Want

- » **Work-ready graduates:** 75% of employers say grads lack practical skills (WEF, 2024)
- » **Proof of ability:** 80% of hiring managers see certifications as evidence of real-world skills (CompTIA)
- » **Business fluency:** 89% want hires who understand both tech and business impact (McKinsey)
- » **Agile learners:** 94% value a willingness to upskill over having perfect experience (LinkedIn, 2023)



»» What Students Value Today

“ I need this course to **help me get a job-** not just pass an exam

“ Teach me the tools **I'll actually use at work.**

“ I love **earning certifications** alongside my degree.

“ I chose this university to **boost my chances** - whether I work at home or abroad.

“ I'm balancing work, family, and study. I need **something flexible** - and worth it.



» Where Institutions Feel the Pressure

“ We need a clearer link between **curriculum and employability**.

“ Funding and tuition alone won't sustain us - **we need new revenue streams**.

“ We must stand out and **stay competitive** in a fast-changing market.

“ Students and employers want **value beyond the degree**.

“ We need scalable **work experience** solutions.



» Supporting Workforce Programmes

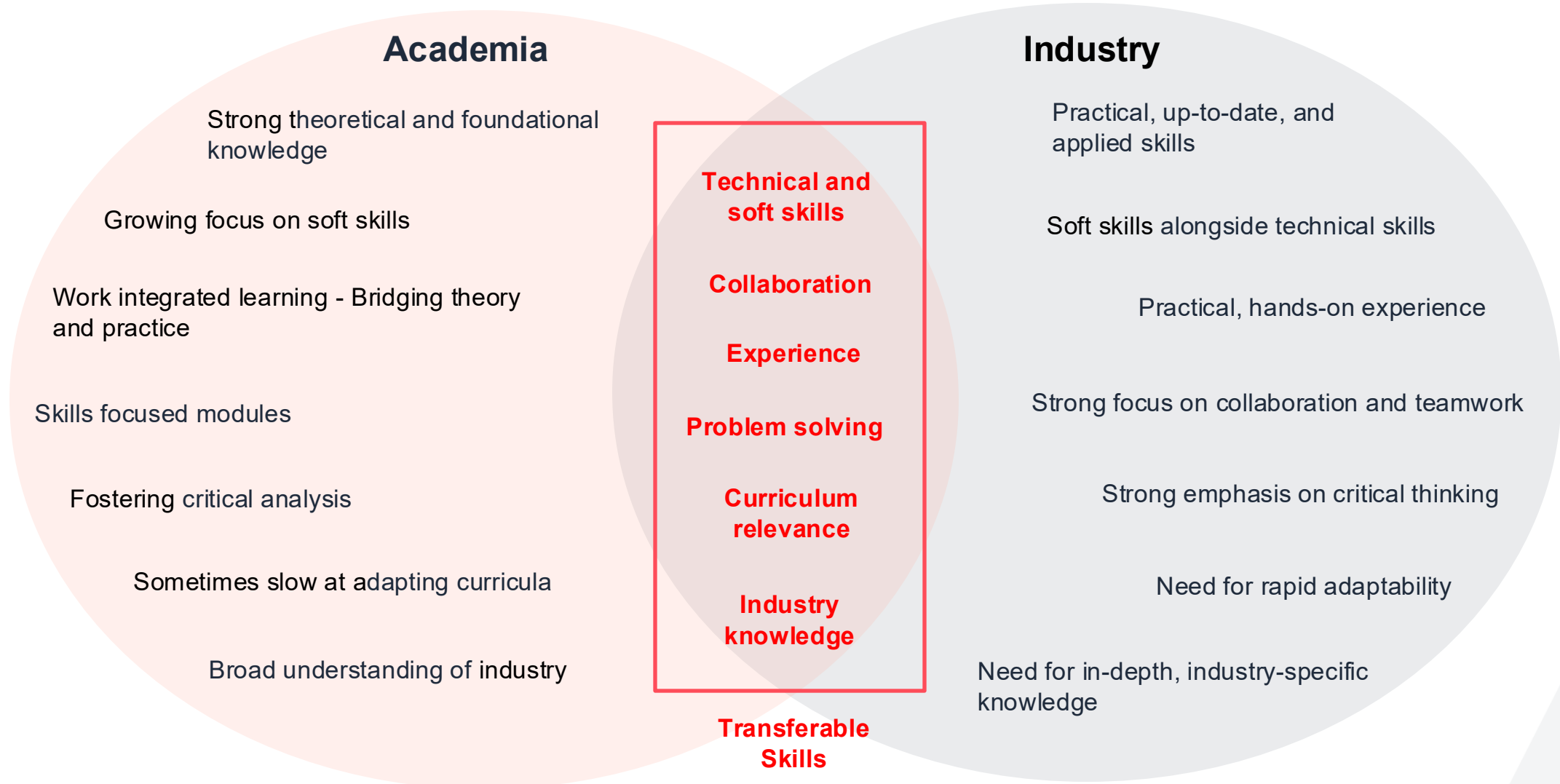
Universities face growing pressure to deliver clear career outcomes through affordable, job-focused learning.


- 92% of professionals are seeking further study to improve their career prospects - within 6 months.
- Cost, flexibility, and job relevance matter most
- 71% face time or financial pressures
- Learners want practical, recognised skills in IT, business, and English

(PeopleCert/Bonard, May 2025)



» Why does the Education-Employment Gap Exist





What are transferable skills?



» 2025 | High-level shifts and megatrends

› A Changing World of Challenge & Opportunity

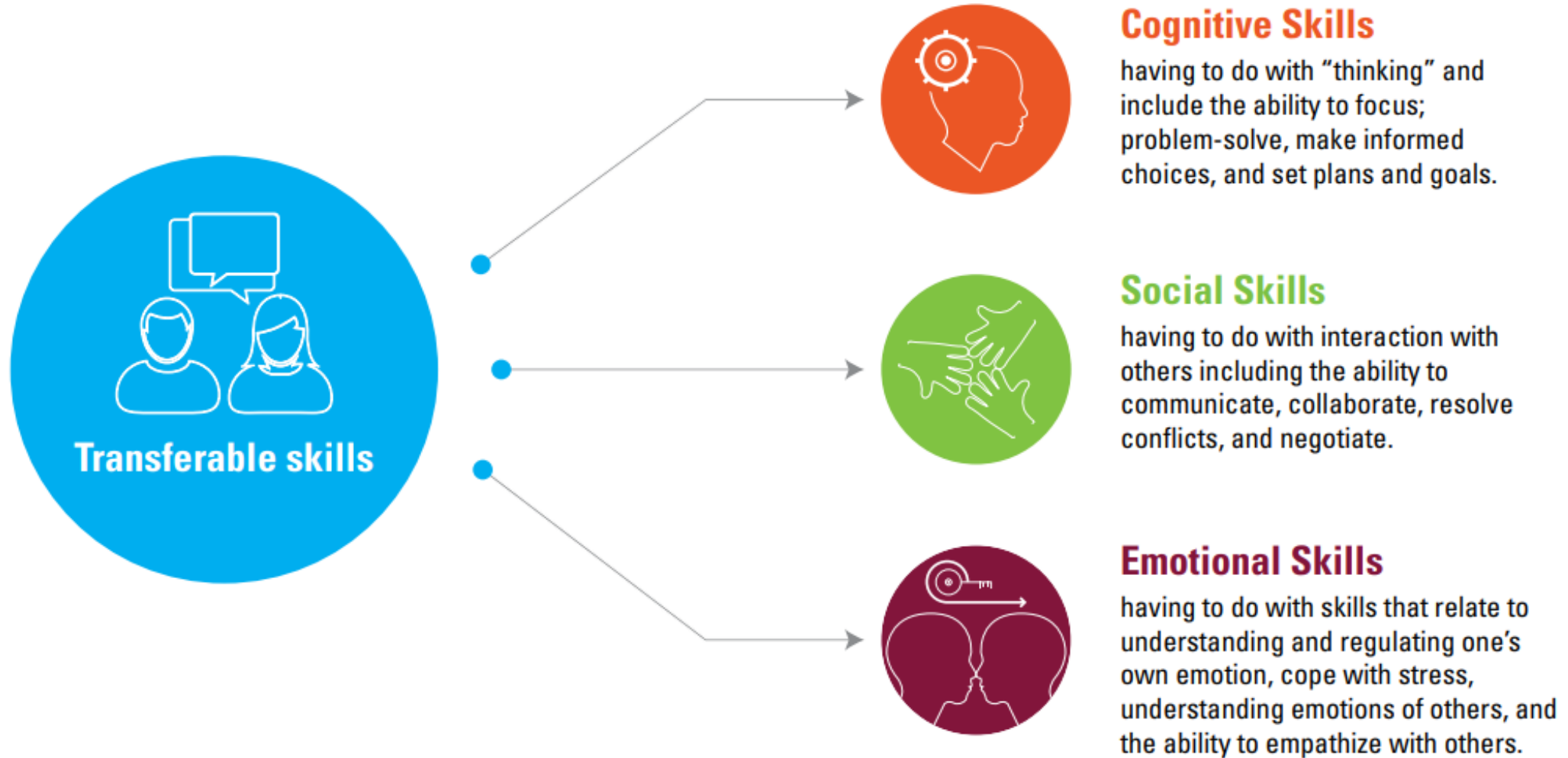
Megatrends: demographics, technology, labour markets, migration, conflict, and climate change

› Skills for Success

Students & young people need the right skills, knowledge, and values to thrive socially, academically, and professionally.

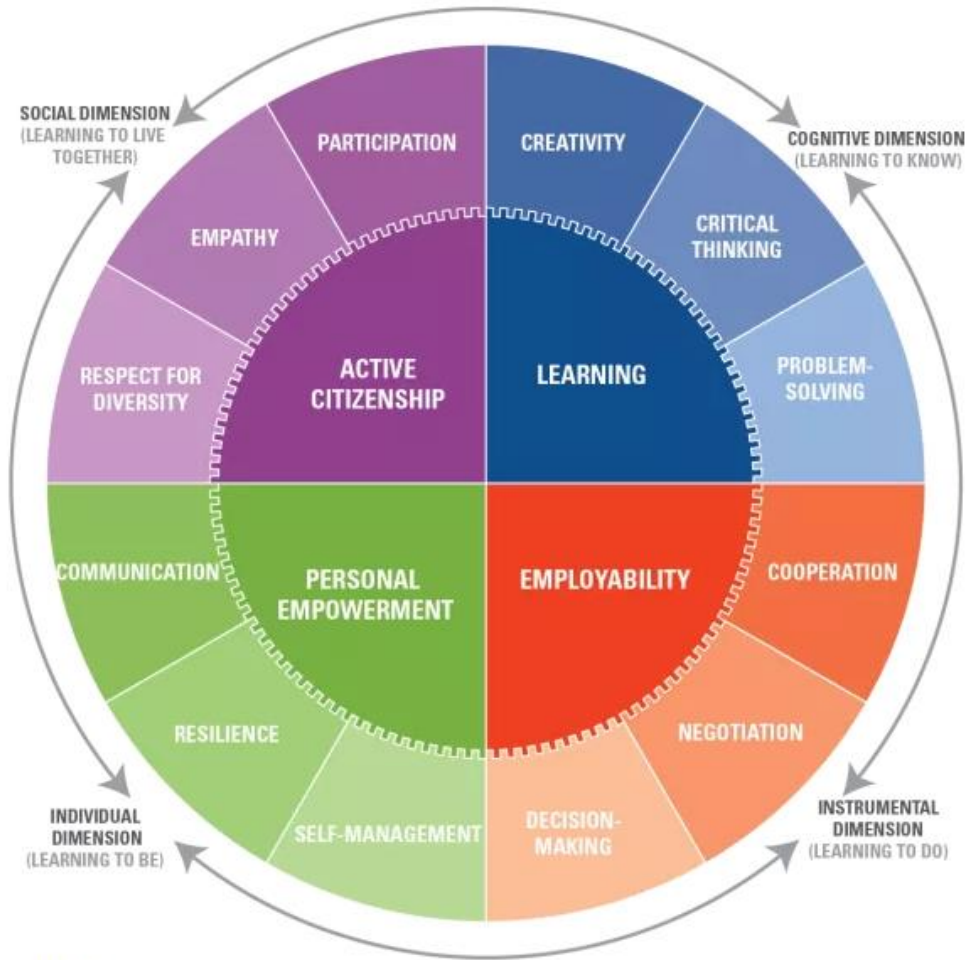


Transferable Skills | The 'Magic Glue'



UNICEF, *Global Framework on Transferable Skills*, 2019

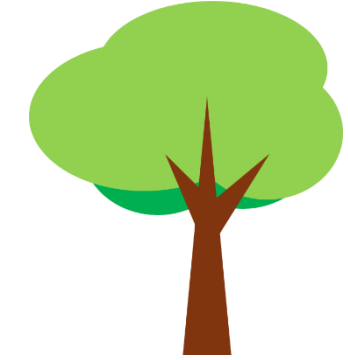
Unlocking the Value of Transferable Skills



© UNICEF



Education



Knowledgeable Society

Employment & Entrepreneurship



Economic Development

Personal Empowerment

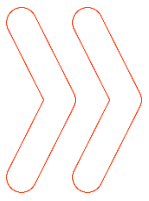


Wellbeing, Inclusion, Life Choices

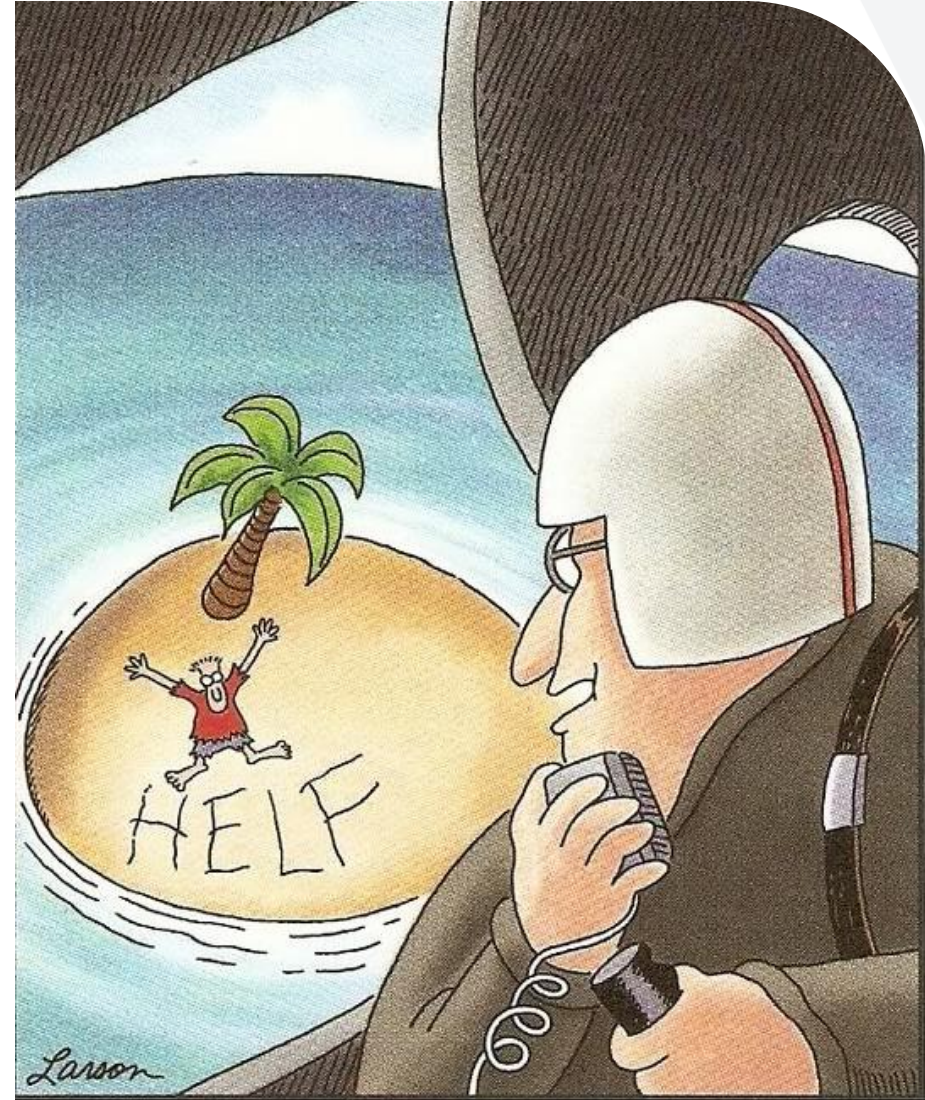
Active Citizenship



Social Cohesion, Peace, Stability



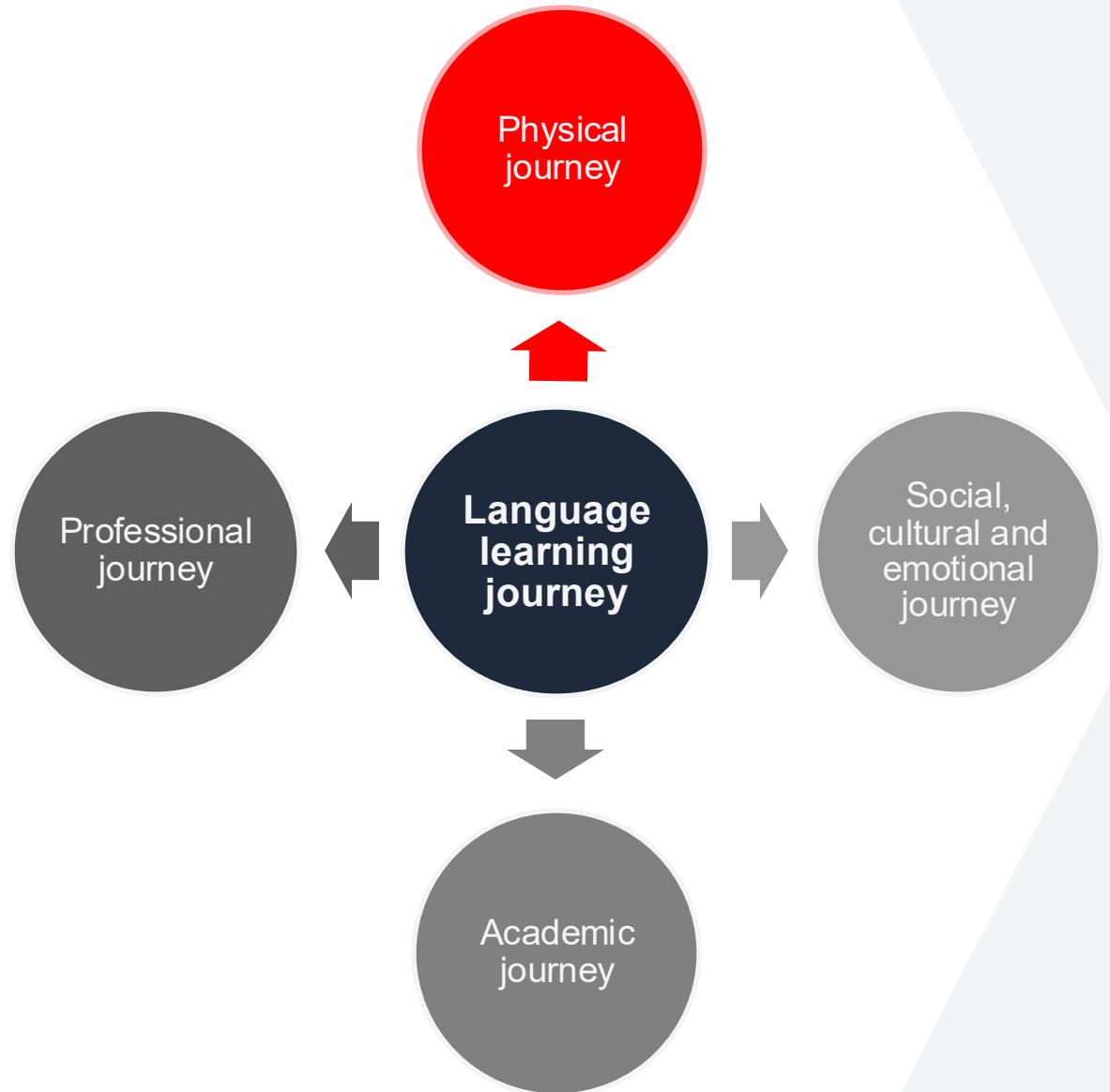
Literacy is important... but so are other literacies, e.g. critical thinking, problem solving and empathy



“Wait! Wait! Cancel that. ... I guess it says ‘helf.’”

>> The Learner Journey

“**Knowledge of languages
is the doorway to wisdom.**”
Roger Bacon, Philosopher and Scientist



» Transferable Skills at a Key Intersection



- › Cognitive flexibility and problem solving
- › Personal growth and resilience
- › Emotional intelligence and communication
- › Cultural awareness and identity
- › Curiosity and openness to new experiences

»» 'Domain Nomads' Navigating Shifting Sands

- › Flexible, mobile and versatile to move between different fields, sectors, disciplines and industries
- › Agile, adaptive and lifelong learners equipped to navigate personal, academic and professional lives



» Enhancing *Extra-Linguistic* Skills Through Assessment



 **LANGUAGECER^T**
Academic

- › 4-skill, multilevel English language proficiency test for HE admission
- › Suitable for student visas
- › All 4 skills focus on academic English
- › Designed to assess and engender real-world English language skills international students need to survive, thrive and flourish at university



Accredited Academic Partner Programme



> The Dual Credential Advantage



Academic Degree

- ✓ Theoretical foundation
- ✓ Critical thinking
- ✓ Research skills
- ✓ Discipline knowledge



Industry Certification

- ✓ Practical competence
- ✓ Industry frameworks
- ✓ Employer validation
- ✓ Job-ready skills



Complete Professional

Theory + Practice = Market-Ready Graduate

Result: Graduates stand out in competitive markets and land jobs faster

X Certification Portfolio

Our portfolio includes more than 200 certifications designed to build real-world skills in fast-growing industries.



Global best practice for digital services and product management.

Core Skills

- Service delivery
- Digital transformation
- Cyber resilience
- Continuous improvement



Global best practice for project and programme management.

Core Skills

- Project delivery
- Agile & Scrum
- Risk & change management

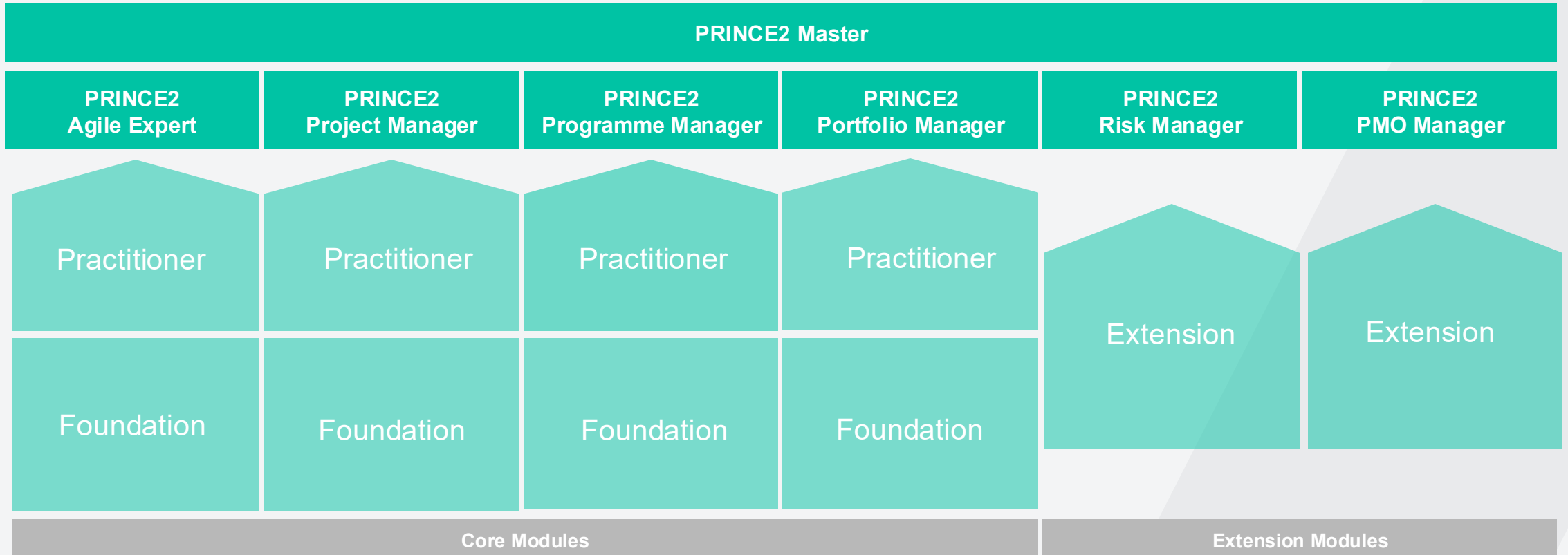


Global best practice for modern IT delivery and team performance.

Core Skills

- DevOps & Lean IT
- Data science
- Software development
- Business analysis

Stackable Certifications



> We partner with organisations to provide skills, assessment and certification

Our certificates are trusted by over 50,000 organisations, including:



» Bridging Education and Employability

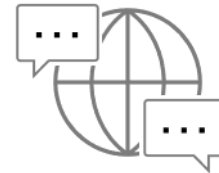
 PeopleCert

Improve student career success with industry certification



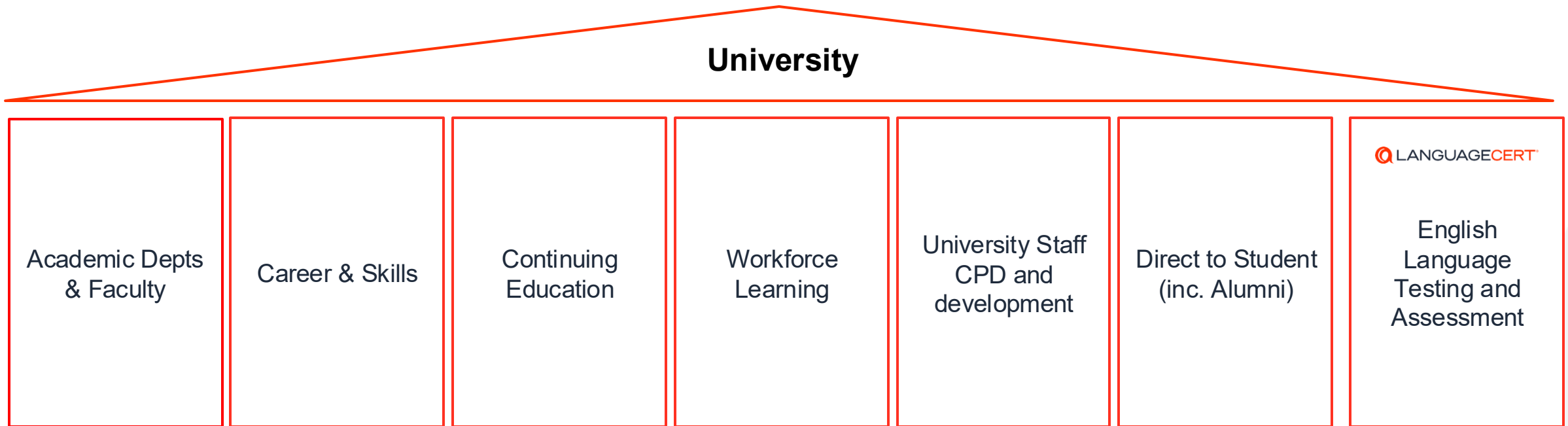
 LANGUAGECERT®

Recognise English language proficiency



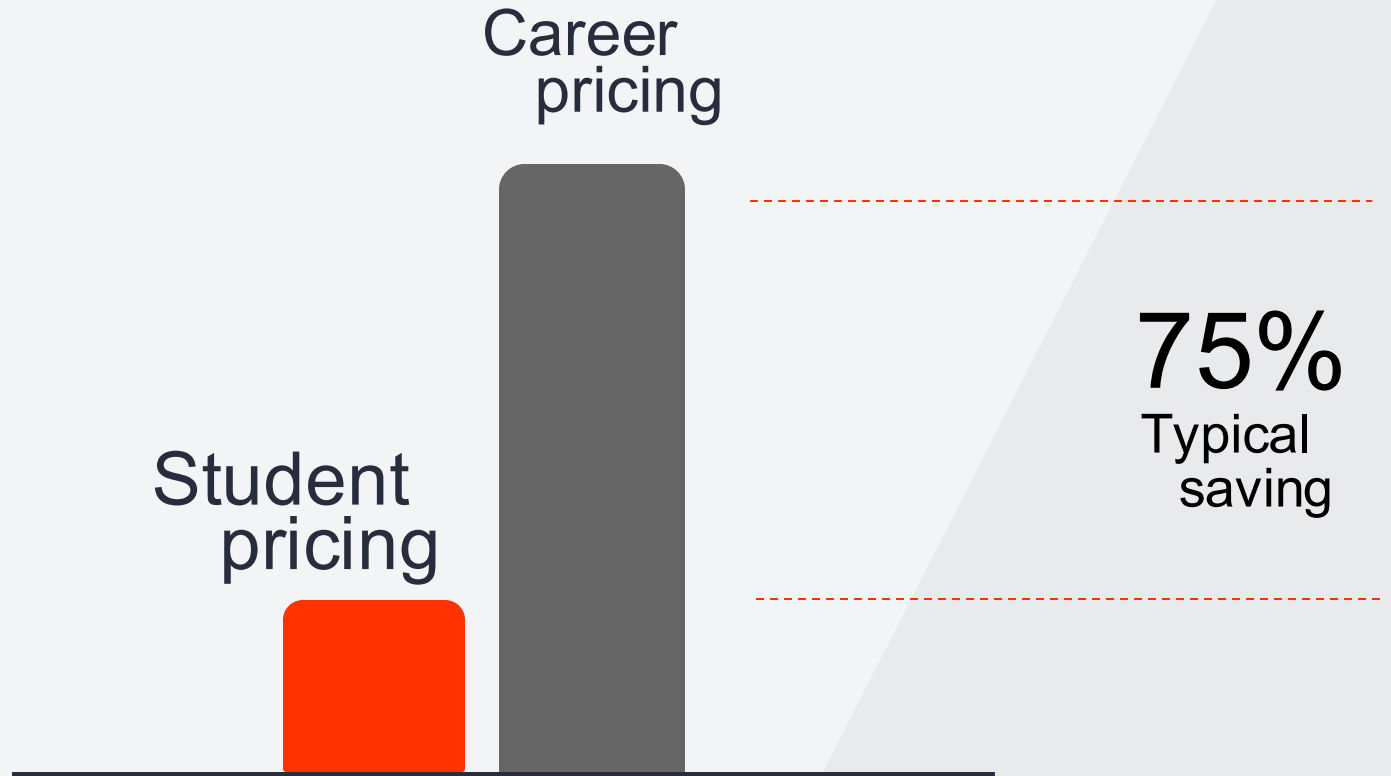
» Supporting the University System

Professional and English language certifications strengthen the entire university system, enhancing student outcomes and global employability.



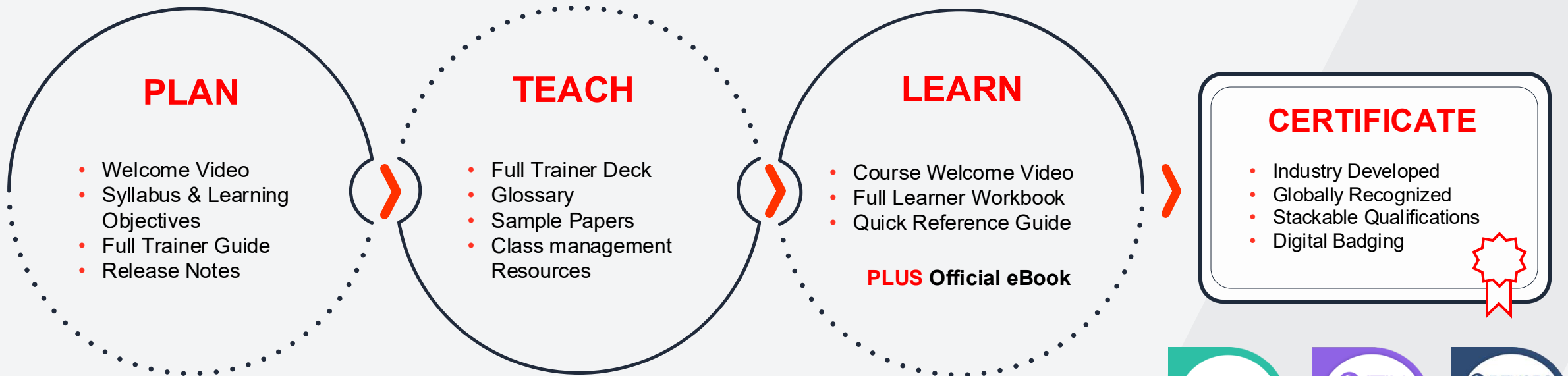
Special Pricing for University Students

Exclusively available to
Academic Partners



X Official Training Materials

Course delivery solutions covering the full syllabus and all training requirements.

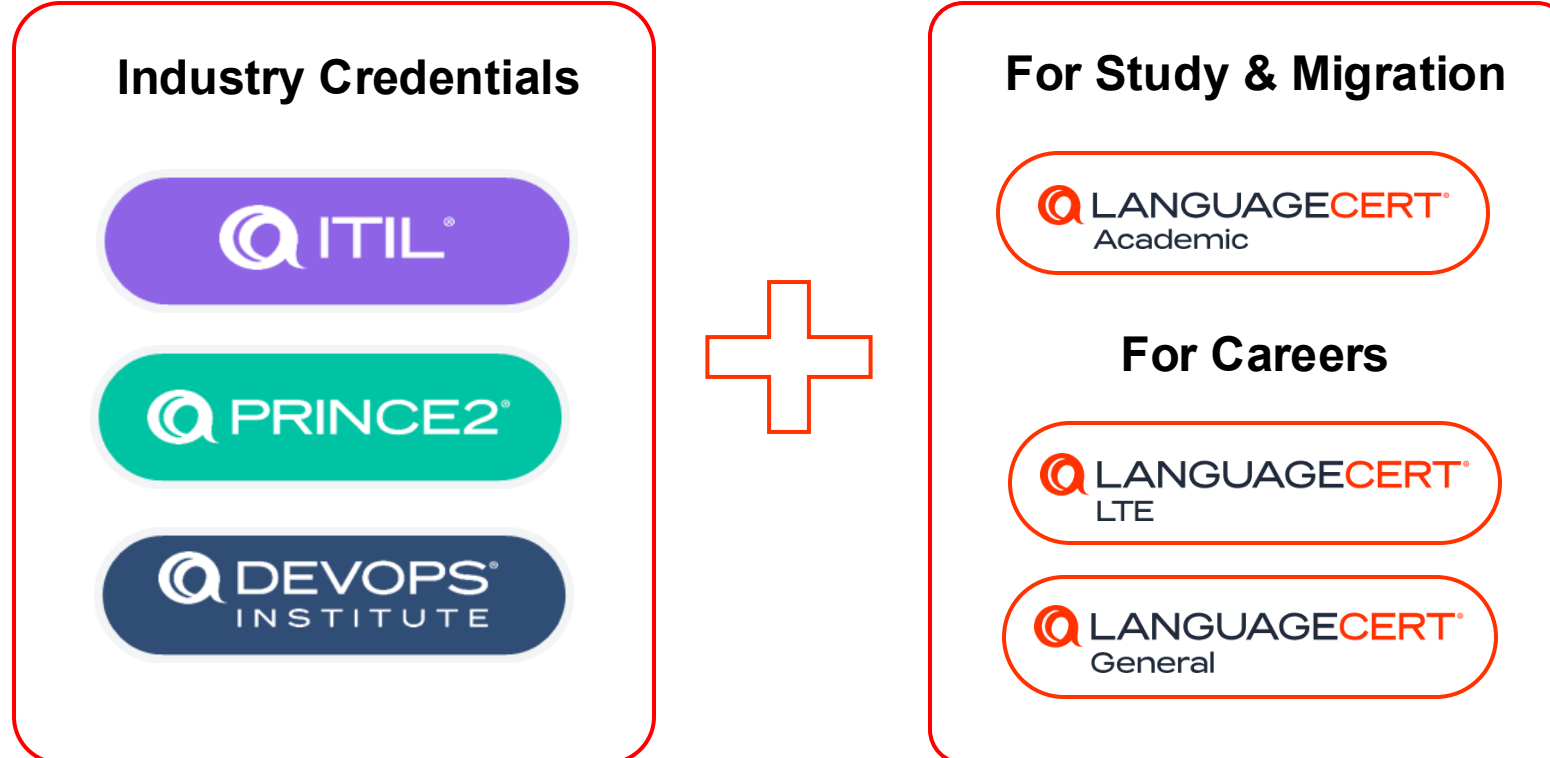


Downloadable or accessible via Canvas LMS for instructors and students



» Industry Skills + Languages for Career Success

Flexible, cost-effective bundles. Mix and match certifications to fit your students' needs.



» Embedding Skills & Language Courses

Entry Readiness & Arrival

Smooth transition into university or career paths

Elective & Career Services

Give students a competitive edge

Workforce Learning

Graduate ready to work with recognised credentials

Integrate into Existing Courses

Build real world skills & languages that employers value

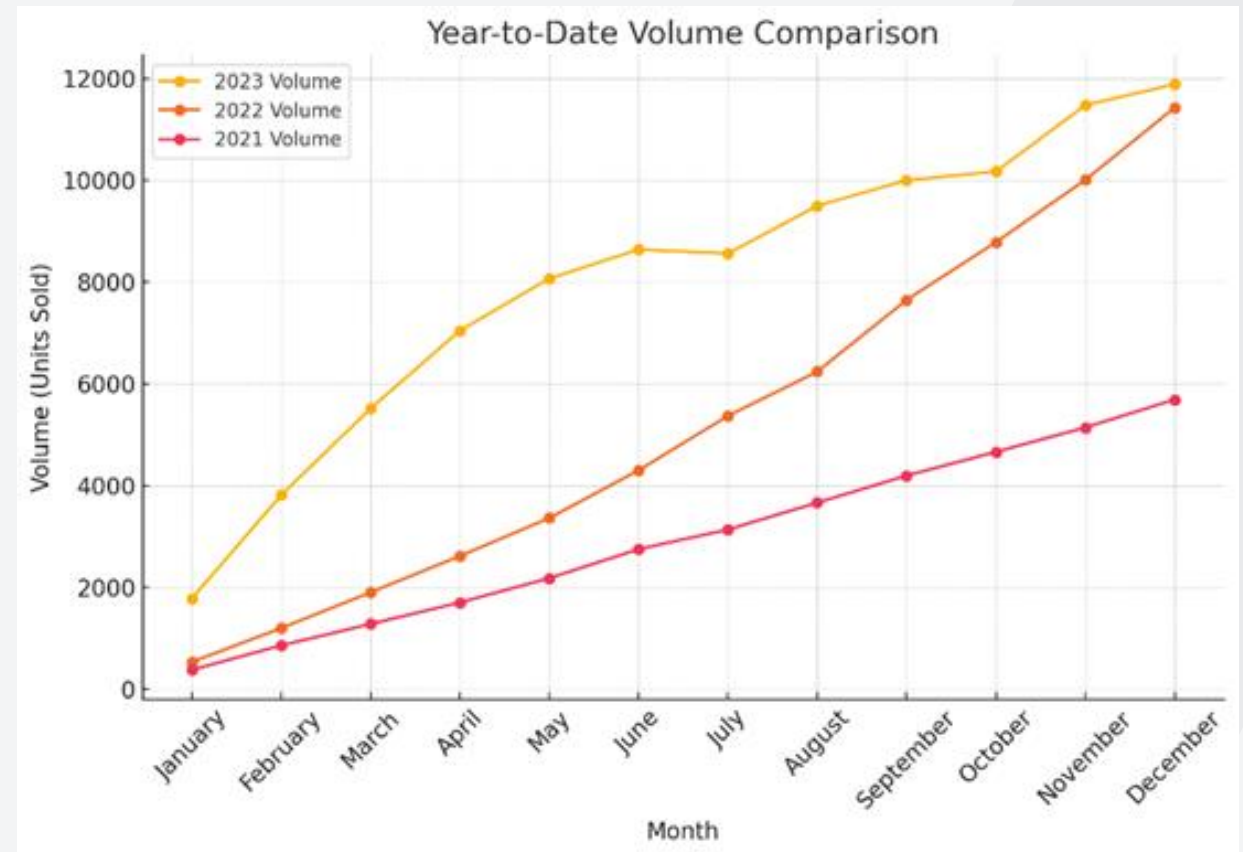
Project-Based Learning

Apply skills in capstone projects or real-world simulations.

Western Governors University | Proven Scale Through Embedded Model

Key Success Factors

- Over 12,000 certificates per year
- Embedded model removes cost and access barriers
- Multi-million dollar annual revenue stream
- Enhanced graduate employability drives enrolment



» Discussion and Questions

1. What are the main challenges your institution faces in preparing students with the skills employers value most?
2. In what ways could language learning and professional certifications help strengthen employability, attract international students, and modernise your curriculum?



The logo consists of a stylized white 'Q' inside a circle, followed by the word 'LANGUAGECER' in a bold, sans-serif font.

LANGUAGECER[®]

by PeopleCert

Skills Employers Want

Give students the capabilities employers want - mapped to real careers in high-demand sectors.

Strategic Thinking

Shape digital strategies that drive real-world impact

Technology Fluency

Understand IT systems, cybersecurity, data, AI, and digital systems.

Project Execution and Agility

Competence in project and programme management

Communication & Influence

Explain complex ideas and lead diverse teams

Service and Systems Thinking

Design and improve services at scale - relevant far beyond IT.

Speak a Common Language

Use shared global terms and frameworks to work together.