



# REAL ESTATE TALENT INSIGHTS 2025 SURVEY RESULTS & ANALYSIS

A Joint Initiative by:



Survey Partner:



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## FOREWORD

The Real Estate Talent Insights Survey 2025 is a joint initiative by Urban Land Institute Singapore, National University of Singapore and Kerry Consulting. This inaugural survey was developed to capture the perspectives of employers and hiring managers on the opportunities and challenges shaping Singapore's real estate talent landscape.

Over 100 employers, spanning real estate developers, real estate service providers, fund managers, academia and public sector, participated in this survey, offering their views on topics ranging from graduate recruitment to talent retention. This whitepaper reflects the views of individuals who completed surveys and/or participated in the focus group discussions. It explores the priorities, pressures and possibilities influencing how organisations attract and retain talent, while highlighting areas that will be critical to future competitiveness. Throughout this whitepaper, the views of the respondents have been presented as direct quotations from the participant without attribution to any particular participant.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who shared their insights through the survey and the focus group discussions. Your contribution play an instrumental role in creating a clearer picture on the workforce priorities at a pivotal moment for the industry. The pages ahead outline six key themes drawn from the survey, supported by detailed data in the appendices (Q1–Q20). We hope these findings will inform discussion, spark reflection and provide useful context for organisations and professionals alike.



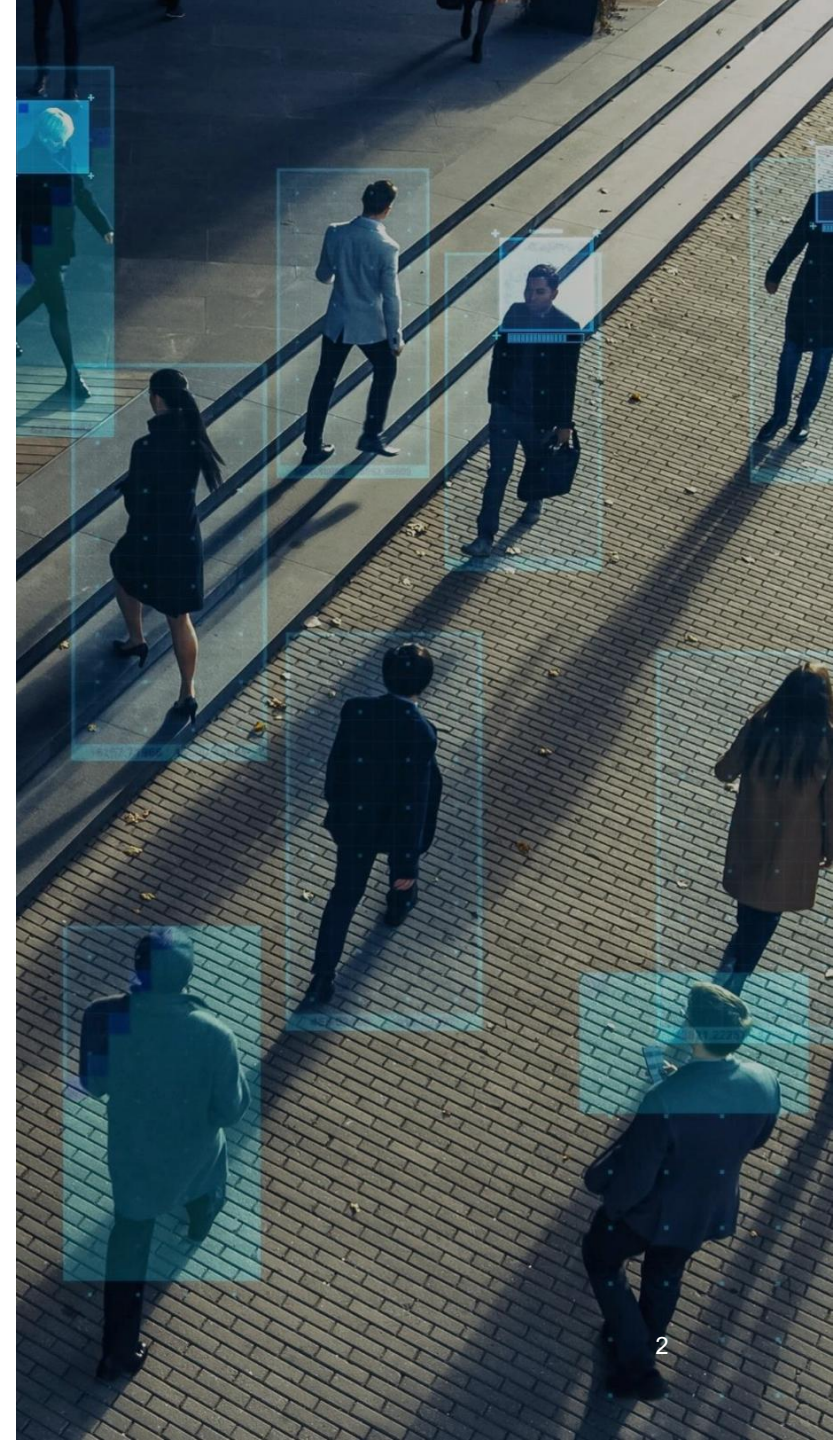
**Cynthia Ang**

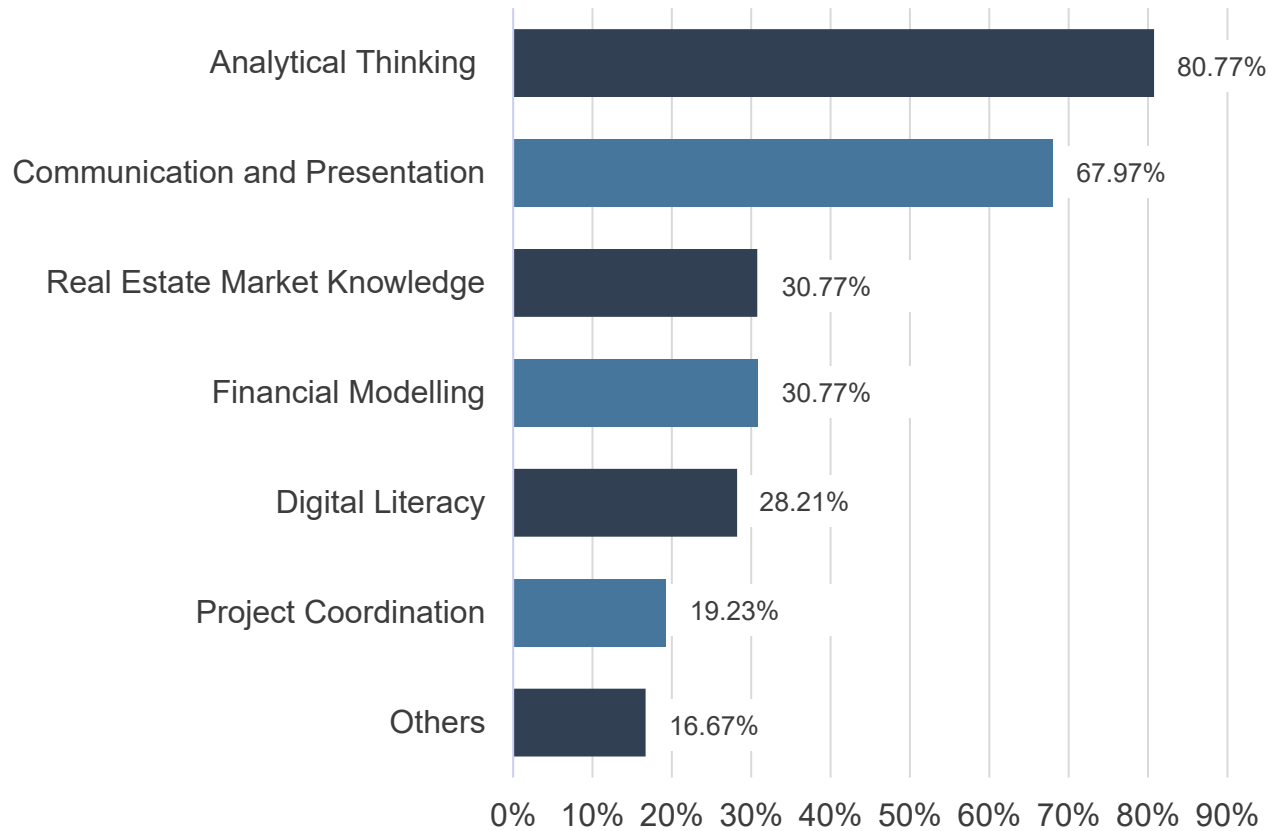
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**Exhibit 1:** Skills real estate employers are currently prioritising when hiring fresh graduates.  
*Source: Real Estate Talent Insights 2025*

## Trend 1: Fresh Graduates: Soft Skills Take the Lead

In 2025, employers demonstrate a clear preference for soft skills when recruiting fresh graduates. Analytical thinking (cited by 80.77% of respondents) and communication and presentation abilities (67.95%) are consistently ranked above any specific technical competencies. This is aligned with the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025<sup>1</sup>, where analytical thinking is the top core skill, with 7 out of 10 companies considering it essential.

In contrast, domain-specific knowledge - such as familiarity with the real estate market (30.77%) or hard skills like financial modelling (30.77%) and project coordination (19.23%) was less of a priority. This suggests that while technical knowledge is expected, it is considered a baseline requirement rather than a distinguishing factor.

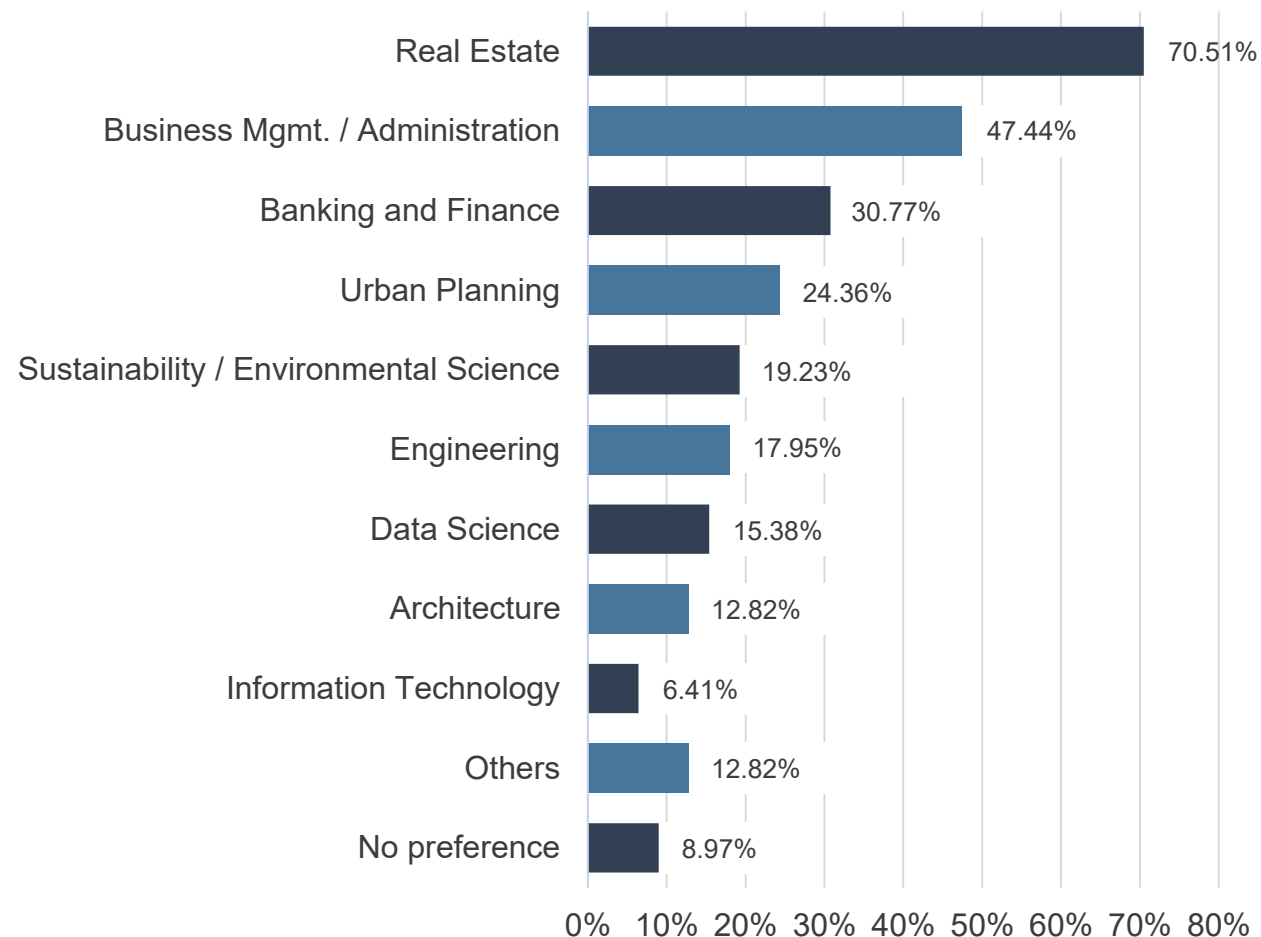
Employers are primarily seeking candidates who exhibit adaptability, critical thinking and strong communication skills. Many believe that technical skills can be effectively developed on the job. One respondent articulated this sentiment by describing the ideal graduate as “open-minded, critical thinking, curious [and] resilient”, adding, “we can teach the rest”. Such perspectives highlight the increasing emphasis placed on mindset and learning agility as key attributes in fresh graduates.

## Trend 2: Beyond the traditional Real Estate qualifications

Real estate employers are increasingly broadening their perspective on educational qualifications when hiring fresh graduates. Amongst the 70.51% of respondents who indicated that they value the specialisation in Real Estate, 14.00% expressed a distinct preference for candidates with real estate qualifications. This suggests that while a real estate qualification remains advantageous, it might not be a pre-requisite for selection. This is also reflected through Trend 1 where only 30.77% indicated real estate market knowledge as their key selection criteria for fresh graduates.

Exhibit 2 further illustrates that employers are receptive to adjacent disciplines. Nearly half (47.44%) would consider graduates in Business Management or Administration, 30.77% in Banking and Finance, and 24.36% in Urban Planning. This shift reflects a growing recognition that transferable skills and genuine interest in the sector outweigh the real estate credentials.

This is also connected to the evolving nature of real estate roles, which increasingly intersect with finance, technology and sustainability, amongst others. Expanding the talent pool would enable employers to address ongoing talent shortage and practise a more inclusive approach towards hiring.



**Exhibit 2:** Key academic qualifications employers consider when hiring fresh graduates.  
*Source: Real Estate Talent Insights 2025*

Ranking results: Greatest gaps in technical skills

1 = Greatest Gap	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Score
Functional Expertise	3.75%	10.00%	11.25%	5.00%	13.75%	21.25%	35%	2.81
Technological Adoption	20.00%	23.75%	11.25%	20.00%	5.00%	6.25%	13.75%	4.60
Regulatory and Compliance Knowledge	2.50%	5.00%	16.25%	11.25%	23.75%	20.00%	21.25%	3.06
Multi-disciplinary Capabilities	32.50%	23.75%	11.25%	12.50%	8.75%	6.25%	5.00%	5.20
Project Management	3.75%	7.50%	12.50%	11.25%	27.50%	18.75%	18.75%	3.17
Transformation and Change Management	23.75%	18.75%	18.75%	21.25%	5.00%	10.00%	2.50%	4.95
Data Analytics	13.75%	11.25%	18.75%	18.75%	16.25%	17.50%	3.75%	4.20

**Exhibit 3:** Heatmap illustrating skill gap distributions across seven key competency areas. Each row represents a skill category, and each column (1 to 7) reflects the degree of gap, with 1 being the greatest gap and 7 the smallest. The percentages in each cell indicate the proportion of respondents who perceive that level of gap for each skill. The "Score" column aggregates these responses into a weighted score, helping to rank the severity of gaps across categories.

Source: Real Estate Talent Insights 2025

Trend 3:  
The Multi-Disciplinary Gap in Experienced Hires

For experienced professionals, employers report a pronounced **gap in multi-disciplinary capabilities**. When asked to rank the greatest technical skill gaps in experienced hires, respondents selected multi-disciplinary capabilities (aggregate score of 5.20), closely followed by transformation and change management (4.95) and technological adoption (4.60).

This implies a strong demand for seasoned professionals who can “integrate knowledge across domains”, “wear multiple hats” and “demonstrate competencies beyond core functional expertise”. As one respondent puts it, “I can’t have an investment analyst who simply lives on the spreadsheet”.

Developing multi-disciplinary capabilities also necessitates the **active involvement of employers and hiring managers**. Respondents advocated measures spanning “cross-functional rotation”, “training and upskilling” and “mentoring” to broaden their skills. Employers can also consider developing hybrid roles – an increasingly popular one being “data analyst sitting within the Investment team” – to provide the exposure. This is also aligned with 68.42% of respondents highlighting AI and automation in real estate as an in-demand skill.

Beyond multi-disciplinary capabilities, employers and professionals alike should consider elevating their appetite for transformation, changes and technological adoption, in their quest to bride the skills gap.

## Trend 4:

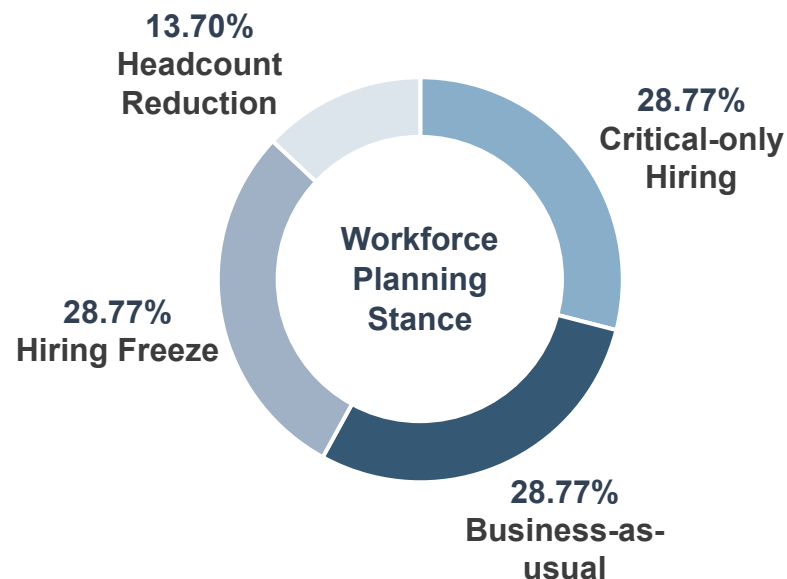
### Cautious Optimism: Hiring Sentiment with Economics and Policy at Play

The overall hiring sentiment is one of **cautious optimism**. Exhibit 4 reveals a tripartite split in hiring strategies:

- 28.77% of organisations are proceeding with planned hires, indicating confidence in their growth trajectory or operational stability.
- Another 28.77% are limiting recruitment to business-critical roles, suggesting a strategic focus on essential functions whilst conserving resources.
- A further 28.77% have paused or frozen hiring, reflecting potential uncertainty and/or a wait-and-see approach amid economic headwinds.
- Only 13.70% anticipate headcount reductions, which is relatively low and reinforces the notion of cautious stability rather than significant contraction.

This hiring sentiment points to a recalibration of workforce planning where organisations are aligning hiring closely with capital strategy, keeping an eye on policy changes and broadly, “waiting out the volatility”. Singapore’s government advisories echo this prudence, noting signs of moderating growth and urging financial caution<sup>2</sup>. In sum, economic and political challenges – interest rates, regulatory shifts and trade dynamics – will continue to influence the hiring sentiment in Singapore.

#### What is Causing Hiring Pressure?



**Exhibit 4:** How the current economic and geopolitical landscape has influenced workforce planning for 2025-26  
*Source: Real Estate Talent Insights 2025*

# Trend 5: Triggers of Attrition in Singapore’s Real Estate Sector

Talent retention has emerged as a critical challenge for Singapore’s real estate organisations. The most frequently cited reason for attrition is the lack of clear career progression - 48.75% of employers reported that limited advancement opportunities are driving staff to leave their organisations. The second major factor is competitive poaching, with 43.75% of respondents indicating they’ve lost talent to peer organisations offering more attractive roles. This reflects an increasingly competitive landscape for experienced professionals. Compensation ranks third, with 33.75% citing uncompetitive salary or benefits as a key driver of attrition. While pay remains important, it is notably secondary to career development. Other factors, such as lack of recognition, purpose or burnout, were mentioned by fewer respondents, reinforcing the central theme: growth and opportunity are the key considerations in talent retention.

To address these challenges, organisations must adopt a multi-pronged retention strategy focused on career development, engagement and competitive rewards. Examples include:

- **Structured Career Pathways:** Define clear advancement routes within the organisation, supported by transparent promotion criteria and regular career conversations.
- **Internal Mobility, Job Rotations & Mentoring:** Enable employees to explore different functions or asset classes through cross-training and rotational programs (e.g. respondents indicated “internal rotation for cross training” and “upskilling through rotations”).
- **Upskilling & Mentorship:** Invest in continuous learning through formal training, certifications and mentorship programmes.
- **Recognition & Purpose:** Foster a culture of appreciation and align roles with meaningful impact, especially important for younger talent seeking purpose-driven work.
- **Competitive Compensation Reviews:** Conduct regular benchmarking to ensure salary and benefits remain attractive.
- **Retention-focused Onboarding:** Start early by integrating career development discussions into onboarding, setting expectations and building long-term engagement from day one.

By focusing on growth, development and meaningful engagement, employers can not only retain talent but also build a more resilient and future-ready workforce.

## What are the greatest challenges you face in retaining experienced hires?

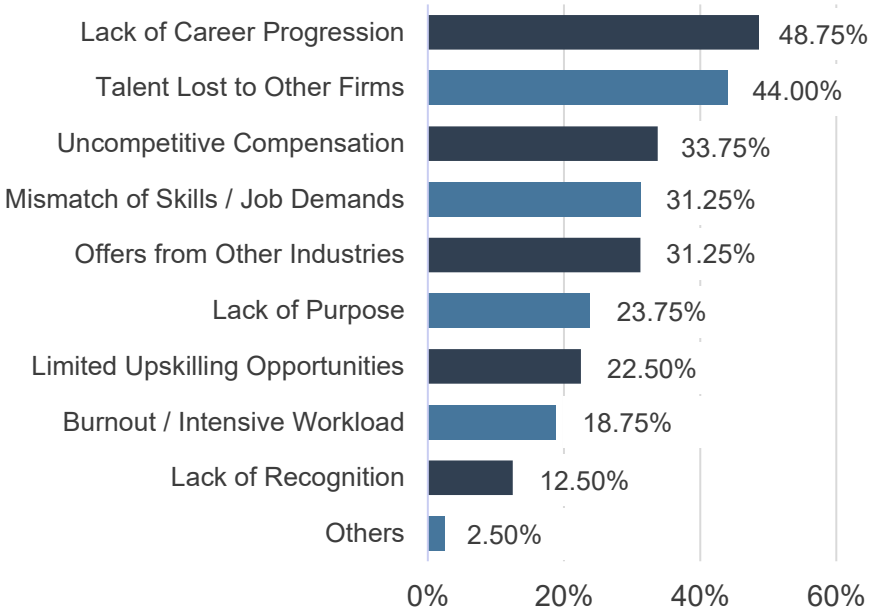


Exhibit 5: Challenges cited by employers in retaining experienced hires.  
Source: Real Estate Talent Insights 2025

## How are organisations tackling retention issues?

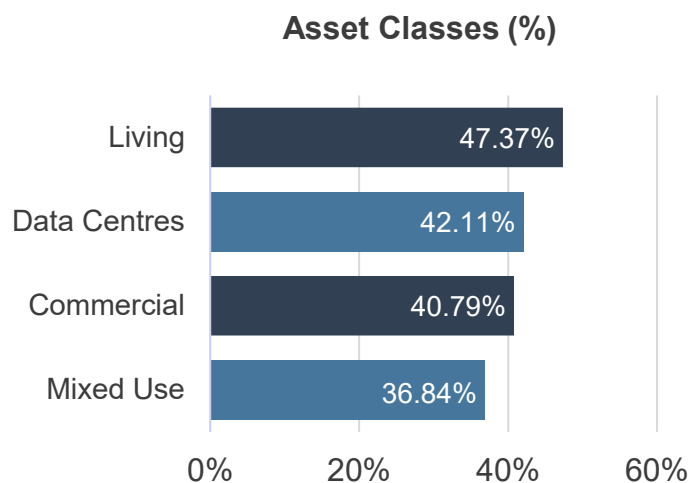


## Trend 6: Looking Ahead: Hiring Focus

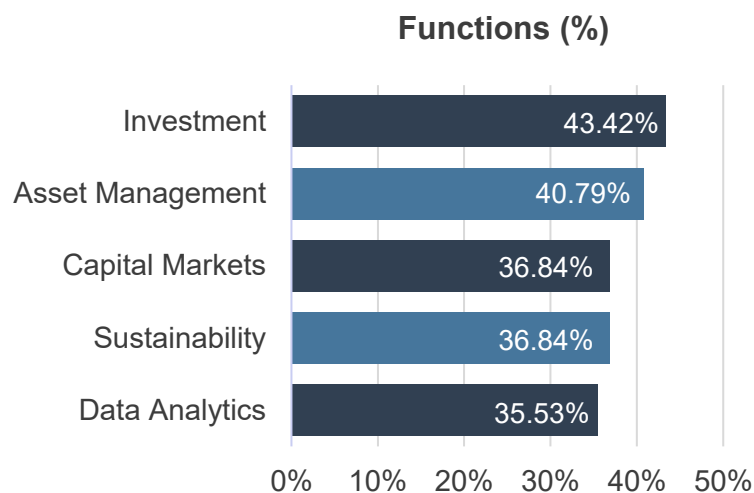
Despite current challenges, real estate employers are proactively identifying strategic hiring priorities to drive future business growth. Specifically, the respondents shared the asset classes and roles where they expect to prioritise their hires for 2025 – 2027.

On asset classes, the Living sector (which includes residential, multifamily, and student housing) leads the way, with 47.37% of respondents indicating their interest to hire in this asset class. Data centres follow closely, with 42.11% of respondents focusing on this asset class. This is aligned with the observations in *Emerging Trends in Real Estate® Asia Pacific 2025*<sup>3</sup>, where the prospects for these new economy assets are noted to be more favourable.

**Future Hiring Focus: Asset Classes and Functions (2025 – 2027)**



**Exhibit 6:** Asset classes real estate employers will prioritise hiring for in 2025-27.  
*Source: Real Estate Talent Insights 2025*



**Exhibit 7:** Functional areas real estate employers will prioritise hiring for in 2025-27.  
*Source: Real Estate Talent Insights 2025*

When it comes to functional roles, employers are signalling a clear demand for talent in Investment (43.42%) and Asset Management (40.79%) - core functions that drive asset acquisition and optimisation.

Close behind, Capital Markets and Sustainability roles were each cited by 36.84% of respondents, reflecting a dual focus: one on returns and capital efficiency, and the other on future-proofing through sustainability and innovation. The emphasis on sustainability aligns with Singapore's national push for greener real estate and the broader global ESG agenda.

Additionally, 35.53% of employers highlighted Data Analytics as a key hiring area, underscoring the growing importance of tech-enabled decision-making.

These functional priorities suggest that organisations are positioning themselves for strategic growth and value creation as market conditions evolve.

## ABOUT | SURVEY PARTNERS



The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns. Each year, thousands of events, both virtual and in person, are held in cities around the world. Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

Find out more at [uli.org](https://uli.org)



The National University of Singapore aspires to be a vital community of academics, researchers, staff, students and alumni working together in a spirit of innovation and enterprise for a better world. The institution's singular focus on talent will be the cornerstone of a truly great university that is dedicated to quality education, influential research and visionary enterprise, in service of country and society.

The National University of Singapore takes an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach to research, working with partners from industry, government and academia, to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in NUS' Schools and Faculties, 30 university-level research institutes and centres, and Research Centres of Excellence cover a wide range of themes. The University's latest research focus is to use data sciences, optimisation research and cyber security to support Singapore's Smart Nation initiative.

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# Credits & Acknowledgements

This joint initiative has been successfully delivered through the collaborative contributions of the following organisations:



Urban Land Institute Singapore

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National University of Singapore  
Department of Real Estate

**Professor Lee Kwan Ok**

**Professor Yong Tu**



Kerry Consulting

**Cynthia Ang**

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In addition, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all survey participants, focus group participants and advisors who have shared their valuable insights.

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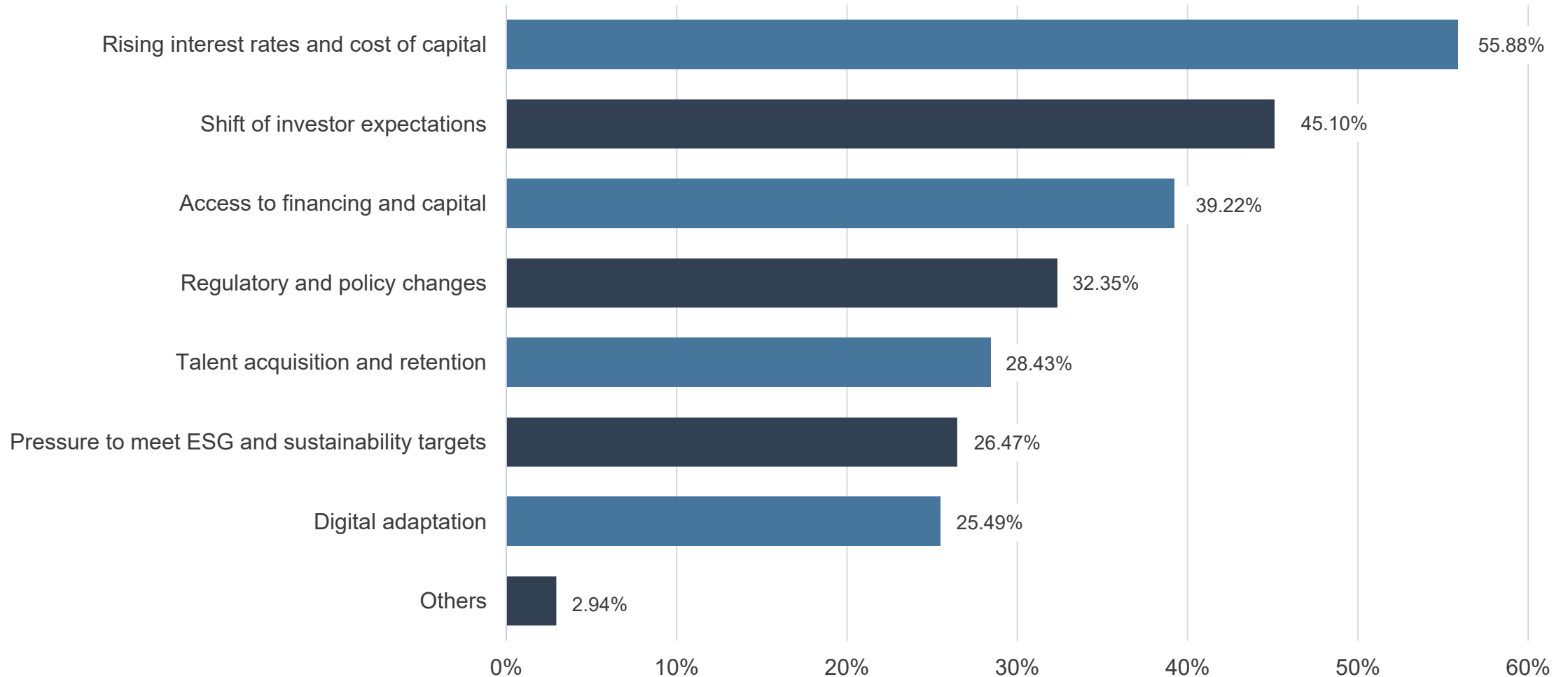
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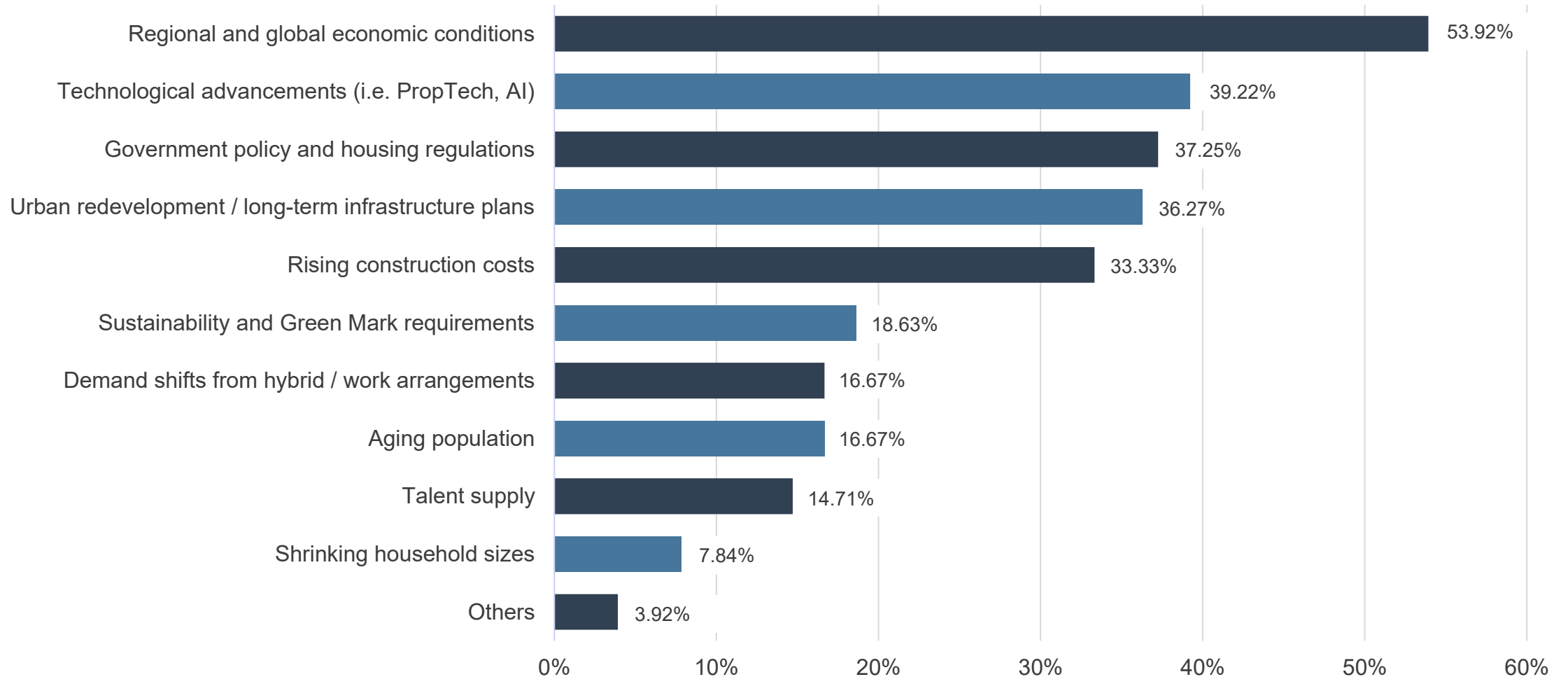
## APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q1 | What are the greatest challenges affecting the real estate sector? You may select up to 3 options.**



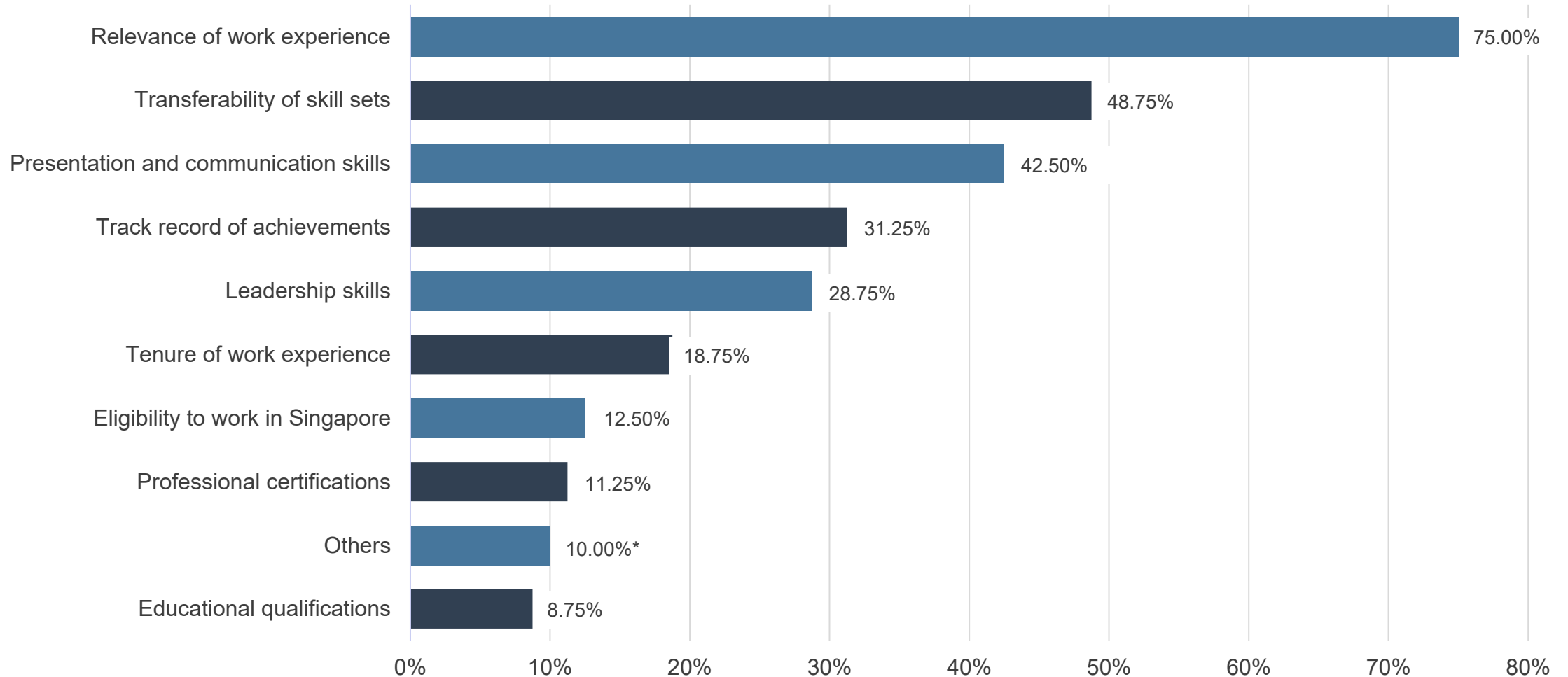
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**Q2 | Which of the following factors play a significant role in shaping the future of the real estate sector?**  
**You may select up to 3 options.**



## APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q3 | Which of the following do you prioritise when you evaluate experienced hires? You may select up to 3 options.**



*\*Others referred to cultural fit, growth mindset, resourcefulness etc. as priorities when evaluating experienced hires.*

APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q4 | For experienced hires, please rank the greatest gaps in technical skills. Please rank all options, where 1 = greatest gap.**

1 = Greatest Gap	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Score
Functional Expertise	3.75%	10.00%	11.25%	5.00%	13.75%	21.25%	35%	2.81
Technological Adoption	20.00%	23.75%	11.25%	20.00%	5.00%	6.25%	13.75%	4.60
Regulatory and Compliance Knowledge	2.50%	5.00%	16.25%	11.25%	23.75%	20.00%	21.25%	3.06
Multi-disciplinary Capabilities	32.50%	23.75%	11.25%	12.50%	8.75%	6.25%	5.00%	5.20
Project Management	3.75%	7.50%	12.50%	11.25%	27.50%	18.75%	18.75%	3.17
Transformation and Change Management	23.75%	18.75%	18.75%	21.25%	5.00%	10.00%	2.50%	4.95
Data Analytics	13.75%	11.25%	18.75%	18.75%	16.25%	17.50%	3.75%	4.20

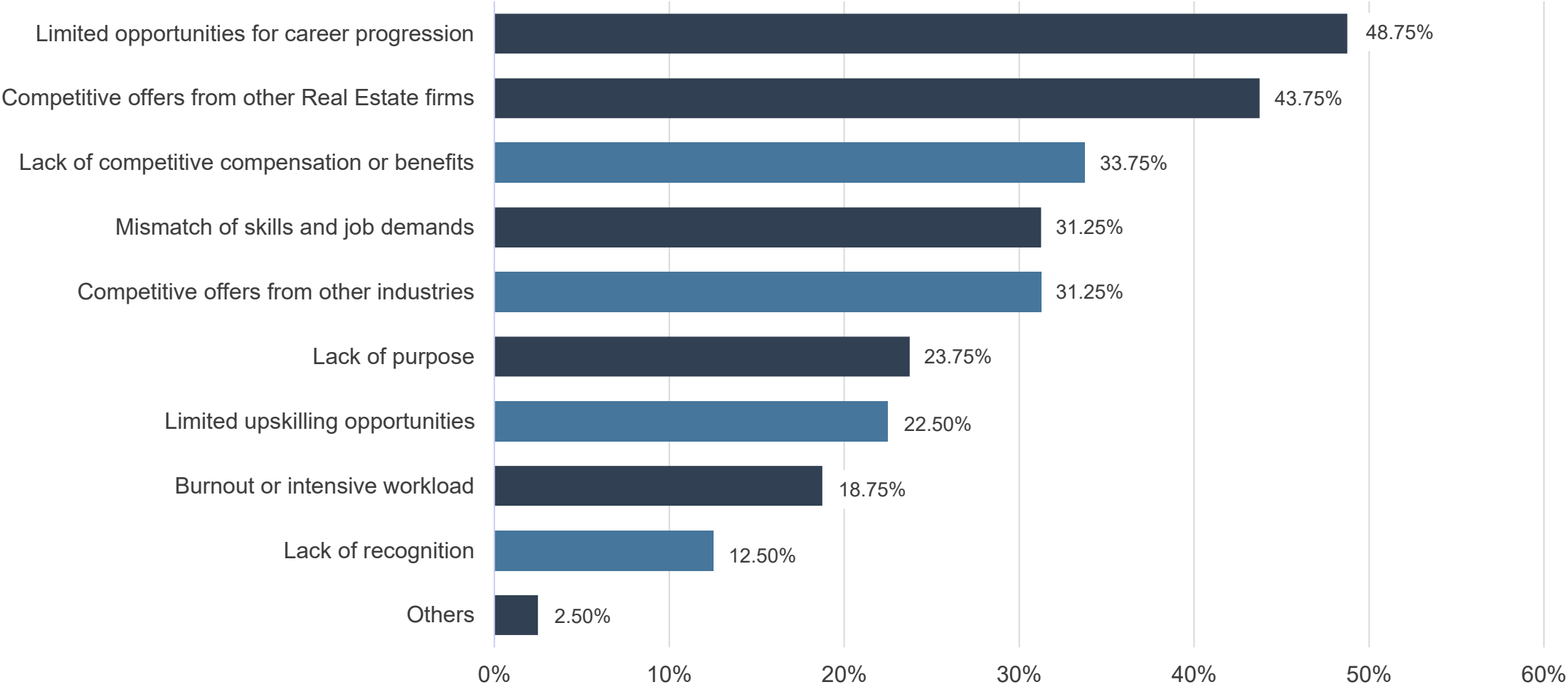
APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q5 | For experienced hires, please rank the greatest gaps in soft skills. Please rank all options, where 1 = greatest gap.**

1 = Greatest Gap	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Score
Creative Thinking	16.25%	26.25%	12.50%	13.75%	6.25%	6.25%	8.75%	7.50%	2.50%	6.26
Problem Solving	11.25%	11.25%	12.50%	8.75%	7.50%	13.75%	5.00%	8.75%	21.25%	4.78
Collaboration	5.00%	6.25%	10.00%	17.50%	10.00%	10.00%	17.50%	7.50%	16.25%	4.44
Self Management	2.50%	3.75%	3.75%	6.25%	16.25%	21.25%	12.50%	18.75%	15.00%	3.73
Communication	15.00%	8.75%	15.00%	6.25%	15.00%	15.00%	6.25%	12.50%	6.25%	5.33
Stakeholder Engagement and Management	11.25%	13.75%	10.00%	7.50%	8.75%	10.00%	17.50%	12.50%	8.75%	4.96
Agility	13.75%	13.75%	13.75%	13.75%	10.00%	3.75%	6.25%	13.75%	11.25%	4.20
Resilience	8.75%	10.00%	11.25%	10.00%	11.25%	11.25%	20.00%	7.50%	10.00%	4.84
Curiosity	16.25%	6.25%	11.25%	16.25%	15.00%	8.75%	6.25%	11.25%	8.75%	5.33

APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q6 | What are the greatest challenges you face in retaining experienced hires? You may select up to 3 options.**



## APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q7 | If you could implement one key initiative to enhance talent retention within the real estate sector, what would it be?**

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

GROWTH **UPSKILLING** EXPOSURE

ROLE ROTATIONS **TRAINING** **PAY** FLEXIBILITY

INCENTIVES **OPPORTUNITIES** PROGRESSION

COURSES ENHANCED BENEFITS

**MENTORSHIP**

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**Q8 | From your perspective, how can your organisation best attract fresh graduates to join the real estate sector?**

COMPETITIVE SALARIES

INTERNSHIP CULTURE ADVANCEMENT

COMPENSATION REPUTATION PROJECT OWNERSHIP

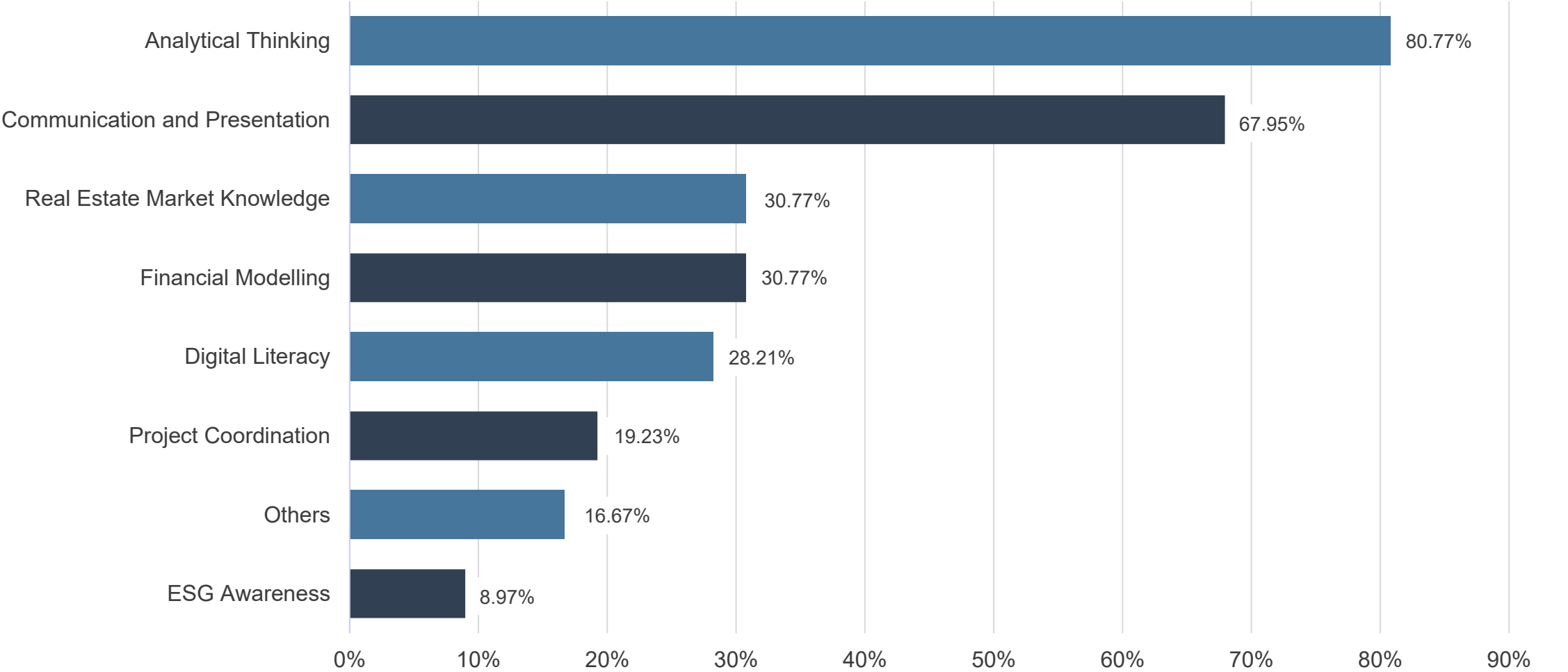
DEVELOPMENT LEARNING PROSPECTS

CAREER TALKS FLEXIBILITY

ENVIRONMENT

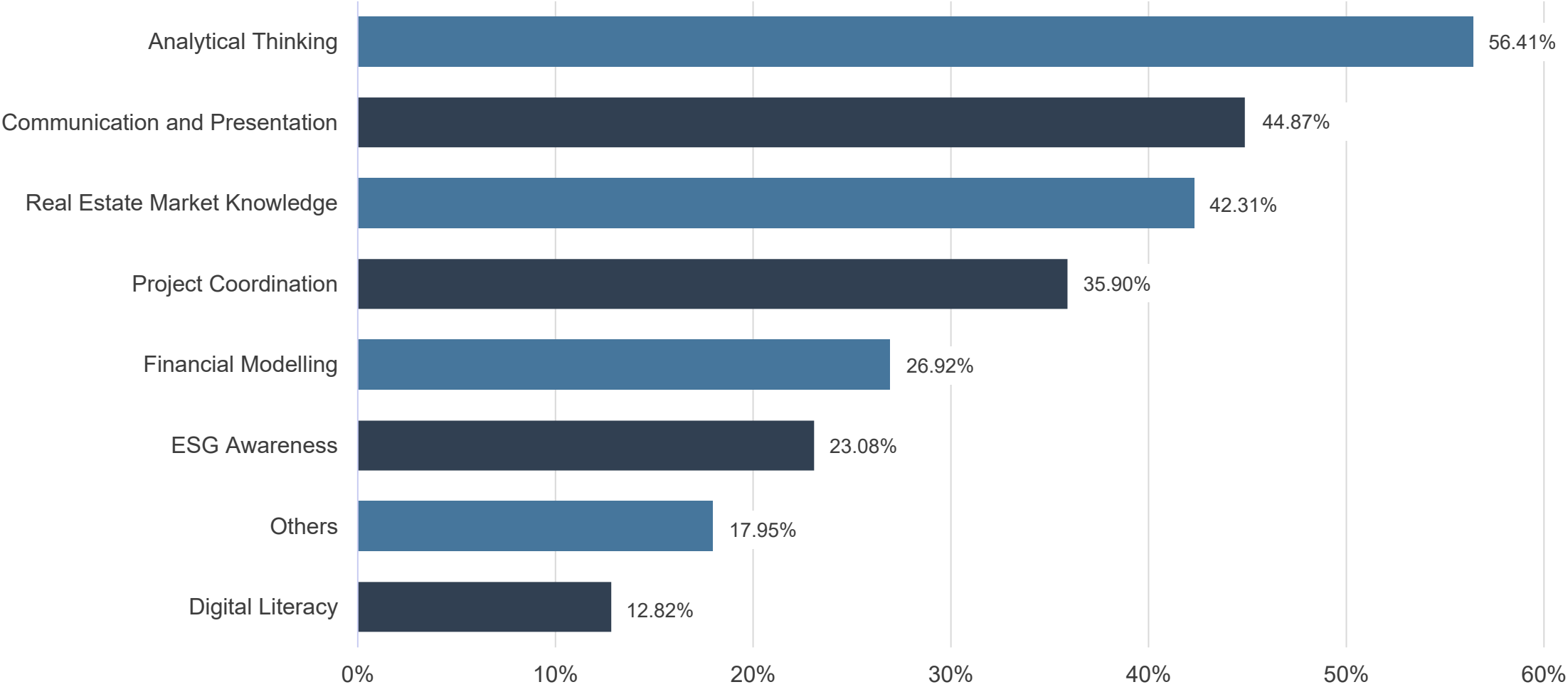
APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q9 | What key skills do you prioritise when hiring fresh graduates in the real estate sector? You may select up to 3 options.**



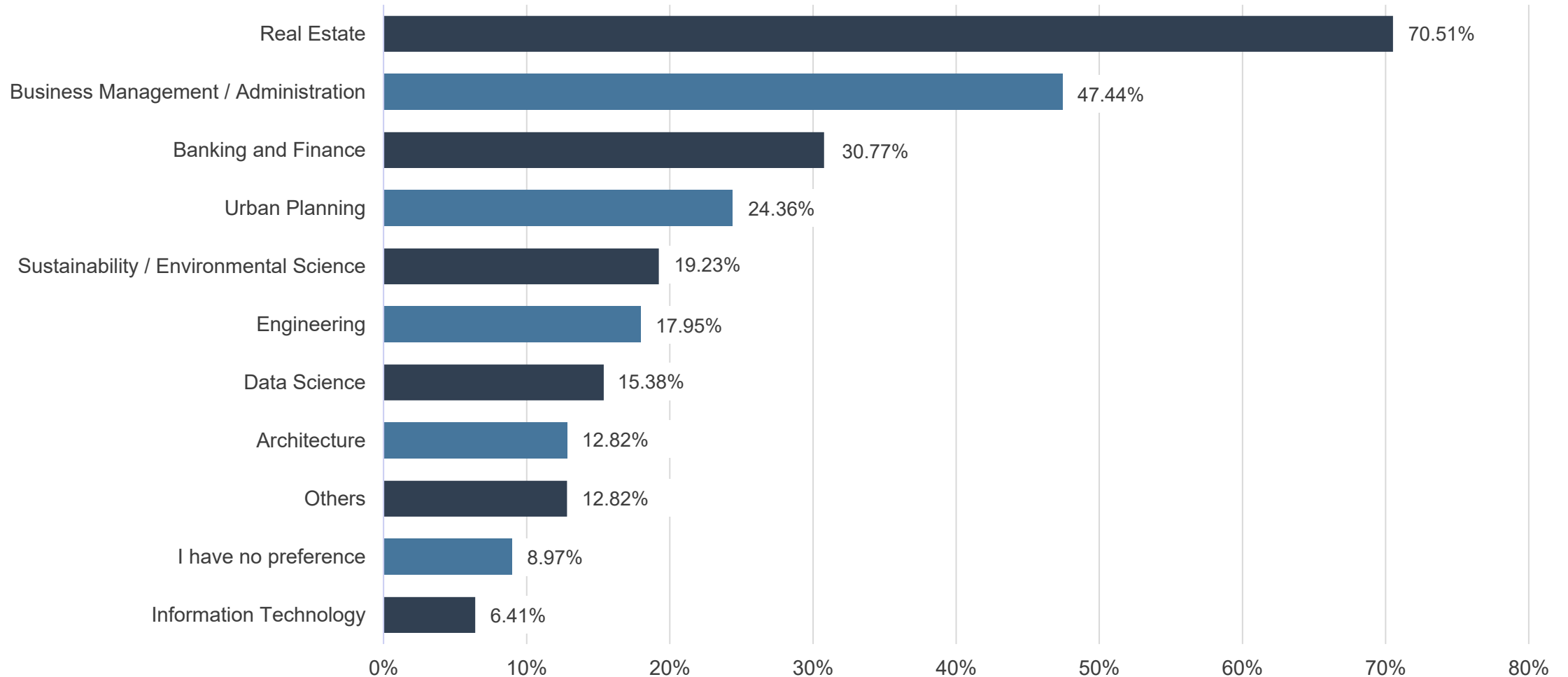
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**Q10 | What are the skill gaps that you typically observe in fresh graduates? You may select up to 3 options.**



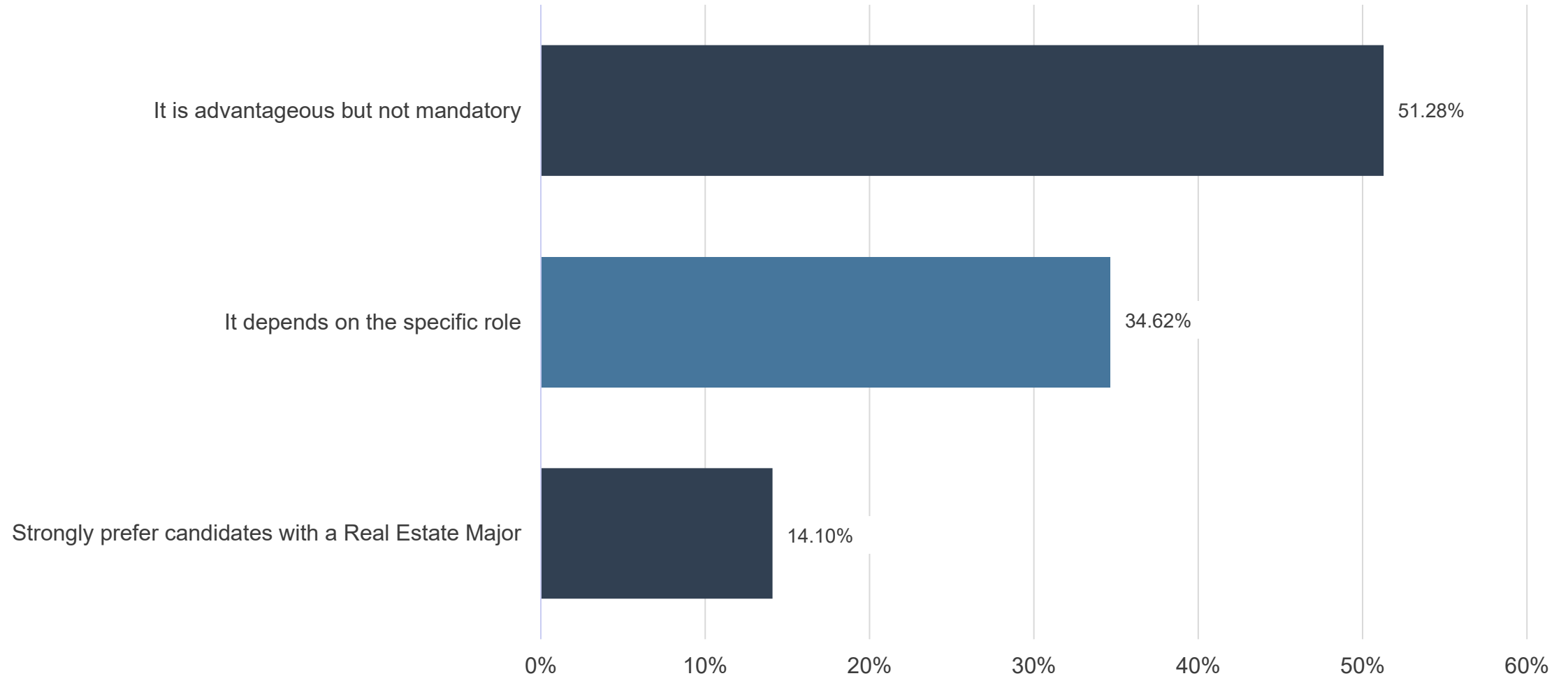
## APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q11 | Which of the following academic qualifications do you consider when hiring fresh graduates?**  
**You may select up to 3 options.**



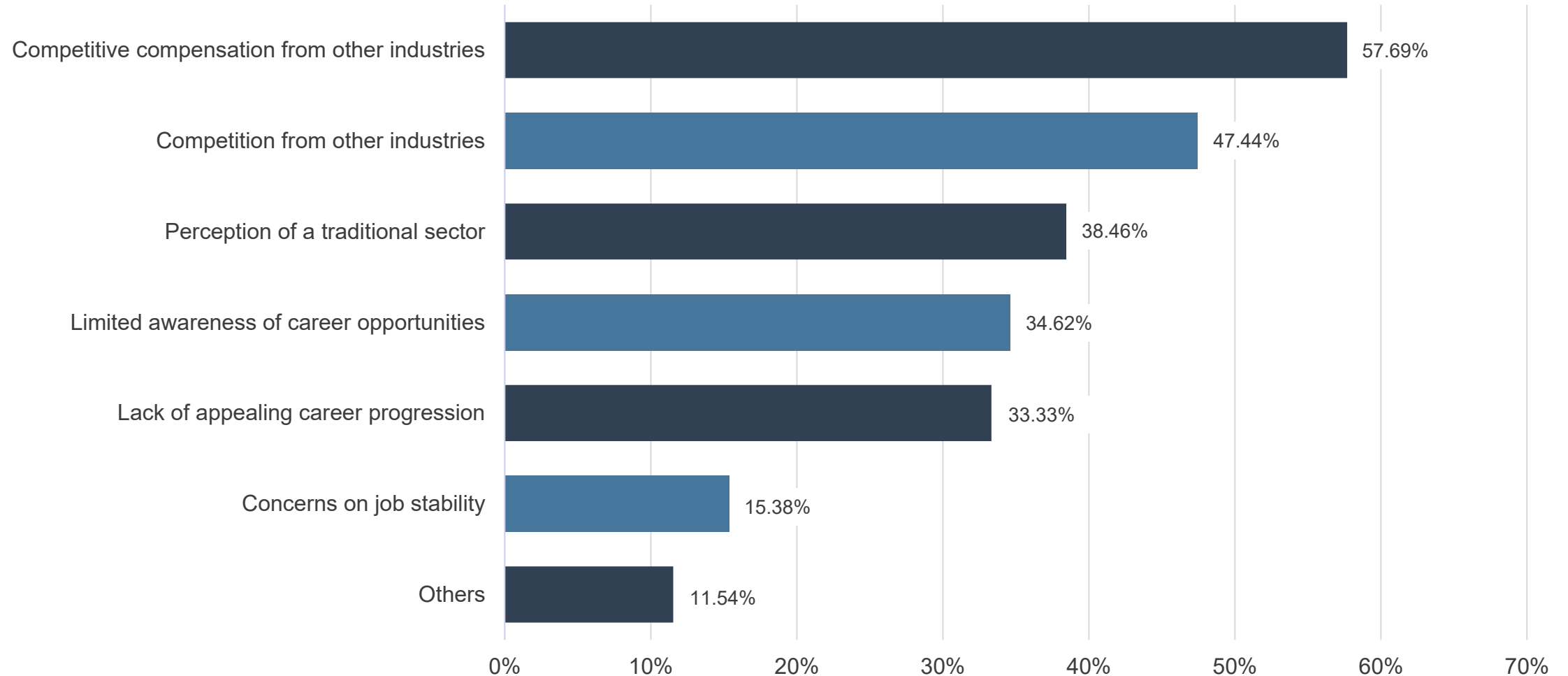
## APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

### Q12 | How important is a Real Estate major in your hiring decision for fresh graduates?



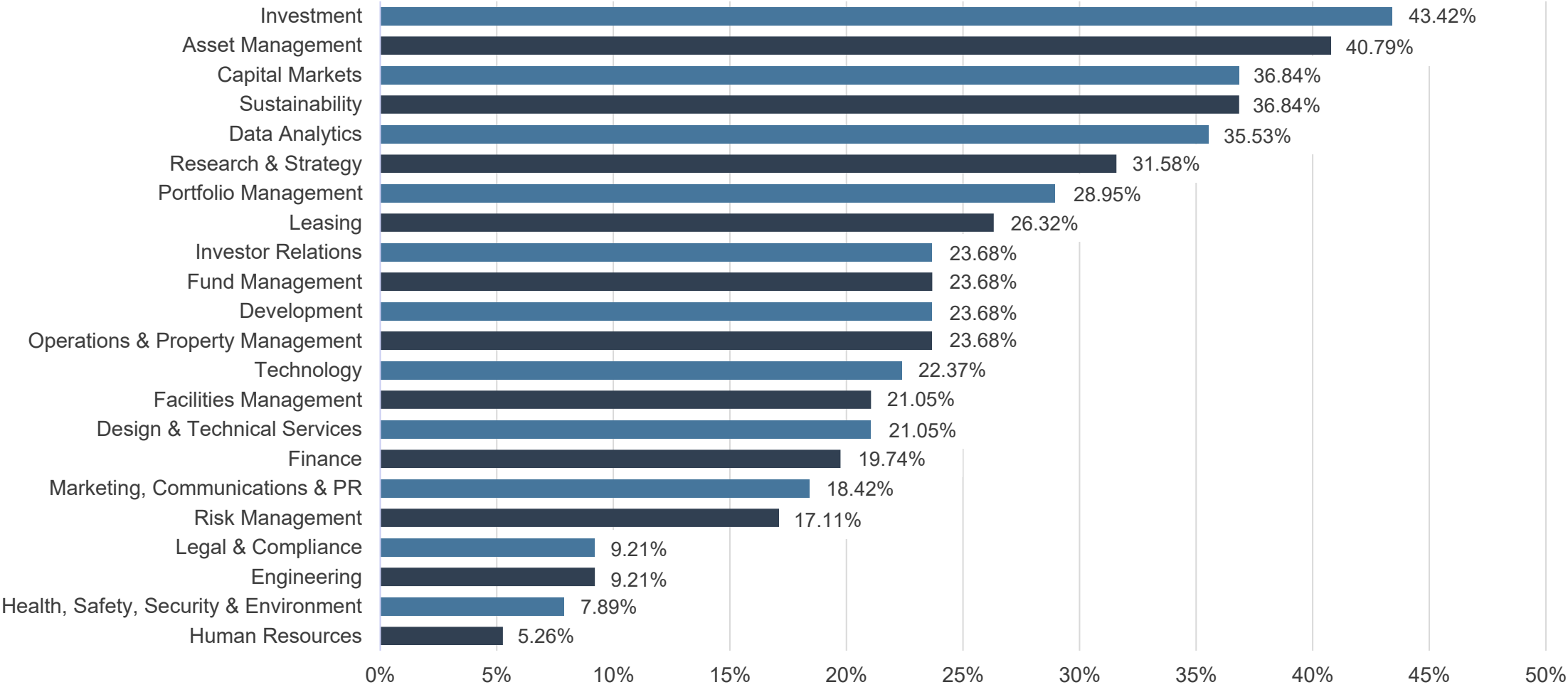
## APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

### Q13 | What are the top challenges faced in attracting fresh graduates into the real estate sector?



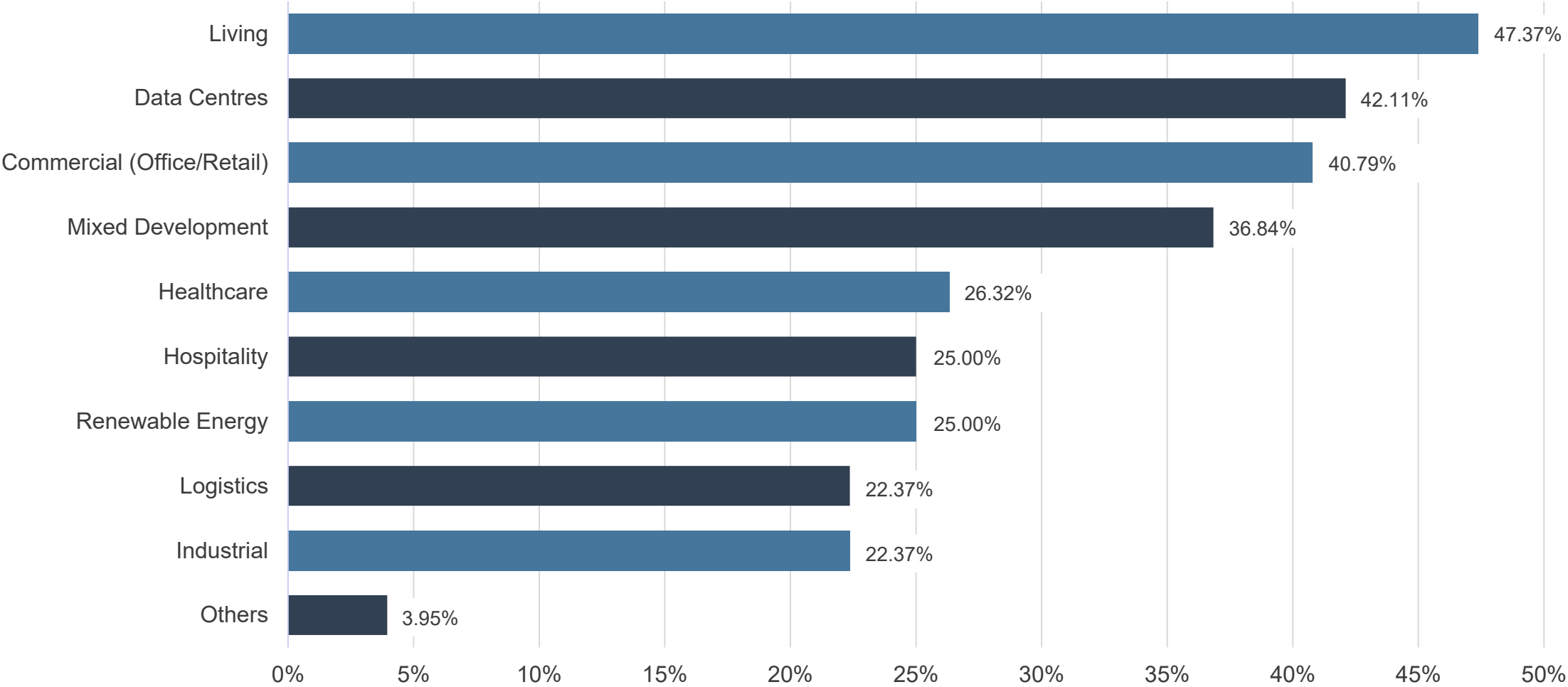
APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

**Q14 | Which of these functions would you prioritise for hiring in 2025/2026/2027? Please choose at least 5 answers.**



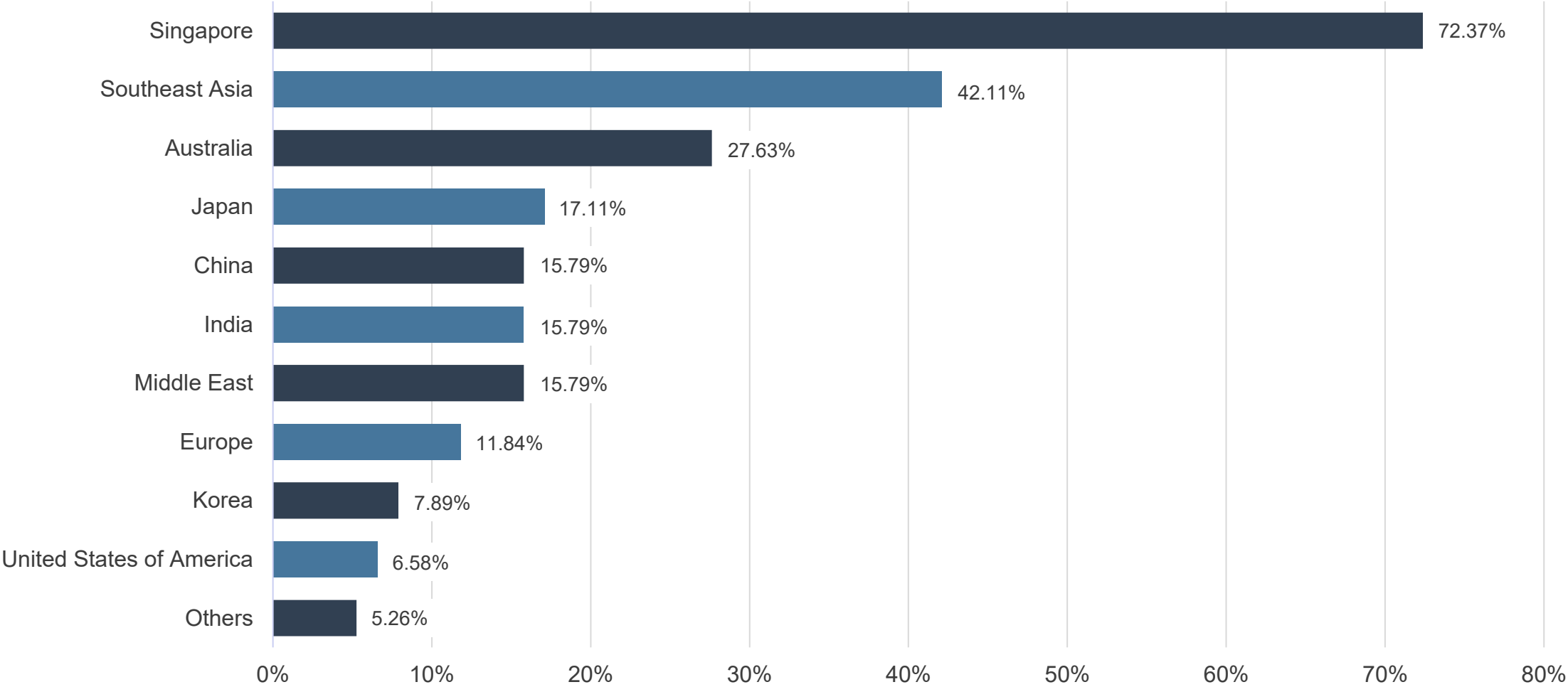
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**Q15 | Which of these asset classes would you prioritise for hiring in 2025/2026/2027? Please choose at least 1 answer.**



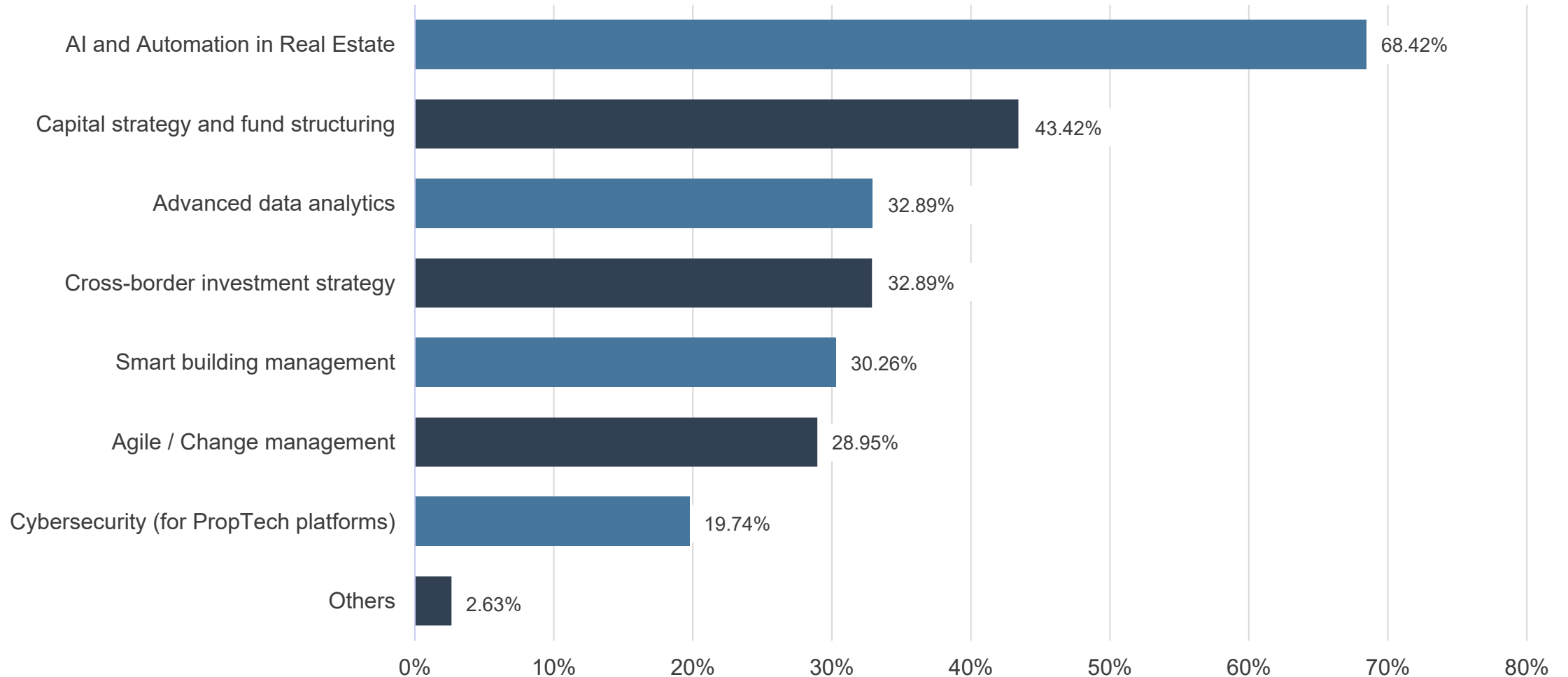
APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

Q16 | Which of these markets would you prioritise for hiring in 2025/2026/2027? Please choose at least 1 answer.



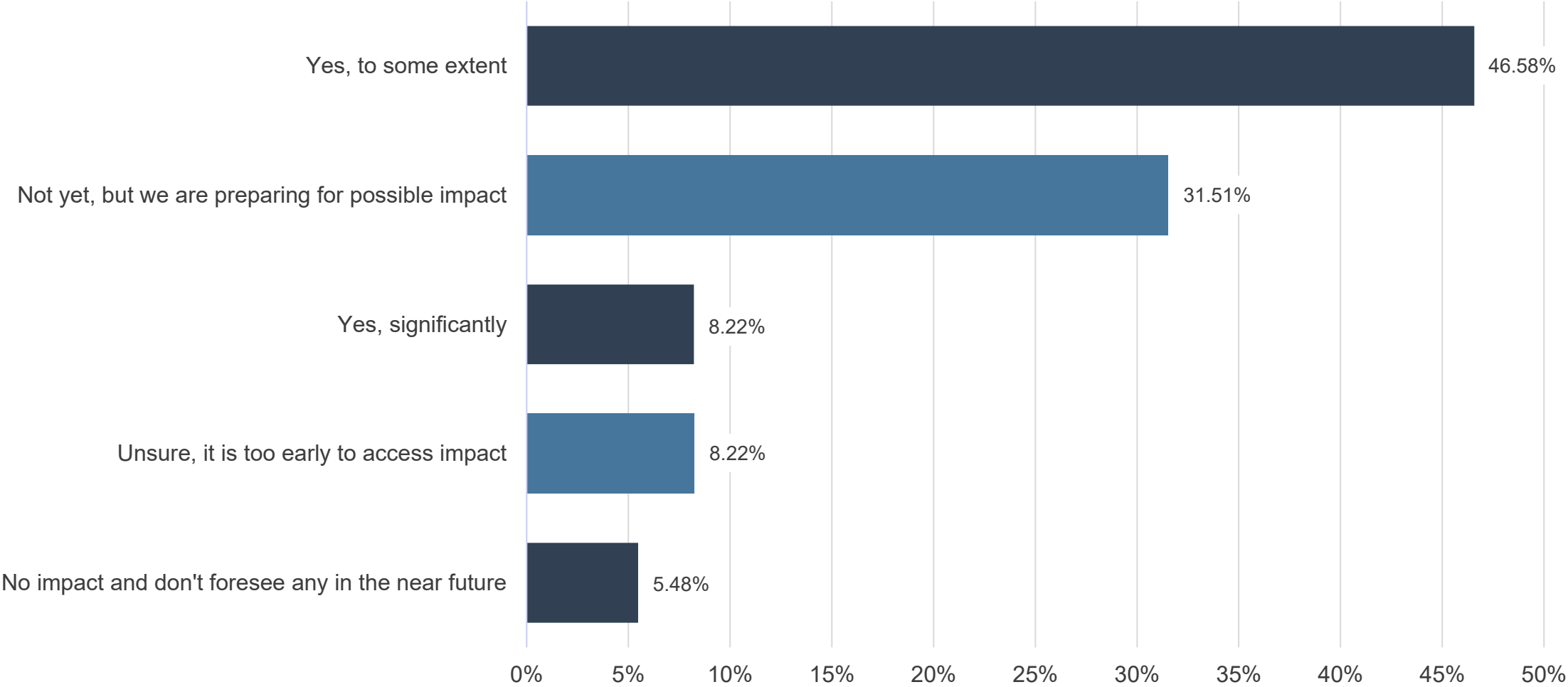
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**Q17 | Which emerging skills do you foresee to be in demand for 2025/2026/2027? You may select up to 3 options.**



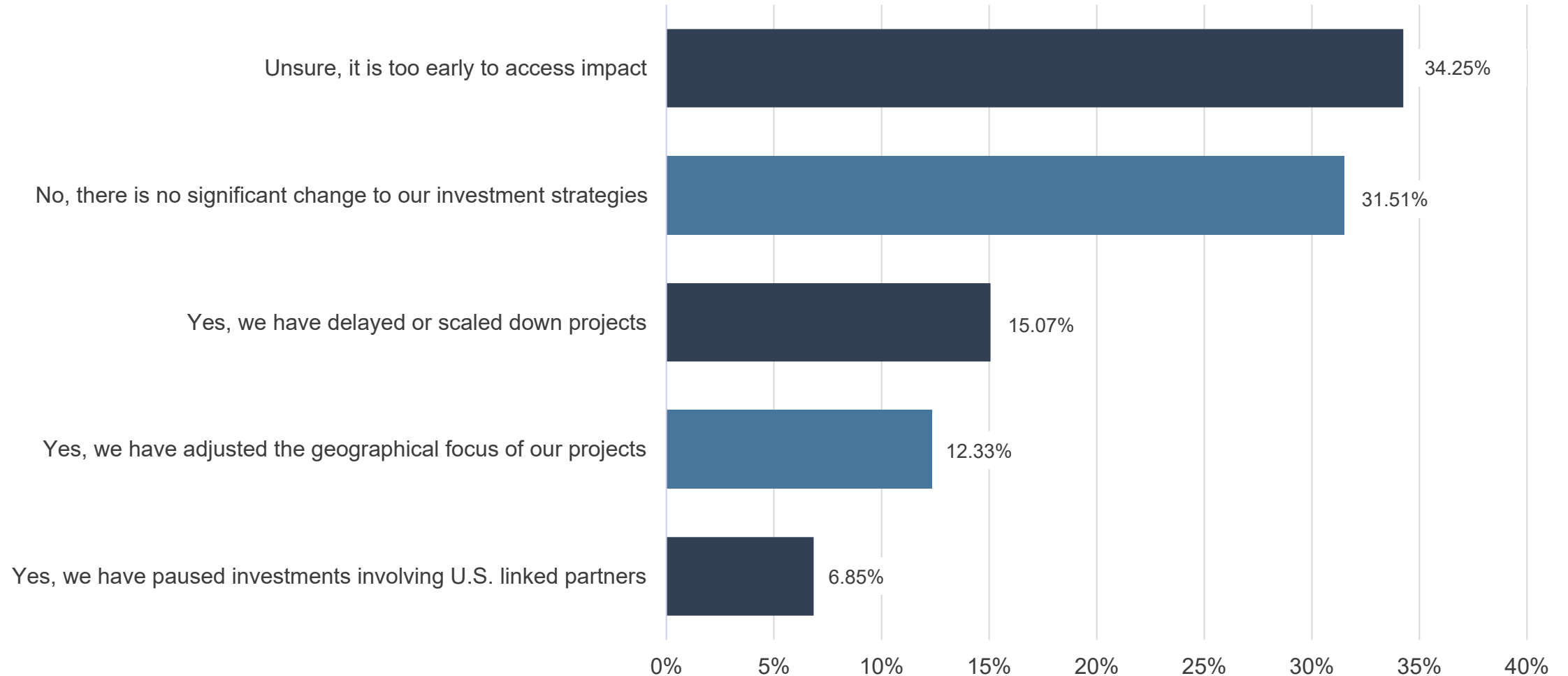
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**Q18 | Has the imposition of new tariffs from U.S. President Donald Trump impacted your business operations in Singapore or the region?**

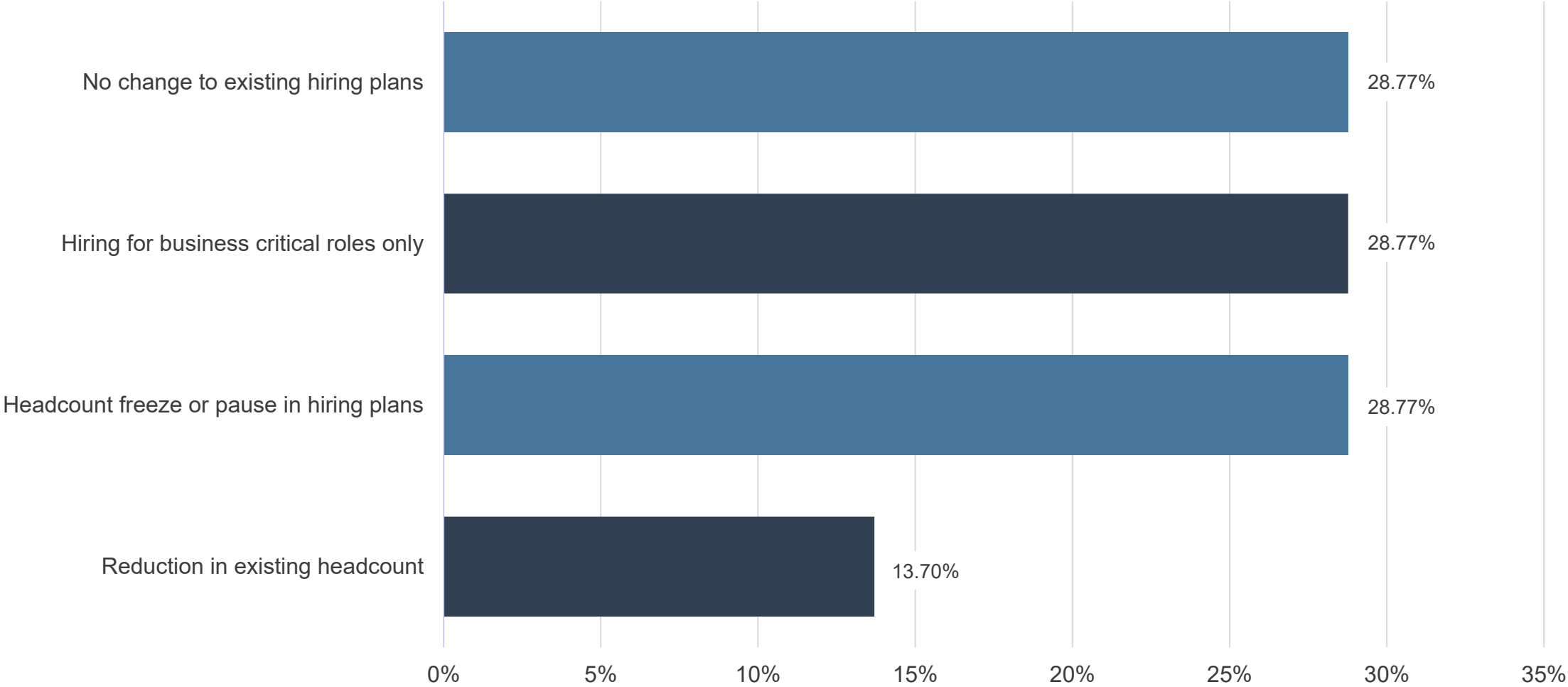


## APPENDICES | SURVEY DATA

### Q19 | Has the imposition of new tariffs from U.S. President Donald Trump affected your organisation's investment decisions?



Q20 | How has the current economic and geopolitical landscape influenced your workforce planning for 2025 / 2026?



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