

# Soft Skills Mismatch between Chinese Higher Education Graduates' Soft Skills and In-Demand Employability Market Soft Skills

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# Changes in higher education in China

**National reforms and internationalisation strategies due to Western influence;**  
**digitalisation of Chinese teaching;**  
**focus on soft skills;**  
**employability skills frameworks.**

# SOFT SKILLS DEFINITION

The concept of soft skills has garnered significant attention in China's contemporary educational and professional landscape.

These skills often contrasted with hard skills, are crucial for success in the workplace and society.

Chinese scholars argue that cultivating soft skills could be a clue to sustaining development and is crucial for enhancing the employment competitiveness of graduates.

# Soft skills from the Chinese perspective

**Soft skills from the Chinese perspective encompass various interpersonal and social qualities and competencies, transferable across economic sectors and industries**

Personality traits, goals, motivations, and preferences which are valued in the labour market, in schools, and many other domains;

Wicked competencies, as they can take on different forms in different contexts and continue to develop throughout one's life;

A dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive skills and interpersonal, intellectual, and practical skills; Communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical and innovative thinking, creativity, self-confidence, ethical understanding, lifelong learning capacity, coping with uncertainty, and the willingness to accept responsibility skills and abilities;

Team-working, innovative thinking, and oral communication skills.

## SOFT SKILLS FRAMEWORKS

Chinese researchers propose many various **frameworks** for soft skills definition and structure.

Chinese scholars further argue that three soft skill levels exist:  
**application, cultivation, and innate.**

# Strategies to avoid soft skills mismatch in the Chinese higher education context

Development of a work-based learning-oriented approach  
Curriculum flexibility  
Rethinking teaching and learning  
Developing reliable soft skills assessment techniques

## Conclusion

Our findings underscore the urgent need for higher education institutions in China to prioritise developing and integrating soft skills into their curricula.

Collaboration between HEE, industry, and government is crucial for effectively addressing the soft skills mismatch.

By forging partnerships and engaging in dialogue, stakeholders can work together to bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that graduates possess the skills and competencies needed to thrive in the 21st-century workforce.



Thank you!