

**WORK READINESS AND GRADUATE RECRUITMENT
IN THE FASSET SECTOR**

by

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I declare that WORK READINESS AND GRADUATE RECRUITMENT IN THE FASSET SECTOR is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

(Mrs M Raftopoulos)

DATE

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ABSTRACT

It is unfortunate that many graduates have difficulty in finding employment after completing their studies. Although graduates typically have academic and technical skills, they often lack some basic skills, also referred to as employability, or work readiness skills. Work Readiness Programmes, such as the Fasset Work Readiness Programme, have been introduced to bridge the gap between studies and work and aim at equipping graduates with the skills required in order to secure employment. The question was raised whether the skills that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme, are in accordance with the skills that employers require from graduates for entry level positions.

The objective of the research is to conceptualise the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions and to determine if the skills and competencies that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and deemed important by graduates, are in accordance with the skills and competencies sought by employers in the Fasset sector. The specific aims of the study are as follows: (a) to conceptualize work readiness and the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions; (b) to determine if the skills and competencies that are required from graduates for entry level positions in the Fasset sector are in accordance with the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and (c) to determine which skills graduates regard as important for the world of work.

Two quantitative research questionnaires (one for graduates and one for organisations) were developed for the purpose of the research. Both questionnaires consisted of two sections – a section containing biographical information that was used to compare differences between the groups and a section referring to the research aims.

Descriptive statistics was one of the methods employed to analyze the data. The questionnaires proved to be reliable (Cronbach alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations were calculated). A preliminary investigation into the validity of the questionnaire was done.

The research was successful in achieving the research aims. The skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions were conceptualized by means of an extensive literature review (including South African as well as international research). The research indicated that although Fasset registered employers regard some of the skills/competencies that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme (i.e. oral communication, interpersonal skills and teamwork) as important, they value other work readiness skills that are not directly addressed by the Fasset Work Readiness Programme (i.e. mature attitude, innovation, positive work ethic) just as much. Graduates regard the skills/competencies that are included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme (such as oral communication, written communication, interpersonal skills and teamwork and occupation skills) as more important than other work readiness skills that are not addressed by the programme (i.e. self-discipline, confidence, self-reliance, leadership, mature attitude and motivation). Graduates in general agreed that self-discipline, career development, the effective use of physical resources, independent time management, understanding an organisation's functioning in relation to its competitors and effective team work are important skills/competencies in the world of work.

Recommendations are made for work readiness programmes in general, and for the Fasset Work Readiness Programme, as well as for future research.

OPSOMMING

Dit is ongelukkig die geval dat talle graduandi (mense wie grade of diplomas voltooi het) sukkel om werk te kry nadat hulle hulle studies voltooi het. Alhoewel graduandi gewoonlik die akademiese en tegniese vaardighede het wat verwag word, het hulle dikwels nie die basiese werkgeredheidsvaardighede nie. Werkgeredheidsprogramme, soos die Fasset Werkgeredheidsprogram, is ingestel om die gaping tussen studies en werk te oorbrug. Die doel van die program is om leerders bloot te stel aan die vaardighede wat vereis word om sodoende werk te kry. Die vraag het ontstaan of die vaardighede wat deur die Fasset Werkgeredheidsprogram aangespreek word ooreenstem met die vaardighede wat werkgewers in die Fasset sektor van graduandi verwag vir intreevlak posisies.

Die doel van die navorsing is om die vaardighede wat van graduandi verwag word vir intreevlak posisies te konseptualiseer en om te bepaal of die vaardighede wat deur die Fasset Werkgeredheidsprogram aangespreek word en deur graduandi as belangrik geag word, ooreenstem met die vaardighede wat werkgewers in die Fasset sektor van graduandi verwag vir intreevlak poste. Die spesifieke doelstellings van die navorsing is om (a) die werkgeredheid en die vaardighede wat van graduandi verwag word vir intreevlak posisies te konseptualiseer; (b) om te bepaal of die vaardighede wat van graduandi verwag word vir intreevlak posisies in die Fasset sektor ooreenstem met die vaardighede wat deur die Fasset Werkgeredheidsprogram aangespreek word en (c) om te bepaal watter vaardighede graduandi as belangrik ag in die werkswêreld.

Twee kwantitatiewe navorsingsvraelyste (een vir graduandi en een vir organisasies) was ontwikkel vir navorsingsdoeleindes. Beide vraelyste het uit twee afdelings bestaan – ‘n afdeling vir biografiese besonderhede wat gebruik is om verskille tussen sub-groepe te bepaal, en ‘n afdeling wat verwys het na die navorsingsdoelwitte.

Beskrywende statistiek is een van die metodes wat gebruik was om die data te analiseer. Volgens die Cronbach alpha koëffisiënte en inter-item korrelasies wat bereken was, is die

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This dissertation deals with the skills that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and the skills required from entry-level graduates in the Fasset sector. The first chapter of the dissertation introduces the reader to the background and rationale of the study, research aim and objectives, paradigm perspective, research design and hypothesis, research methodology and limitations in terms of the study. This chapter concludes with the chapter layout of the dissertation.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Organisations spend a substantial amount of time on recruiting and selecting appropriate staff. Selection involves “setting up fair selection processes which, as far as possible, are designed to predict how an individual will behave at work and whether he or she can perform a specific range of tasks adequately” (Thomson, 2004, p.53).

Not only are people with years of experience recruited and selected, graduates with no, or limited experience, are also targeted for entry-level positions. Graduates apply for positions with the expectation that they possess the skills required in order to perform the required tasks of the position adequately. Initiatives, e.g. Work Readiness Programmes and bridging programmes, have been put in place in order to assist graduates in entering the workplace.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Organisations worldwide are facing the challenge of acquiring ever-increasing knowledge, skills and intellectual capital (Dlamini, 2001) in order to be competitive and survive in the global economy. Schreuder and Theron (2002) emphasize the fact that an organisation’s competitive advantage is often dependent on the specialized knowledge and skills of the employees.

Organisations face challenges such as high technology, global economy and increased social diversity (Zinser, 2003) and therefore, emphasis is placed on better preparing graduates for the

workplace. According to Zinser (2003), many terms are used to describe the preparation of students for the adult world, and there is general agreement that graduates need some basic career skills in order to function effectively in the workplace.

In South Africa, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA's) were established in terms of the Skills Development Act (No 97 of 1998) and are responsible for the development of skills in the sector. Fasset is the Seta for Finance, Accounting, Management Consulting and other related financial services and includes organisations that perform financial service activities such as investment entities and trusts, company secretary services, the administration of financial markets, security dealing activities, stock broking, asset portfolio, management development organisations, tax, accounting, bookkeeping and auditing services, cost and management accounting, and business and management consulting services (Fasset Sector Profile, n.d.).

By means of their Sector Skills Plan, Fasset analyses the demand for and supply of skills to the sector, and determines the skills needs and skills development priorities for the sector. Fasset has identified the training of unemployed youth and absorbing them into the formal sector as a priority. The aim will be to ensure that these people are equipped with necessary academic and practical skills required in the work place (Fasset, 2004). As a result, a Work Readiness Programme has been introduced to better prepare graduates, and especially previously disadvantaged graduates, for the world of work. A consortium, consisting of Stanley Hutcheson and Associates in association with Deloitte and the University of Johannesburg, has been awarded the contract to design and execute the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.

The 12-week Work Readiness Programme consists of classroom based (structured) training as well as "on-the-job" (skills based) training. A number of modules, which will equip the graduates with the skills required in the workplace, have been designed.

Although Work Readiness Programmes could potentially benefit graduates in many ways, they are only valuable if they address the needs in the workplace. The question was raised if the Fasset Work Readiness Programme addresses the basic skills that employers require from graduates when recruiting staff for entry level positions. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, graduates expect that they have the skills required for the world of work, but are often

disillusioned when not being appointed. It therefore seems important to also investigate the perceptions of graduates, regarding the skills they deem important for the world of work.

The results of this study will benefit role players in the following ways: Research into the graduate recruitment practices of employees and the skills required from graduates will firstly assist training and education authorities to better equip graduates with the skills required in the market and will secondly promote the integration of education at tertiary institutions and workplace learning. This research will also provide information regarding the graduate's perceptions of the skills required in the workplace. By being aware of the skills that employers in the Fasset sector value for entry level, graduate positions, graduates who are entering the sector can better prepare themselves. Furthermore, there is the possibility that this Work Readiness Programme will be run on an annual basis. A better understanding of employers' needs will allow the Consortium managing the Work Readiness Programme to tailor the programme to suit the employers' needs as suggested by Falconer and Pettigrew (2003).

If the Work Readiness Programme succeeds, employers benefit by having employees who are well-trained and possess the basic skills that are required on the job. Graduates benefit from personal development (e.g. personal and job satisfaction, employability and self-esteem improve) and by learning the skills that will enable them to do a better job (Anon, 2004/2005).

It is clear from the rationale of the study, as presented above, that the study will contribute to the quality of skills development in South Africa in many ways.

The specific research problem, aim and objectives of the study are discussed in the following section.

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General aim

The objective of the research is to conceptualise the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions and to determine if the skills and competencies that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and deemed by graduates to be important, are in accordance with the skills and competencies sought by employers in the Fasset sector.

1.3.2 Specific aims

The specific aims of the study are:

- a) To conceptualize work readiness and the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions.
- b) To determine if the skills and competencies that are required from graduates for entry level positions in the Fasset sector are in accordance with the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.
- c) To determine which skills graduates regard as important for the world of work.

The specific aims of the research, as set out above, will be addressed by means of quantitative research.

The paradigm perspective, including the field of study, psychological paradigm, applicable concepts and constructs are discussed in the next section.

1.4 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

1.4.1 Field of industrial psychology

This study falls in the Industrial Psychology discipline, and specifically within the sub-disciplines of career psychology and personnel psychology, which are described in more detail below.

1.4.1.1 Personnel psychology

Psychologists have been studying methods of measuring human attributes with the view to predict future behaviour since the First World War (Cooper, Robertson & Tinline, 2003). Different methods are used in the selection process (such as interviews, psychometric tests, simulations, in-basket techniques and work samples) to predict successful performance in terms of the skills required in the workplace.

1.4.1.2 Career psychology

Career psychology is a result of the interaction of individuals with organisations and society (Collin, 1998). Collin (1998, p.412) defines the field of career psychology as “the legitimate concern of several disciplines and sub-disciplines such as organisational psychology, counselling psychology, sociology, labour economics, organisation and management studies”.

1.4.2 Applicable psychological paradigm

According to Van Manen (1983, p.27), research paradigms comprise of the fundamental assumptions about the general orientation to life, the view of knowledge, and the sense of what it means to be human that guide particular modes of enquiry.

This study falls within the positivist and the behaviourist paradigm. A definition as well as motivation of the chosen paradigms is provided next.

1.4.2.1 Positivist paradigm

Fouché and Delport (2002, p.79) state that the “quantitative paradigm is based on positivism”. De Vos and Schulze (2002, p.5) define positivist social science as “the approach of the natural science”. Bryman (1988, p.14) defines the positivist paradigm as follows:

First and foremost, positivism entails a belief that the methods and procedures of the natural sciences are appropriate to the social sciences. This view includes the conviction that the objects of the social sciences – people – are not an obstacle to the implementation of the scientific method.

1.4.2.2 Behaviourist paradigm

Apart from the positivist paradigm, the behaviourist paradigm is also relevant to this study as it is related to training and development. Skinner played a key role in the development of the behaviourist paradigm, as the learning and behaviour theory of Skinner attempted to explain the learned habits of animals and humans (Engler, 1999).

1.5 APPLICABLE CONCEPTS AND CONSTRUCTS

An operational definition of the key constructs of the study is provided in this section.

1.5.1 Work readiness

Different terms are used to refer to the concept of work readiness. Harvey (2001) refers to graduate employability and states that it can be defined in many ways. Harvey’s (2001) take on graduate employability is concerned with enhancing the capacity of a graduate in order to obtain employment. Harvey (2001) further argues that graduate employability is also about graduates being better equipped and prepared for the world of work.

1.5.2 Graduate

The term graduate is an inclusive term in the context of this study, which refers to students who have completed either a degree or diploma. In the context of the NQF (National Qualifications Framework) these students have completed either a NQF level 5 (diploma) or level 6 (degree) qualification.

1.5.3 Recruitment

According to Steward and Knowles (2000a) the topic of graduate recruitment and selection has emphasized the importance of transferable skills. Recruitment is the development of a pool of candidates from which to select qualified employees, whereas selection involves selecting and hiring the candidates who are most likely to perform well when employed (Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Louw & Oosthuizen, 2001).

The research design and hypothesis of the study are presented in the next section.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND HYPOTHESIS

Information pertaining to the research design, variables, hypothesis and unit of analysis is contained in this section.

1.6.1 Research design

Creswell (1994) maintains that the main aim of a quantitative study is to make an inquiry into a human or social problem, test a theory composed of variables, measure it with numbers and analyse it statistically.

Delport (2002) states that questionnaires or survey design are one of the data collection methods used when working from a quantitative perspective. The research design, specific to this study, is the cross-sectional survey design. The emphasis of a survey design is on structured, indirect

observation such as the information obtained from questionnaires and interviews on a specific moment in time (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

1.6.2 Variables

The difference between two variables will be calculated for the purposes of this study. The independent variable is the skills in the work readiness programme and the dependent variables are the skills required by organisations and the perception of graduates regarding important skills required in the workplace.

1.6.3 Hypothesis

The following guiding hypothesis has been developed for the purposes of this study.

H1: There is no significant difference between the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness programme and the skills required for entry level graduate positions in the Fasset sector.

H2: There is no significant difference between the skills required for entry level graduate positions in the Fasset sector and the skills deemed by graduates to be important.

1.6.4 Unit of analysis

The recruitment practices of organisations in the Fasset sector will be studied as well as the perceptions of graduates; therefore the units of analysis are organisations and graduates. Mouton and Marais (1996) emphasize the importance of identifying the unit of analysis in order to avoid research errors.

The research methodology is provided in the following section.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sample, measuring instrument, data analysis and procedure to be employed is described in this section.

1.7.1 Sample

In terms of the population from which the sample was drawn, it is estimated that the Fasset sector consists of 7 200 organisations which employ an estimated 92 000 employees (an estimated 1% of employment in the formal sector of the South African economy), according to Fasset's Sector Profile (Fasset Sector Profile, n.d.). Almost two thirds of the member organisations in the Fasset sector employ 5 or fewer employees and another 30% of member organisations employ between 6 and 20 employees (Fasset Sector Profile, n.d.).

It was important to establish whether employers in the Fasset sector employed graduates before the study was undertaken, as the study could not take place if this was not the case. It was therefore suggested that purposive sampling be used for the purposes of the research.

Kerlinger and Lee (2000, p.179) define purposive sampling as “characterized by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including presumably typical areas or groups in the sample”.

Questionnaires were distributed to employers in the Fasset sector at the beginning of the Fasset Work Readiness programme. Employers who were interested in employing graduates have responded to the questionnaire. A total of 68 organisations, registered with Fasset, have indicated interest in recruiting graduates from the Fasset Work Readiness Programme. These 68 employers will be targeted for the purpose of this research, in order to determine their skills requirements for graduates.

The pool of candidates (335 graduates) for the 2006 Work Readiness Programme will be asked to complete questionnaires to determine what their perceptions are of the skills required in the world of work.

1.7.2 Measuring instrument

Two questionnaires were designed to obtain the information necessary for the research:

- A questionnaire targeted for organisations registered with Fasset that have indicated that they employ graduates to determine which work readiness skills they deem to be important; and
- A questionnaire targeted for unemployed graduates who will participate in the next Fasset Work Readiness Programme for 2006 to determine which work readiness skills they deem to be important.

The process used for developing the questionnaires and a description of the questionnaires are discussed in Chapter 3.

1.7.3 Data analysis

A research questionnaire will be distributed to organisations registered with Fasset and another questionnaire to graduates. Questionnaire responses will thus be obtained from organisations and from graduates.

The responses from the organisations will be categorized according to the following sub-categories in order to make comparisons between the sub-categories:

- Size of the organisation;
- The number of graduates employed per year;
- The skills and competencies required from graduates for entry-level positions; and
- A ranking of the most important work readiness skills:

The responses from graduates will be categorized in the following manner:

- Graduates' responses with no previous work experience;
- Graduates' responses with previous work experience as a result of part time work;

- People who have completed a degree;
- People who have completed a diploma;
- The work readiness skills identified by graduates; and
- A ranking of the work readiness skills by graduates.

Descriptive statistics, such as the mean, variance and standard variation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004) will be used to describe the data (in terms of the categories as described above) with the use of the SPSS statistical analysis programme (SPSS Inc., 2003). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004, p.108) maintain that the “first stage in any quantitative data analysis, after producing graphical displays of the data, is to calculate measures of variability and measures of central tendency for the data”. In addition to the descriptive statistics mentioned above, frequencies and Wilcoxon signed ranked test will be calculated.

The reliability of the questionnaires will be determined by calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Inter-item correlation coefficients will be used to determine whether the internal consistencies of the constructs are not too high, so that they affect the validity (Clark & Watson, 1995). Exploratory factor analysis will be used to explore the factors that the questionnaire for the graduates are measuring. The sample size for organisations will be too small to repeat this analysis on the questionnaire for the organisations.

Furthermore, the differences between the two variables will be calculated by means of t-tests. Effect sizes will be used to decide on the practical significance of findings (Steyn, 1999).

1.7.4 Procedure to be employed

Kerlinger and Lee (2000) warn against the low response rate of mailed questionnaires. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) further maintain that telephone questionnaires, in comparison with mailed questionnaires, have the advantage of a higher response rate although they are limited to the person that one can get hold of as well as the brevity of the interview.

Questionnaires will be e-mailed to Fasset registered employers, which were selected by means of purposive sampling. This will enable the respondent to complete the questionnaire at a convenient time.

The researcher will administer the questionnaire to the targeted graduates in order to ensure a high response rate. The raw data obtained from the research will be transformed into a data set which could be captured (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004) in the SPSS statistical analysis programme (SPSS Inc., 2003). The data will be cleaned and checked for errors after it has been captured, as suggested by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004), in order to reduce the possibility of contamination of the data.

The next section refers to the limitations relevant to the study.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

Care should be taken when responses from the questionnaires are interpreted and generalizations are made. Generalizations can only be made to the population of which the sample is representative (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004). In this case, generalizations can only be made to the organisations who responded to the questionnaire and not to all Fasset registered employers and the graduates who completed the questionnaires.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters of the dissertation will be presented in the following manner, in order to achieve the aim of the research:

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction to the study (Background and orientation to research)

CHAPTER 2 – Literature study (Comprehensive overview of relevant constructs)

CHAPTER 3 – Research methodology

CHAPTER 4 – Research findings

CHAPTER 5 – Conclusions, recommendations, and limitations

REFERENCES

ANNEXURES

1.10 SUMMARY

Chapter one of the dissertation consists of an overview and background to the study. The research aims and objectives, research design and hypothesis and research methodology are discussed. Information pertaining to the relevant paradigm perspective as well as limitations in terms of the study is also presented.

The second chapter of the dissertation consists of a comprehensive literature review on the topics of work readiness and graduate recruitment.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The fact that many graduates find themselves unemployed after completing their studies is a concerning issue. A factor that impacts on a graduate's employability is whether or not the person has the skills required in the world of work, i.e. whether the graduate is work ready or not.

This chapter reviews graduate recruitment and work readiness. The focus is specifically on the definitions and processes of graduate recruitment, as well as employers' skills needs for graduates. Work readiness is conceptualised from the literature. Especially in the South African context, the processes of recruitment and work readiness are faced with challenges. Some of these challenges as well as possible solutions are identified. The chapter concludes, stressing the importance of work readiness programmes being aligned to the needs of employers.

2.2 GRADUATE RECRUITMENT

There is a high interest in graduate recruitment, especially in the UK where there is interest in graduates who find themselves unemployed after three or four years of study (Holden & Jameson, 2002). South African graduates are faced with a similar situation. Many graduates, as well as non-graduates, enter the labour market yearly and become part of formal or informal graduate recruitment programmes. Many of these graduate applicants are in many cases not successful in securing employment. It can, therefore, be assumed that the topic of graduate recruitment in South Africa generates as high an interest as elsewhere in the world.

The concept of recruitment, and more specifically graduate recruitment, is defined in the next section.

2.2.1 Definition of recruitment

Byars and Rue (2000, p.150) define recruitment as finding and attracting a pool of people from which suitable candidates can be chosen for job vacancies. Hellriegel et al. (2001) provide a similar definition for recruitment and emphasize that the pool of candidates can be sourced from either inside or outside the organisation. Muchinsky (1999, p.140) define recruitment simply as “the process of attracting people to apply for a job”.

Hellriegel et al. (2001) suggest that recruitment should not only be concerned with identifying the employers’ needs; but also with identifying the employees’ needs in order to retain them. The above definitions of recruitment have the following in common: finding and attracting candidates (from inside or outside the organisation) and matching their skills with the requirements for the vacant job.

Graduate recruitment differs from the general type of recruitment referred to above in the sense that graduate recruitment is aimed at attracting graduates (people who have completed either a degree or a diploma). This type of recruitment is often associated with the first full-time employment for the employee. According to Holden and Jameson (2002), there is little consensus as to what constitutes a “graduate” job. Holden and Jameson (2002) suggest that one way to classify a graduate job is whether or not a degree is required for the relevant job.

For the purpose of this research, the following definition of graduate recruitment will be adopted: Attracting a pool of graduates (people in possession of a degree or a diploma) in order to fill entry level positions (often first time employment in permanent positions) which Schreuder and Theron (2002) explain is aimed at finding a place for oneself in the world of work and will most probably represent the first full-time employment position for a graduate.

Recruiting graduates is one method of feeding fresh talent into an organisation (Beagrie, 2005). The process followed when recruiting graduates in organisations is discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Graduate recruitment process

The procedure adopted during recruitment is determined by the human resources planning process as well as the requirements of the positions to be filled (Byars & Rue, 2000). Hellriegel et al. (2001, p.245) state that human resource planning involves forecasting the organisation's needs in terms of human resources and doing the necessary planning and taking the necessary action steps in order to meet the needs. Byars and Rue (2000) links the human resource planning process to recruitment and explains that recruitment is the way of providing a pool of candidates to fill the identified vacancies.

In terms of the methods used when assessing graduates' skills; interviews, application forms and psychometric tests are often used to measure psychological constructs which predicts behaviour (Gammie, 1995). Many organisations use application forms as a first step in the selection process.

Organisations also make use of different sources for the recruitment of graduates. Hellriegel et al. (2001) mention advertisements, references from educational institutions and electronic recruitment sites as possible sources.

It is clear that there is no one size fits all approach to recruitment. The approach is often dependent on the circumstance of the organisation e.g. the organisational size, number of graduates required and nature of the organisation. Employers often have a very clear picture of the skills that they require from graduates when recruiting them for vacant positions. More about the employers' skills needs for graduates is presented in the following section.

2.3 EMPLOYERS' SKILLS NEEDS FOR GRADUATES

This section firstly deals with the large number of literature that has been published on employers' skills needs for graduates. An integration of the literature is, thereafter, presented, so that employers' skills needs for graduates are summarized.

2.3.1 Literature review of employers' skills needs for graduates

A fewer number of employees are expected to have more skills in the turbulent economic environment in which organisations find themselves (Dlamini, 2001; Lee, 1994; Nabi, 2003) and Nabi (2003) argues that the optimum use of graduate skills enhances the competitiveness of an organisation.

Davies (2000, p.436), when commenting on employability skills, maintained that “one of the most noticeable trends in employment over the last decade or so has been the rising expectations among employers of newly recruited graduates”. Graduates are expected to make a significant contribution from the start of their employment and to take ownership of their careers (Davies, 2000).

Employers hope that employees bring appropriate skills, knowledge, values and practical experience to the organisation (Dymock & Gerber, 2002). The sad thing is that acquired skills from further education do not necessarily lead to the competencies valued by the labour market (Jorgensen, 2004) and many graduates are disappointed after completing studies and being unable to find a suitable job.

There is a widening gap between the opportunities available for those with and without the basic skills required in the workplace (Addis, 2003). Research on graduate recruitment and selection emphasized the importance of transferable skills (Stewart & Knowles, 2000) which relates to the basic skills required in the workplace. A number of studies have been analysed in order to identify the transferable skills that employers value when recruiting graduates. These skills are also often referred to as employability skills.

Nabi (2003) refers to research conducted in the UK context and maintains that graduate employability skills are varied. Nabi (2003) further mentions that it includes traditional academic skills (e.g. critical evaluation of evidence, analysis, logical argument, problem solving) as well as the “core” or “key” skills that are required by higher institutions (e.g. communication, numeracy and team working).

Organisations need graduates with academic, technical and social skills required to meet the demands of globalisation (Zinser, 2003). Zinser (2003) argues that although different terms are used to refer to work readiness, there is consensus that all graduates need some basic work readiness skills. Graduates need to ensure that they accumulate not only the academic and technical knowledge developed by their studies, but also transferable skills that are required in the workplace (Falconer & Pettigrew, 2003).

The basic skills required are connected with personal development, occupational skills and information technology skills and are an element of competitiveness (Addis, 2003). Basic skills, e.g. reading skills in order to understand safety instructions, are required in the workplace in order to function effectively (Addis, 2003). Basic writing skills are more important (Addis, 2003) as a result of globalisation.

Birt, Wallis and Winternitz (2004), commenting on the variables considered important to South African talent, emphasize the importance of knowledge workers who are able to solve complex problems with a good understanding of cause-and-effect relationships and are adaptable to changes within the organisation and the environment.

Hughey and Mussnug (1997) maintain that knowledge matter experts have argued that it is important to teach people how to think, rather than teaching them specific skills. Doncaster (2000, p.350) agrees with this view and states that “learning how to learn rather than simply applying known solutions to problems is becoming an ever-more important ability”. Better decision-making and problem-solving skills will help employees to remain employable, according to Hughey and Mussnug (1997).

As far back as the late 80’s Greenwood, Edge and Hodgetts (1987) undertook research studies over 13 years to identify the skills that managers expect from graduates. Across the three studies, the following group of skills were commonly identified by managers:

- Communication skills,
- The ability to analyse data; propose solutions and make decisions;

- The ability to plan; organise; co-ordinate; and
- Working effectively with others.

The conclusion was that the above people-orientated skills, should be incorporated into further education (Greenwood, Edge & Hodgetts, 1987).

Falconer and Pettigrew (2003) list self-reliance, self-discipline, the ability to work harmoniously with others and the ability to apply knowledge to solve practical problems, as transferable skills. Falconer and Pettigrew (2003) argue that the above transferable skills should be incorporated into the curricula of University programmes. Transferable skills “has become a very significant issue in recent years” at Napier University (Falconer & Pettigrew, 2003, p.51). Zinser (2003) maintain that employability skills include the effective management of resources, communication and interpersonal skills, teamwork and problem solving skills, and acquiring and retaining a job.

With specific reference to the financial services profession, Falconer and Pettigrew (2003) conducted a questionnaire using a range of skills considered important by graduates and professionals. The list of skills generated from the study (i.e. team working, oral and written communication, problem solving, information handling, negotiation, listening, planning, resourcefulness and innovation), can also be grouped according to the four groups suggested by Greenwood et al. (1987).

In a study by Stewart and Knowles (2000) on graduate recruitment and selection in small businesses, four of the 22 respondents interviewed indicated the following skills/competencies as essential: attention to detail, positive work ethic, good time keeping, caring and commitment to helping others, common sense, world and local awareness, good memory, likeable personality, broad based knowledge and the ability to adapt knowledge to “real world” situations. From the other responses obtained from this study, work experience, problem solving, decision making, being a self-starter and showing initiative came to the foreground (Stewart & Knowles, 2000). Other skills/competencies considered important by the respondents are the ability to “fit in”, general intelligence, a mature attitude, confidence, motivation, teamwork, leadership, verbal and written communication skills, numeracy and IT skills (Stewart & Knowles, 2000).

Another viewpoint is that the type of skills required by employers depends on the nature of the relevant position (Raybould & Sheedy, 2005). Raybold and Sheedy (2005) suggest that there are transferable skills or employability skills which refer to the personal abilities of a person which can be transferred from one position to another and used within any profession in any stage of their careers. Davies (2000) defines transferable skills as the ability to use skills learned in one situation in other situations.

Munby, Versnel, Hutchinson, Chin and Berg (2003) have a different take on transferable or generalizable skills as they refer to the concept. According to them, workplace knowledge and learning are highly contextual (Munby, Versnel, Hutchinson, Chin & Berg, 2003). More should be explored about what is generalizable about work and Munby, Versnel, Hutchinson, Chin and Berg (2003) argue that routines are central to all workplaces. They recognize that routines are different in different contexts, but emphasize the fact that they remain routines.

The work environments and contexts differ even across the same industry, hence the integration of institutional learning and on-the-job learning is not always practical (Dymock & Gerber, 2002).

It is fair to say that a graduate needs to be work ready or employable in order to successfully secure employment, make a contribution to the organisation and develop on a personal and professional level.

The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing identified and categorized workforce skills in five major studies (O'Neil, 1997). In these studies, experts (who consisted mainly of educators, business people, scholars and policy makers) were asked to identify the skills necessary in the world of work (O'Neil, 1997). O'Neil (1997) published the four categories of skills that were identified by these five studies, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Basic academic skills – basic listening and speaking skills;
2. High order thinking skills – reasoning, problem solving, creativity, decision making skills and the ability to learn;

3. Interpersonal and teamwork skills – negotiation and conflict resolution skills, leadership skills and the ability to work with others from diverse backgrounds; and
4. Personal characteristics and attitudes – self esteem, motivation and taking responsibility for own actions and growth.

It is clear from the above that there are different views regarding the skills required by graduates. Graduates are challenged to prepare themselves for the world of work and taking ownership of their careers, without having a clear picture of which skills are required in the working environment. This seems like an impossible challenge. It is therefore important to identify a list of skills in order for graduates to prepare for the world of work.

2.3.2 Integration of literature on employers' skills needs for graduates

It is clear from the above argument that graduates can only prepare for the workplace if they are aware of the skills required. In the same sense, work readiness programmes can only be successful if they address the needs of the workplace in terms of the skills required.

From the reviewed literature it seems to be that the following categories of skills are required for graduates when entering the world of work:

- Academic/technical skills and knowledge learned during school years and studies;
- Basic skills/transferable skills/employability skills/core skills/basic work readiness skills;
and
- A form of practical experience (whether through part time or full time employment).

These three categories of skills, as referred to above, are summarized in the Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of skills required for employment

Category of skills/knowledge required	Academic and technical skills	Transferable/basic skills	Practical experience
Description of the skills	Skills learned during schooling and formal qualification(s).	Skills that are required in the workplace, irrespective of the type of position that is applied for	Skills learned by practical, work experience, which can be part time of full time employment, and related or unrelated to the further studies that the learner embarked on
Examples of skills or knowledge in this category of skills/knowledge required	Numeracy skills Cognitive skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving • Understanding cause and effect relationships • Information handling • Thinking • Learning to learn • Decision making • Planning 	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral communication • Written communication • Negotiation skills • Listening skills • Conflict resolution skills Personality characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Self-reliance • Self-discipline • Motivation • Innovation • Positive work ethic • Mature attitude • Confidence • Leadership • Taking initiative • Self-development Interpersonal skills and teamwork Occupational skills (job search strategies) Information technology skills Effective management of resources Time management World and local awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how organisations operate • Understanding different departments and levels within organisations • Understanding how job responsibilities relate to organisational goals and objectives • Understanding economic and environmental influences on organisations

Although these three categories of skills are tabled in separate columns under separate headings, they overlap to a degree. It is thus possible that some of the transferable skills (e.g. interpersonal skills and teamwork) are learned during schooling, formal studies or work experience.

It can be argued that learners who possess the skills required by employers are ready to find employment and to make a meaningful contribution to the workplace. In other words, learners who possess the necessary academic/technical skills, basic/transferable skills and work experience are “work ready”. This concept is described in more detail in the following section.

2.4 WORK READINESS

Work readiness, also referred to as graduate employability, refers to the necessary skills required in order to secure employment. The terms work readiness and graduate employability are used interchangeably. The concept work readiness is defined in the next section.

2.4.1 Definition of work readiness

Harvey (2001) is of the view that work readiness can be defined in many ways. Harvey (2001) states the importance of graduates being better prepared for the world of work and emphasise the importance of enhancing the capacity of the student in order to become employed. Nabi (2003) adds to this definition that students must possess an appropriate level of skills and attributes in order to become employable.

The concept of work readiness has been extensively researched in the international context. It is, however, disappointing to note, that although work readiness programmes have been run in South Africa, research in the South African context is limited.

2.4.2 Research conducted on the topic of work readiness

This section provides information on some of the international research on work readiness. Reference is also made to the limited research on the topic in the South African context.

2.4.2.1 International research

A lot of international research has been published on the importance of employability skills and the preparation of students for the world of work (Zinser, 2003) in the international context. Countries like the USA, Canada, Australia and Great Britain have placed emphasis on defining the basic work-related skills and competencies required by people to succeed in the world of work (Munby, Versnel, Hutchinson, Chin & Berg, 2003).

The Nottingham Business School has integrated transferable skills into their undergraduate courses (Stewart & Knowles, 2001). Many policies have also been developed in France to encourage work experience in organisations while completing a training programme in order to decrease youth unemployment (Bonall, Mendes & Sofer, 2002). It is believed that the relatively low youth unemployment rate in Germany can be contributed to apprenticeships (Bonall, Mendes & Sofer, 2002) which offer a work based route for gaining qualifications.

Emphasis is also placed on the importance of work experience in Great Britain. Approximately 1400 students per year, from the University of Ulster, accept paid placement for a year in a range of settings in Ireland and Great Britain, in order to gain work experience (Neill & Mulholland, 2003). The University has also developed a code of good practice, which provides for an element of work experience for all courses (Neill & Mulholland, 2003). Neill and Mullholland (2003, p.89) refer to this phenomenon as “sandwich placements” and define it as “assessed, paid work, which is part of the student’s course”.

In Britain, the concern with educational programmes addressing the need of the industry has resulted in developments such as the National Curriculum and debate about core skills for 16-19 year olds in an attempt to prepare young students for future employment (Neill & Mulholland, 2003).

In Canada, co-op education refers to the practice where educational institutions and organisations work together to provide students with extended periods of time in the workplace, while studying, in order to gain work experience (Munby, Versnel, Hutchinson, Chin & Berg, 2003).

2.4.2.2 South African research

Studies on South African graduate employment are limited to the few Universities that conduct follow-up statistics on their own graduates (Moleke & Albertyn, 1999). Although these studies sometimes give information on the type of employment that graduates enter, it does not provide information pertaining to graduates' expectations and perceptions of the work situation or the extent to which their education has prepared them for employment (Moleke & Albertyn, 1999).

Some findings of research conducted by Moleke and Albertyn (1999) to gain insight into the first employment experiences of graduates, which are relevant to this research, are summarized below:

- The South African labour market is characterised by poor skills in general, which can be attributed to the political background.
- The growth in the number of jobs that require graduate level education and the number of new graduates are factors that influence graduate employment.
- Graduates realize that a Bachelors degree doesn't guarantee specific occupational training. A complete degree is only, in a few fields, sufficient preparation for entering the labour market.
- Situations where graduates use the skills learned during formal studies and are rewarded by job satisfaction and responsibility is usually not quickly accomplished.
- For many graduates, further studies provide a temporary escape from unemployment and provide them with a link between studies and employment.
- Although there is the perception by graduates that they are overqualified to perform their work, graduates in South Africa still have a better chance of finding employment after completing a degree.

It is clear from the above, that South Africa also recognized the challenge for graduates to enter the labour market with the limited skills that they have learned during their studies. Although further studies provide people with a better chance for securing a job, it doesn't sufficiently prepare graduates for the world of work as was identified by Birt et al. (2004).

Although it appears as if work readiness is a global challenge, South Africa faces a lot of challenges which is different from the situation in other countries. It is therefore not possible to directly apply international literature on the subject, without considering the unique South African situation. Subjects which play an important role in work readiness in the South African context, such as high unemployment rates and employment equity, are discussed in the next section.

2.5 WORK READINESS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

It is extremely difficult to find a suitable job in South Africa, especially for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The South African situation in terms of finding employment is challenged even more because of the high unemployment rate and employment equity.

2.5.1 Unemployment and employment equity

A serious economic issue in South Africa is the high unemployment figure (Visagie & Botha, 1998). According to Luiz (1996, p.137) democracy in itself will not solve all South Africa's problems in terms of unemployment. Luiz (1996) maintains that the legacy of apartheid will continue for many generations to come.

The Employment Equity Act (No, 55 of 1998) states that "every employer must take steps to promote equal opportunities in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice" (Republic of South Africa, 1998). The act prohibits unfair discrimination and makes provision for affirmative action measures, which are designed to allow equal access to all occupational levels and categories for designated groups (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

Perhaps being work ready is a solution to the high unemployment rates. If people can be trained in the skills required in the workplace, it could assist them in securing employment.

Of particular interest is Munby, Versnel, Hutchinson, Chin and Berg's argument (2003, p.97) that "it is one thing to compile lists of employability and essential skills, and quite another to conduct the research needed to determine if these skills are the actual competences sought by employers

and used in the workplace”. It is, therefore, important that a list of work readiness skills is not only identified, but that research is conducted to determine the applicability of these skills for the workplace.

2.6 CHALLENGES FACED WITH WORK READINESS AND GRADUATE RECRUITMENT

Apart from the unique South African situation addressed above, work readiness and graduate recruitment are faced with other challenges. Some of these challenges are discussed in this section.

2.6.1 Challenges faced with work readiness

A factor that influences work readiness is the unrealistic expectations of graduates in terms of finding employment (Jorgensen, 2004). Graduates often expect that they will find a first job, with a high salary, which is on a higher level than an entry level position. They also have the perception that their studies have prepared them for the world of work, not realising that work experience plays a vital role.

A second factor refers to the fact that many people are either unaware of their lack of basic skills or are not concerned with this fact (Addis, 2003). This relates to the previous challenges of graduates expecting that their academic studies on their own are sufficient to prepare them for the world of work. Many graduates expect to find employment after graduating and do not realize the value of possessing basic workplace skills and having work experience.

Another factor that influences work readiness is the attitude of the graduate. Some graduates expect that they will be offered employment and absorbed by the labour market without putting in effort. It is very important that graduates take responsibility for securing employment for themselves and don't sit back and wait for job opportunities to come to their way.

The challenges faced with recruitment relate to the challenges faced with work readiness, although some recruitment challenges refer to organisational processes such as human resource planning and procedures.

2.6.2 Challenges faced with graduate recruitment

Although there are unique organisational circumstances which may result in unique challenges to the recruitment process, there are some general challenges that organisations can be faced with when recruiting people.

2.6.2.1 Mismatch between skills of graduates and skills required for entry level positions

Even though a large number of graduates complete their studies every year and it seems like a large number of positions are advertised, Raybold and Sheedy (2005) warns that the numbers of graduates in the UK are expanding fast and the market is more complex.

An interview with David Wood (Chief Executive of the UK based Hotel and Catering International Management Association which represents 23 800 professional managers in 106 countries across the world) highlighted his belief that recruitment will be a big problem in future (Powell & Wood, 1999). Wood goes so far to say that ‘the millennium time bomb for the industry worldwide is staffing!’ (Powell & Wood, 1999, p.138). According to Wood, a lack of skills, qualifications and professionalism are the real problems that recruiters are faced with when recruiting graduates (Powell & Wood, 1999).

Work readiness programmes can facilitate the link between the skills of graduates and the skills required for entry level positions. This will be dealt with in more detail in section 4.3 of this chapter.

2.6.2.2 Lack of work experience

Research shows that in general, graduates do not possess the personal, transferable and employability skills required for entry level positions (Davies, 2000). In contrast with this,

Muchinsky (1999) is of the view that organisations sometimes prefer to recruit inexperienced graduates rather than people with work experience because of their willingness and adaptability to learn. Having said that, newly recruited graduates need to work for some time to gain experience and develop the necessary skills before they can really start contributing to the organisation's performance.

2.6.2.3 Changes in organisational structure

Lee (1994) warns that the size of organisations is getting smaller and that the structures are getting flatter. As a result, the fewer levels of management means that the people at the bottom need to have more skills in order to take on the additional tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities required (Lee, 1994). Therefore, more skills are required from graduates in order to perform their tasks successfully.

2.6.2.4 Competence and life-long learning

With specific reference to competency-based qualifications, learners are measured against standards of work performance (Lee, 1994) and when found competent; it is assumed that learners will be able to perform the relevant job successfully. Lee (1994, p.6) warns that employers should not see competency at a specific point in time as a "ticket" for life as competence should be balanced with flexibility, adaptability and openness to learning. It is, therefore, important that organisations facilitate life long learning and motivate employees to continually grow and develop and this is necessary in the changing world of work.

Recruitment will be more effective and successful if the employer and the employee place emphasis on the continual development of skills and if the skills developed are in line with business needs. In line with this, Lee (1994), suggests that long-term staff should be recruited for long-term organisational needs.

2.6.2.5 Employing employees who will “fit in”

It is often found that recruiters seek employees who will “fit” – those people that they will feel comfortable with (Lee, 1994). Lee (1994) maintains that organisations are constantly faced with change and challenged to think in new ways. Employing people who think differently will bring diversity to the team and will assist organisations in coping with the changes as they challenge the normal way of doing things (Lee, 1994).

2.6.2.6 Effective organisational planning

The time from when employers realize that they need more employees until the time that employees are recruited and ready to commence work takes weeks or even months (Muchinsky, 1999). It is therefore important that effective human resource planning is conducted in order to address the organisational needs and forecast future needs.

2.6.2.7 Labour law legislation

As already mentioned, labour law legislation, and especially affirmative action and employment equity, has an impact on recruitment practices. Hellriegel et al. (2001) warns that recruiters need to ensure that their recruitment practices are in no way discriminatory.

2.6.2.8 Vaguely defined jobs/unclear job descriptions

Byars and Rue (2000, p.150) warns that “successful recruiting is difficult if the jobs to be filled are vaguely defined”. It is imperative that a vacant position is clearly defined in terms of its purpose, tasks and responsibilities, reporting requirements and performance criteria. A comprehensive job description is a useful tool for presenting this information.

Identifying these challenges is only the first step in the process. It is important to identify ways to overcome these challenges in order to address it effectively.

2.7 WAYS TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES WITH GRADUATE RECRUITMENT AND WORK READINESS

Some suggestions about ways to enhance the success of work readiness and graduate recruitment programmes are presented in this section.

2.7.1 Co-operative programmes

Co-operative programmes between universities and industries are a possible solution to develop and maintain the ever-increasing skills required by the working world (Dlamini, 2001). With more co-operatives between universities and industries, Doncaster (2000) believes that more pressure is placed on universities to better prepare students for the world of work. In order to achieve this, workplaces need to effectively communicate the basic skills required to universities so that they can facilitate the development of these skills.

2.7.2 Work experience, internships, apprenticeships and learnerships

It is not a new aspect of student's education to spend some time in industry (Neill & Mulholland, 2003). Falconer and Pettigrew (2003, p.51) identified work-based learning as "a suitable vehicle" for advancing transferable skills. Work experience assists graduates to succeed in the employer's assessment process, understand the organisational climate better and adjust to working life as experience can broaden one's knowledge and understanding of the working world (Falconer & Pettigrew, 2003).

Research (Falconer and Pettigrew, 2003) has shown that work experience leads to the following improved skills:

- Analysing information (i.e. analyse data, propose solutions; make decisions);
- Leadership skills (i.e. effective verbal and oral communication, improved planning, organising and co-ordinating skills);
- Ability to motivate yourself and others in a working environment.

A study in the UK, involving directors and senior managers has shown the respondents are of the view that 80% or more of the knowledge they use to do their daily work is derived from their own experience after completion of studies (Davies, 2000).

It is, unfortunately, the reality in South Africa that the majority of students do not get the education they need in order to secure employment (Hatting, 2003). The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is part of the Government's skills development effort which is aimed at addressing the challenges faced by South Africa's economy. One of the key objectives of the NSDS is to assist new entrants to enter the labour market. Learnerships are the key tool transforming the skills crisis in the country.

A learnership is a structured learning programme that leads to a qualification registered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), on a level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). A learnership constitutes of a theoretical component (which is dealt with by a Training Provider) and a workplace component (which is dealt with while the learner is in the employment of an organisation). Learnerships are aimed at giving learners a greater chance of becoming employed (Hatting, 2003) as valuable work experience and work related knowledge are gained during the period of the learnership.

A learnership is similar to an apprenticeship programme. In fact, learnerships are based on apprenticeships. Hatting (2003) explains that, although none of them secures employment after completing the qualification, a key difference between a learnership and an apprenticeship, is that learnerships prepare learners for employability outside the scope of the employer, which registered the learner on the learnership.

Unlike learnerships and apprenticeships that include practical and theoretical training, internships refer to the practical component of studies that are usually conducted after the theoretical component has been completed.

The value of all three of these training initiatives is that they provides the learner with valuable exposure to the workplace and practical experience which cannot be achieved by formal studies.

2.7.3 Effective human resource planning

As mentioned in 2.2, Human Resource Planning involves forecasting the human resource needs and making plans to meet the needs. When the process of human resource planning is effective, the organisation can effectively manage the human resource management process.

It is important to keep aspects in mind which will impact on the human resource planning process. Bin Idris and Eldridge (1998) suggest the following “analytical contributions” to effective human resource planning:

- **Environmental scanning** – identifying trends and forces in the external environment that can impact on human resource management;
- **Interpretation of strategic objectives** – analysing the future direction of the organisation and the types of employees required;
- **Audit of the internal human resource** – analysing the current number of employees, their job-related skills, performance levels, potential performance, competencies and work attitudes in order to determine current human resource strengths and weaknesses;
- **Demand forecast** – forecasting future human resource needs; and
- **Formulation of human resource objectives and strategies** – identify desired human resource position and strategies required to achieve that.

2.7.4 Graduate development programmes

Especially larger organisations sometimes make use of graduate development programmes to address their graduate recruitment needs. Beagrie (2005) suggests that a graduate development programme needs to be established in order to recruit graduates successfully. Beagrie’s (2005) steps for setting up a programme successfully are summarized below:

- Establish a business case for the graduate development programme and involve senior management and directors from the start.

- Make sure that the three essential R's of graduate development - recruiting, retaining and return on investment – are fully integrated into the programme.
- Develop the programme where the graduates will have the opportunity and environment to learn and grow.
- Include a comprehensive induction programme in the graduate development programme.
- Assign mentors to graduates who will guide and coach graduates in order to stimulate their growth and development.
- Measure success by measuring the graduates' contribution to the profit and measure their potential by rating their progress on the programme.

In the UK, the Leeds Metropolitan University and several major local employers has piloted the two year “Working for Skills” Project (Davies, 2000). The purpose of the project was to equip graduates with transferable skills which will lead to their personal development, while engaging in part time work (Davies, 2000). Emphasis was placed on a model consisting of 20 skills which were believed to be required from employers for graduate entry-level positions (Davies, 2000). These skills related to:

- The inner you (referring to processes in one's head, and relating to an awareness of others in the outer world)
- The inner and outer worlds in balance

A readily assessable and easily understandable work file, focusing on the 20 skills presented above, has been developed to assist graduates in their journey to self development (Davies, 2000). The skills presented above were described in the file and the learner was invited to present evidence of how he/she has developed the relevant skill from experience at school, university or part time work (Davies, 2000). Davies (2000) maintains that the 20 skills comprise a “wish list” for employers when recruiting graduates, but at the same time, placed emphasis on the skills that graduates should focus on in order to find employment.

2.7.5 Work readiness programmes

A work readiness programme, which prepares graduates for the world of work, is a similar type of programme. These programmes are developed in a manner that it will address the skills required by the labour market. There is a great need for more information on this topic in order to address the issue of work readiness successfully.

An example of a work readiness programme in South Africa is the Fasset Work Readiness Programme. Work readiness in the context of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme is defined as equipping graduates with the necessary skills in order to become employable and to play a valuable role to an employer. Work readiness in the context of the research is defined as having the required skills in order to fill an entry-level graduate position.

It was initially a challenging task for the project team to develop the curriculum for the programme. Stanley Hutcheson & Associates (SHA) (the lead provider for the Fasset Work Readiness Programme) has developed a model according to which the learning activities of the project have been arranged. The model is aimed at the development of essential employability skills, mostly based on experience that SHA has gained on the topic of work readiness. The model overleaf illustrates that unemployed learners were selected to take part in a work readiness programme that enhances the following skills:

- **Basic employability skills.** This element was dealt with by means of theoretical, classroom based training. Some modules were aligned to relevant NQF registered unit standards.
- **Basic workplace skills.** This element was dealt with by means of practical, on-the-job experience and was not aligned to NQF registered unit standards.

In addition to the above, learners took part in a mentoring programme from the outset of the programme. Each learner was assigned a mentor and had weekly meetings with the mentor.

Ongoing project management and quality assurance was necessary to ensure the success and high quality of the project. Learners are placed with employers registered with Fasset after completion of the Work Readiness Programme. The target was to place 70% of the learners with employers in the Fasset sector on learnerships other than the learnerships registered with Fasset. In this manner, the Work Readiness Programme would build the foundation for further experience and learning within an organisation.

Figure 1 also illustrates that learners kept a learner portfolio which can be used as a “marketing tool” for their skills when searching for a job.

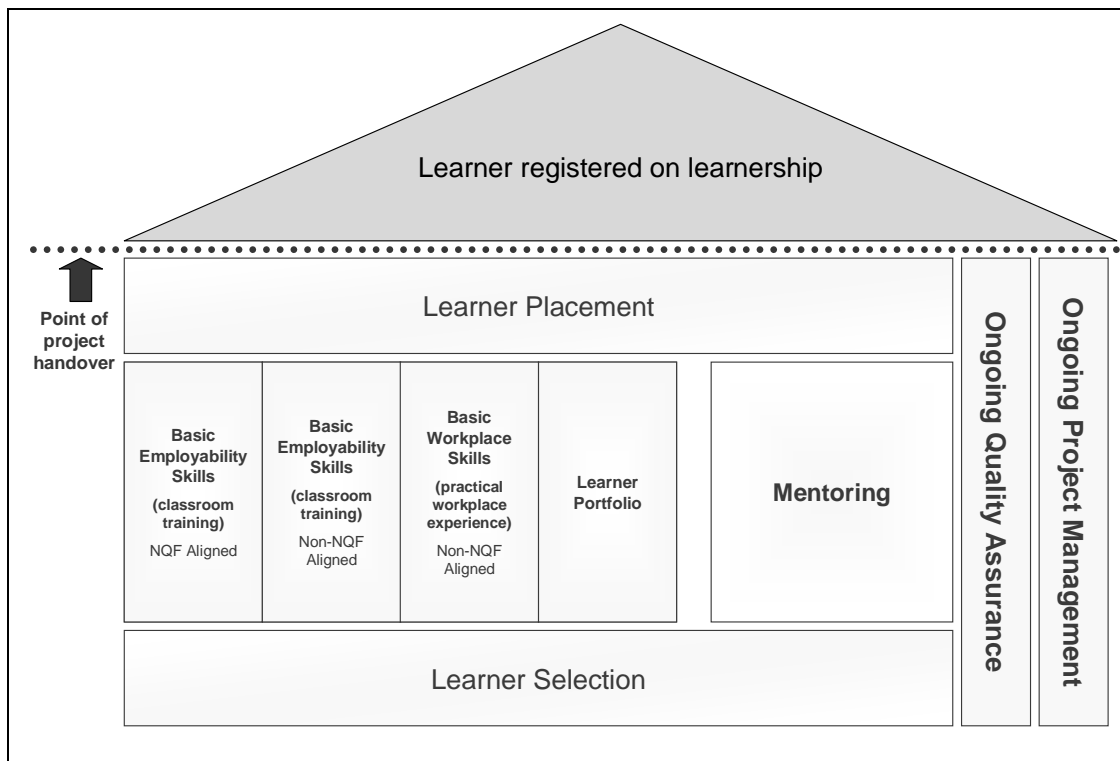


Figure 1. Project Approach/Model

As illustrated by means of the module above, the skills were broken down into the following modules as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Modules included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme

<i>Employability Skills (Non-NQF aligned)</i>		
Learning Module	Description of Outcomes	Theoretical/ practical
Orientation		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of employment contracts and a basic understanding of labour legislation (incl. LRA, BCEA, disciplinary and grievance procedures, arbitration, mediation, and conciliation) - Learners will be introduced to the goals, objectives and timeframes for the programme 	Theoretical
Personal qualities & work ethic		
Dress and grooming		Theoretical
Career development and networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career Development and Networking - Career development skills - Career development as a process - Managing your career development whilst studying Networking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition and benefits - Tips - Maps - Letters - Rules of effective networking - Techniques - Informal networking interviews 	Theoretical
Applying for a job		
CV, cover letter and advertisements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your CV, cover letter and advertisements - Get to know yourself: SWOT analysis, skills analysis - Your CV: What is a CV? The one minute rule, CV writing - Cover letter - Application forms - Online applications 	Theoretical
Job search strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job search strategies; - Career planning - Self Knowledge - Career Knowledge - The world of work - Decision Making - Insecurities and anxieties - Self marketing - Networking - Organizing your job hunting strategy - The job search process 	Theoretical

<i>Employability Skills (Non-NQF aligned)</i>		
Learning Module	Description of Outcomes	Theoretical/ practical
Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interviewing: Your opportunity to negotiate for placement in a position – Purpose of an interview – Preparing for an interview – Types of interviews – Stages of an interview – Questioning styles – The Star method – Types of interviewers – General tips on interviewing 	Theoretical
<i>Employability skills (NQF aligned)</i>		
Name	Unit Standard Name and ID	Theoretical/ practical
Essential individual skills		
Time management	Manage time productively (SAQA ID: 114589)	Theoretical
Conflict management	Interpret and manage conflicts within the workplace (SAQA ID: 114226)	Theoretical
Effective (oral) communication	<p>Engage in sustained oral communication and evaluate spoken texts (SAQA ID: 8974). The following aspects are addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Philosophy • Elements of communication • Presenting yourself • Telephone skills • Face to face communication • Delegation • Listening skills • Negotiation skills 	Theoretical
Business Knowledge & Skills		
Office practice	Plan, organize and control the day-to-day administration of an office support function (SAQA ID: 110531)	Theoretical
Effective meeting skills	Plan and conduct meetings (SAQA ID: 9244)	Theoretical
Business (written) communications	Prepare written communications (SAQA ID: 7822)	Theoretical
Project management skills	Apply a range of project management tools (SAQA ID: 10140)	Theoretical
Presentation skills	Design presentations for products and services (SAQA ID: 14178)	Theoretical
Team Effectiveness		
My role in a team My impact in a team Getting along with other team members to produce common goals	The results of the psychometric assessment used to screen and select the learners will be further used and interpreted to facilitate this session. Learners were taken to UJ Island for a two day team building workshop where they were exposed to a range of team building exercises.	Practical
Information Technology		
Basic IT Skills	For the full duration of the training component learners will have full access	Practical

<i>Employability Skills (Non-NQF aligned)</i>		
Learning Module	Description of Outcomes	Theoretical/ practical
	to an e-mail address and the computer laboratories at the University of Johannesburg.	
<i>Basic Workplace Knowledge & Skills (Practical)</i>		
Name	Description	Theoretical/ practical
2-week workplace component at Deloitte, Woodmead		Practical
Induction	Experiencing a working environment. Practicing the theoretical skills learned during the theoretical modules.	
Mock job application	Gaining experience that can be added to the CV. Welcome by senior partners.	
Understanding the workplace	Deloitte induction programme. Obtaining a letter of reference that can be used when applying for a position.	
Information Technology (IT) skills	Submitting a mock job application. Attending an interview. Obtaining feedback on performance. Understanding the corporate environment and specifically the Deloitte corporate environment. Office administration. Meetings and presentations. The latest on the IT market.	

When comparing the skills required in the workplace (as summarized in Table 2) with the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme, it is clear that the Fasset Programme addresses some of the skills required in the workplace (as identified by literature) as well as additional skills. The skills that are addresses by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme that are also identified by literature as work readiness skills, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme which are also identified as work readiness skills according to literature

Category of skills/knowledge required	Academic and technical skills	Transferable/basic skills	Practical experience
Description of the skills	Skills learned during schooling and formal qualification(s).	Skills that are required in the workplace, irrespective of the type of position that is applied for	Skills learned by practical, work experience, which can be part time of full time employment, and related or unrelated to the further studies that the learner embarked on
Examples of skills or knowledge in this category of skills/knowledge required	Cognitive skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning 	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral communication • Written communication • Negotiation skills • Listening skills • Conflict resolution skills Interpersonal skills and teamwork Occupational skills (job search strategies) Information technology skills Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how organisations operate • Understanding different departments and levels within organisations

It is clear from the above that the challenge exists to equip graduates with the necessary skills required in the workplace and that work readiness programmes play a valuable role by enhancing job related skills.

2.8 CONCLUSION

It is clear from the research that organisations expect graduates to be work ready when they enter the organisation and that graduates expect that they will be work ready as a result of their studies. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Many graduates have the perception that they are well prepared for the world of work due to the skills and knowledge obtained during their studies, and are then disappointed when they cannot find suitable employment.

The research will determine if these skills are also the skills that graduates believe are required in the world of work.

Organisations expect graduates to have academic and technical skills, transferable/basic skills and practical work experience. The Fasset Work Readiness Programme is designed to assist graduates to make the transition from studies to work. Whether the skills that are advanced by means of this programme are the skills that employers value as important in the workplace, specifically for the Fasset sector, will be determined. In addition to this, a ranking of the skills will also be done in order to determine which work readiness skills are perceived by organisations and graduates respectively, as most important. This will assist graduates to better prepare themselves for the world of work and be of greater value to the employer once employed. By having a clear understanding of the skills that are required in the workplace, work readiness programmes can be tailored to specifically address these needs. With this, the first specific aim is achieved, namely to conceptualize work readiness and the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions.

The next chapter consists of the research methodology utilized to complete this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research methodology employed is delineated in this chapter. The following topics are addressed:

- Purpose and objective of study;
- Population and sample;
- Measuring instrument; and
- Data analysis.

3.2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The aim of the research is descriptive (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The objective of the research is to conceptualise the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions and to determine if the skills and competencies that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and deemed by graduates to be important, are in accordance with the skills and competencies sought by employers in the Fasset sector.

The specific aims of the study, as listed below, were addressed by means of quantitative research:

- a) To conceptualize work readiness and the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions.
- b) To determine if the skills and competencies that are required from graduates for entry level positions in the Fasset sector are in accordance with the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.
- c) To determine which skills graduates regard as important for the world of work.

The population and sample is described in the next section.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The way in which the sample is selected for a study impacts on the generalizability of the results (Mouton & Marais, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004). This study has contextual interest and the aim is to study a single case and not to generalize to a defined universe (Mouton & Marais, 1996). As the case with this study, the way in which the sample is determined is often based on practical constraints (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004).

Two samples are used for the purposes of this research:

- Organisations registered with Fasset; and
- Unemployed graduates.

3.3.1 Organisations registered with Fasset

In order to ensure that only organisations registered with Fasset that employs graduates are targeted, purposive sampling was used (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000) to select a sample from the organisations registered with Fasset. Kerlinger and Lee (2000, p.179) define purposive sampling as “characterized by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including presumably typical areas or groups in the sample”.

The population of employers registered with Fasset consists of 7 200 organisations. As it was important to establish which employers in the Fasset sector employ graduates before the study is undertaken, purposive sampling was used for the purposes of the research, in order to take into account the practical constraints. Questionnaires were distributed to employers in the Fasset sector at the beginning of the programme. Employers who were interested in employing graduates responded to the questionnaire. A total of 68 organisations, registered with Fasset, have indicated interest in recruiting graduates from the Fasset Work Readiness Programme. These 68 employers were targeted and from those organisations targeted, 26 responded. Only 24 valid responses were obtained as 2 organisations that participated in the research indicated registration with a Seta other than Fasset.

These 24 organisations are described in terms of the following dimensions:

- Total number of employees;
- Sub sector; and
- Number of graduates recruited annually.

3.3.2 Unemployed graduates

The second population is the population of unemployed graduates. From this population a purposive sample of 335 graduates was used. A new pool of unemployed graduates was recruited for the purpose of the 2006 Fasset Work Readiness Programme. The 335 candidates who have been successful in the first screening phase and who were invited to attend an interview were asked to complete the questionnaire.

The sample of unemployed graduates will be described in terms of the following dimensions:

- Age;
- Previous work experience; and
- Whether they have completed a degree/diploma.

The measuring instrument used is discussed in the following section.

3.4 MEASURING INSTRUMENT

This section provides information on the development of the questionnaires, a description of the questionnaires, methods used to ensure the reliability and validity, and the administration and interpretation of the instruments.

3.4.1 Development of questionnaires

As suggested by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004), the researcher developed the questionnaire with the assistance of subject matter experts. The steps that the researcher followed, are a combination of the steps proposed by Fink (2006); Delpport (2002) and Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004) with reference to the construction of a questionnaire. These steps are provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Steps in the development of a questionnaire

<p>Identify the purpose of the questionnaire</p>	<p><u>Questionnaire for organisations:</u> The aim of this questionnaire is to obtain information from organisations registered with Fasset that employ graduates regarding the work readiness skills that they require in the world of work. Demographical information as listed in the previous section will be included in this questionnaire.</p> <p><u>Questionnaire for unemployed graduates:</u> The aim of this questionnaire is to establish what unemployed graduates' perceptions are in terms of work readiness skills required in the world of work. Demographical information as listed in the previous section will be included in this questionnaire.</p>
<p>Draft questions</p>	<p>A list of work readiness skills were drafted based on the literature review of the subject. The questions formulated for both questionnaires have reference to this list of work readiness skills.</p> <p>Short and concise questions which are relevant to the research purpose were drafted by the researcher with assistance from subject matter experts, as suggested by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004). The economic principle was thus applied in order to ensure that respondents communicate as much information as possible in the shortest possible time (Delpport, 2002).</p>
<p>Format of questionnaire</p>	<p>In order to ensure standardized responses from respondents (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004), closed ended questions were used. Respondents were provided with a checklist of options to choose from.</p> <p>The questionnaires were complemented by a covering letter as suggested by Delpport (2002) which included the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of the research (motivating respondents to participate);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of the research; • Guarantee of confidentiality; • Contact details of researcher; • Instructions for completing the questionnaire; and • An offer to send respondents a summary of the research findings as suggested by Fink (2006).
Assemble the questionnaire	The questions were ordered so that respondents would find it easy to read. The instructions for completing the questionnaire, the layout and format were finalized as suggested by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004). General, non-threatening questions were presented first, with more personal and possibly sensitive questions towards the end of the questionnaire (Delpport, 2002).
Evaluate the measures included in the questionnaire (pilot-testing)	<p>The questionnaires were pilot tested (i.e. administered to a sample of respondents) in order to ensure that the questions are clear and concise and that errors are rectified (Delpport, 2002). The questionnaires were finalized after feedback has been received from the respondents.</p> <p>The ways to ensure completion of the questionnaire for organisations registered with Fasset includes phoning respondents to provide an overview of the research and stress the importance, e-mailing the questionnaire to them to complete at a convenient time and e-mailing and phoning them to follow up regarding the completion of the questionnaire.</p>
Development of norms	It was not necessary in this case to develop norms as the aim is not to compare an individual's result with that of a population (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004).

The questionnaires were thus constructed with knowledge of the subject and the construction process followed the principles for development (Delpport, 2002).

3.4.2 Description of questionnaires

Two questionnaires were designed to obtain the information necessary for the research:

- A questionnaire targeted for organisations registered with Fasset that have indicated that they employ graduates; and
- A questionnaire targeted for unemployed graduates who will participate in the next Fasset Work Readiness Programme for 2006.

These questionnaires are included in Appendix A and B.

Both the questionnaires consist of a Section A which pertains to biographical information and a Section B which pertains to the research question. In terms of the biographical section for the questionnaire for organisations, the following were asked:

- Total number of employees;
- Sub-sector; and
- The number of graduates recruited annually.

In terms of the biographical section for the questionnaire for unemployed graduates, the following were asked:

- Respondent's age;
- Previous work experience; and
- Degree obtained.

The second sections of the questionnaires are aligned to the work readiness skills identified in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Three groups of work readiness skills were identified:

1. Technical/academic skills;
2. Basic/employability skills; and
3. Work experience.

The questions of the questionnaires are structured around these three categories of skills. With both questionnaires, respondents are asked to indicate whether the listed skills are considered as important work readiness skills. Thereafter, they are asked to rank the work readiness skills in terms of importance. Ordinal questions (Delpont, 2002) were used for this purpose.

Section B of the questionnaire consists of 35 questions and statements related to work readiness. Respondents are asked to indicate their answers by marking an X in the appropriate box. For questions 1-10 respondents must choose between the following six options: totally disagree, disagree to a large extent, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree to a large extent and totally agree. For questions 11-35, respondents must choose between the following five options: not at

all, to a slight extent, to a moderate extent, to a large extent and completely. Respondents are thereafter asked to rank three categories of skills/competencies from 1-3 by indicating a 1 next to the most important category of skill/competency, 2 next to the second most important and 3 next to the third most important.

Respondents are lastly asked to rank 22 skills/competencies from 1-10 by indicating the 10 most important skills/competencies.

The next section provides information regarding the reliability and validity of the measuring instrument.

3.4.3 Reliability and validity of measuring instrument

Promoting the reliability as well as the validity of the measuring instruments is of utmost importance.

3.4.3.1 Reliability

Reliable instruments provide consistent measures over time provided that the instrument remains the same (Fink, 2006; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

Pilot testing assists in ensuring that a reliable questionnaire is constructed (Fink, 2006). The focus was on the clarity of the questions and the general format of the questionnaire during the pilot process in order to ensure reliability as Fink (2006) suggests. More specifically attention was given to items which failed to encourage answers and items that encouraged more than one response.

3.4.3.2 Validity

Valid instruments provide accurate measures (Fink, 2006). The types of validity relevant to the research are content validity and face validity.

Fink (2006, p.31) describe content validity as the “accuracy with which the questions represent the characteristics they are supposed to questionnaire” hence the construction of the questionnaire by including only questions relating to the work readiness skills that were identified by means of the literature review. Fink (2006) maintains that content validity is established by referring to relevant literature on the subject and by asking experts whether the items are representative samples that which one wants to questionnaire (i.e. work readiness skills in the context of this research).

Another type of validity, very similar to content validity, is face validity (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Kerlinger and Lee (2000) explain that face validity refers to what the questionnaire appears to measure as judged by trained or untrained individuals. In order to ensure the face validity of the questionnaires in the context of this research, it is important to only include questions that refer to work readiness skills.

The administration of questionnaires is discussed in the next section.

3.4.4 Administration of questionnaire

The questionnaire for unemployed graduates was group administered. Cost and time were saved by this approach and all respondents were exposed to the same conditions while completing the questionnaire (Delport, 2003).

The questionnaire for organisations was self-administered as it was e-mailed to the respondents. Each organisation was telephoned before they received the questionnaire to explain the importance of the research to them and to encourage their participation. E-mail reminders were sent to respondents to encourage them to complete the questionnaire.

The process for data analysis is presented in the next section.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

With reference to the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics was one of the methods employed. Descriptive statistics like numbers or frequencies (counts); percentages (proportions); mean, median and mode (measures of central tendency); and range and standard deviation (measures of variation) (Fink, 2006) were used to describe the data obtained according to the different categories as described in section 3.3.

Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to assess the reliability of the questionnaires that were developed for this study. An alpha coefficient of 0.70 and larger was deemed as acceptable compared to the guideline of Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Inter-item correlation coefficients were used to determine whether the internal consistencies of the constructs are not too high, so that they affect the validity. Clark and Watson (1995) specified inter-item correlations between 0.15 and 0.50 as acceptable.

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out to explore the data and determine the factors measured by the questionnaire for unemployed graduates. A simple principal component analysis was conducted on the items of the questionnaire. The eigenvalues and scree plot were studied to determine the number of factors. Factor loadings higher than 0.35 were deemed as significant. From this, the conceptual factors measured by the questionnaire could be identified. The objective of this research is not to test hypotheses about the structure of latent variables or to generalise the findings to the rest of the graduate population, therefore, it was decided that exploratory factor analysis would be sufficient without continuing with a confirmatory factor analysis (Field, 2005).

The sample size for organisations was too small to repeat this analysis on the questionnaire for the organisations.

Analyzing questionnaire data by calculating differences is also common (Fink, 2006). The ratings of the organisations on skills deemed to be important were compared with the ratings of graduates on skills deemed to be important by means of t-tests, which are used to test the differences between means (Field, 2005).

Field (2005) explains that Levene's test is used to calculate homogeneity of variance. Levene's test, test the hypothesis that the variances in the groups are equal (i.e. that the differences between the variances are zero) (Field, 2005). Field (2005) explains the interpretation of Levene's test as follows:

- If Levene's test is significant (i.e. $p \leq 0.05$), it means that variances are significantly different and the assumption that homogeneity of variance has been violated is thus applicable.
- If Levene's test is non-significant (i.e. $p > 0.05$), it means that the difference between the variances is zero and variances are thus roughly equal.

In terms of statistical significance, it was decided to set the value at a 95% confidence level ($p \leq 0.05$). Effect sizes (Steyn, 1999) were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. The practical significance is indicated by the value of d which is calculated as follows (Steyn, 1998):

$$d = (\bar{X}_A - \bar{X}_B) / s_{MAX}$$

where

\bar{X}_A = the mean of the top group;

\bar{X}_B – the mean of the lowest group; and

s_{MAX} = the maximum standard deviation of the two groups.

According to Cohen (1977), the following cut-off points for practical significance of differences between the means of groups are applicable:

- $d \geq 0.2$ small effect
- $d \geq 0.5$ medium effect
- $d \geq 0.8$ large effect

3.6 SUMMARY

The research design of the study has been outlined in this chapter. Sampling procedures are discussed. This discussion is followed by a comprehensive description of the measuring instrument including evidence of reliability and validity. The data collection, data processing and statistical techniques employed are explained in detail.

The results of the study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of the research was to conceptualize the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions and to determine if the skills and competencies that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and deemed by graduates to be important, are in accordance with the skills and competencies sought by employers in the Fasset sector.

This chapter will describe the reliability of the questionnaire for graduates and organisations, a preliminary investigation into the factors of the questionnaire for the graduates, the samples used for completion of the questionnaires, descriptive statistics, differences between the graduate and organisations group and the fit between the research findings and the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.

4.2 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS AND RELIABILITY OF MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The factors measured and reliability of the questionnaires are discussed in this section.

4.2.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Kerlinger and Lee (2000) explain that the purpose of exploratory factor analysis is to identify the variables that have something in common by means of factors. Factor analysis is a method used to provide evidence of validity (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Factor scores above 0.3 are interpreted as significant (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). For the purposes of this research, eigenvalues higher than 0.35 were deemed as significant. These values are indicated in bold in table 5.

Exploratory factor analysis for this study were performed on the questionnaire for the graduates (sample size prohibit factor analysis in the case of the organisational questionnaire) and has resulted in 9 factors, 7 of which are conceptually meaningful. These 7 factors, as well as their corresponding questions from the questionnaire, the factor loadings and a possible description for each factor are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Factor analysis of the work readiness questionnaire for graduates

Questionnaire items		Factor									Communalities
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
B27	To what extent is decision making required from entry level graduates?	0.652									0.503
B26	To what extent is problem solving skills required from entry level graduates?	0.556									0.489
B28	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand cause-and-effect relationships?	0.430		-0.218							0.400
B17	To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates?	0.352						0.292			0.425
B33	To what extent are entry level graduates faced with interpersonal conflict?	0.323								-0.237	0.193
B25	To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to use a computer to execute their daily tasks?	0.228									0.290
B3	Only graduates with a diploma will be employed in entry level graduate positions.		0.888								0.612
B2	Only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level graduate positions.		0.864								0.615
B31	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand how changes in the world impact on the functioning of the organisation?			-0.706							0.547
B30	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand economic influences on the organisation?			-0.699							0.545
B35	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand environmental influences on the organisation?			-0.631							0.450

Questionnaire items		Factor									Communalities
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
B23	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to write a cover letter to respond to job advertisements secure employment?				0.863						0.390
B22	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves by means of a well formatted CV secure employment?				0.569						0.334
B24	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves well in an interview secure employment?				0.504						0.303
B19	To what extent does the mature attitude of an entry level graduate play a role in employment?				0.344			0.234			0.365
B10	Entry level graduates should be able to function effectively in a team.					0.520					0.262
B4	Entry level graduates should have high levels of self-discipline in order to succeed.					0.479		0.237			0.235
B6	It is essential for an entry level graduate to manage his/her own career development in order to secure employment.					0.439					0.216
B9	It is required from entry level graduates to understand how organisations function in relation to its competitors.			-0.256		0.325			-0.206		0.290
B7	Entry level graduates should be able to use physical resources (such as fax machines and photo copiers) effectively.					0.318					0.194
B11	To what extent do excellent oral communication skills contribute towards employment in entry level graduate positions?						-0.759				0.348
B12	To what extent do excellent written communication skills contribute towards employment in entry level graduate positions?						-0.513				0.345
B13	To what extent are negotiation skills required for entry level graduate positions?	0.249					-0.401				0.415
B5	Leadership skills are expected from entry level graduates.					0.245	-0.264				0.316
B18	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to show commitment towards their work?							0.578			0.367
B16	To what extent does self-motivation play a role in the success of an entry level graduate?							0.389		-0.268	0.297

Questionnaire items		Factor									Communalities
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
B20	To what extent are high levels of self-confidence a requirement for entry level graduate positions?							0.383			0.407
B14	To what extent is adaptability to changing circumstances a requirement for entry level graduate positions?						-0.279	0.345			0.370
B34	To what extent should entry level graduates be able to effectively manage their time?			-0.244				0.291			0.339
B15	To what extent is the success of an entry level graduate driven by their own effort?							0.270	0.250		0.296
B32	To what extent are listening skills required from entry level graduates?			-0.234				0.251			0.300
B21	To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues and superiors?							0.214			0.272
B8	It is expected from entry level graduates to independently plan their time.						-0.265		-0.432		0.303
B29	To what extent are advance numeracy skills required for entry level graduate positions?						-0.213		0.301		0.347
B1	Entry level graduates need work experience in order to become employed.									0.406	0.120
	% of variance	21.741	5.800	5.060	4.381	4.279	3.962	3.457	3.401	3.022	

The cumulative variance for the 9 factors, as listed in Table 5 is 55.103%. It is also clear from Table 5 that the following factors have been identified by means of the exploratory factor analysis, which explains 48.68% of the variance:

- Factor 1 Cognitive skills (decision making skills, problem solving skills, understanding cause-and-effect relationships and innovation);
- Factor 2 Qualification (degree or diploma);
- Factor 3 Understanding the organisation in relation to the world (understanding how changes in the world impact on the functioning of the organisation, understanding economic and environmental influences on the organisation);

- Factor 4 Job search skills and strategies (writing cover letters to respond to job advertisements, presenting themselves by means of a well formatted CV and presenting themselves well in an interview);
- Factor 5 Self-management (effective functioning in a team and managing his/her career development);
- Factor 6 Communication skills (excellent oral and written communication skills); and
- Factor 7 Attitude towards career (commitment towards work, self-motivation and self-confidence).

The reliability of the factors, presented in Table 5 was also calculated. More information is provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Reliability of the factors of the work readiness questionnaire for graduates

	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
Cognitive skills (Factor 1)	0.72
Qualification (Factor 2)	*
Understanding the organisation in relation to the world (Factor 3)	0.80
Job search skills & strategies (Factor 4)	0.69
Self-management (Factor 5)	0.53
Communication skills (Factor 6)	0.60
Attitude towards career (Factor 7)	0.73

*The question relating to qualification consisted of only 2 items (degree obtained and diploma obtained) and therefore reliability for this item was not calculated.

It is clear from Table 6 that the alpha coefficient for cognitive skills, understanding the organisation in relation to the world, job search skills and strategies and attitude towards career was acceptable (>0.7). The reliability for only 2 factors (self-management and communication skills) was <0.7 and thus proved to be unreliable.

It was not the purpose of the research to validate the research questionnaire and confirmatory factor analysis was therefore not calculated. The rest of the study focuses on the individual items

of the questionnaire and not with the seven factors presented in Table 6, due to the fact that confirmatory factor analysis wasn't done.

Reliability, with specific reference to Cronbach alpha coefficient and inter-item correlation, is presented next.

4.2.2 Reliability (Cronbach alpha coefficient and inter-item correlation)

Cronbach alpha coefficient and inter-item correlation was calculated for the purposes of commenting on the reliability of the measuring instruments. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) explain that researchers can determine the internal consistency reliability of their questionnaires by means of calculating the cronbach alpha coefficient. Clark and Watson (1995) also recommend calculating the inter-item correlation as an indication of consistency. These are shown in table 7.

Table 7

Reliability of the work readiness questionnaires

	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient	Inter-item correlation
Graduate sample	0.85	0.212
Organisation sample	0.93	0.384

A number of researchers have declared 0.7 as the cut-off for acceptable and unacceptable levels of reliability (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). It is thus clear from Table 7 that the questionnaires for graduates and organisations are proved to be reliable. The internal consistency of the questionnaires is also good, given the inter-item correlation of 0.212 and 0.384 (Clark & Watson, 1995).

The samples of respondents who participated in the research are described in the following section.

4.3 SAMPLES

The graduate and organisations samples that participated in the research are discussed in more detail in this section with specific reference to the biographical information obtained from the research.

4.3.1 Graduates

A total of 335 graduates completed the questionnaire for graduates. The following biographical information was obtained by the questionnaire: age, work experience, when the degree or diploma was obtained and the type of qualification obtained. The specifics around these biographics are presented in tables 8 to 11.

Table 8

Age description of the graduate sample

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	334	18	34	24.13

The mean age of graduates is 24.13 with the youngest respondent 18 years of age and the oldest respondent 34 years of age.

Table 9

Description of work experience of graduate sample

	Frequency	Percentage
No experience at all	145	43.3
Work experience due to part time work	163	48.7
Work experience due to full time work	18	5.4
Total	326	97.3
Missing	9	2.7
Total	335	100

The largest percentage of graduates (48.7% or 163 of the 335) indicated work experience due to part time work. A large number of the graduates (43.3% or 145 of the 335) indicated no work experience at all. Only 5.4% of the graduates (18 of the 335) have been employed in a full-time position in the past.

Table 10

Description of when degree or diploma was obtained

	Frequency	Percentage
In the last year	222	66.3
In the last 2-4 years	93	27.8
In the last 5-7 years	12	3.6
In the last 8-9 years	0	0
More than 10 years ago	1	0.3
Total	328	97.9
Missing	7	2.1
Total	335	100

Most graduates (66.3% or 222 of the 335) have obtained their qualification in the last year. The second most popular category chosen was the 2-4 year category, which was selected by 27.8% or 93 of the 335 graduates. None of the graduates obtained their qualification in the last 8-9 years and only one person obtained his/her qualification more than 10 years ago.

Table 11

Description of type of qualification obtained

	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	97	29.0
Degree	224	67.1
Other	8	2.4
Total	329	98.5
Missing	5	1.5
Total	334	100

Most respondents (67.1% or 224 of the 335) have completed a degree. 29% or 97 of the 335 respondents have completed a diploma. Only 8 respondents (2.4%) have completed a qualification other than a degree or a diploma.

Biographical information pertaining to the organisations sample is presented next.

4.3.2 Organisations registered with Fasset

The researcher distributed 68 questionnaires electronically to organisations who indicated interest in recruiting graduates for the Fasset Work Readiness Programme. From the 68 questionnaires sent out, 26 questionnaires were returned. In terms of the interpretation of the data, two

questionnaires were discarded due to the fact that those organisations were registered with Setas other than Fasset. Tables 12 to 14 summarize information regarding the size of the organisation, number of graduates recruited annually and which sub-sector of Fasset the organisation is registered with.

Table 12

Size of the organisation

Size of the organisation	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 employees	2	8.3
6-20 employees	4	16.7
21-50 employees	4	16.7
51-150 employees	0	0
More than 150 employees	11	45.8
Total	21	87.5
Missing	3	12.5
Total	24	100

As illustrated in Table 7, 45.8% of the organisations that participated in the research have more than 150 employees. The two categories, in terms of organisational size, that presents the second most organisations are the 6-20 employees and 21-50 employees categories. Only 8.3% of organisations have 1-5 employees.

Table 13

Number of graduates recruited annually

Number of graduates recruited annually	Frequency	Percentage
None	2	8.3
1-5 graduates	10	41.7
6-10 graduates	1	4.2
11-20 graduates	2	8.3
21-50 graduates	3	12.5
51 or more graduates	6	25
Total	24	100
Missing	0	0
Total	24	100

41.7% of organisations (10 out of the 24) indicated that they recruit 1-5 graduates annually. 25% of organisations (6 out of the 24) recruit more than 51 graduates annually. A further 12.5% (3 out of the 24) indicated that they recruit 21-50 graduates on an annual basis. It is expected that

there is a relationship between the size of the organisation and the number of graduates recruited annually.

Given the fact that 2 organisations indicated that they don't recruit graduates at all, it is safe to assume that they are potentially interested in employing graduates in future as they have indicated interest in recruiting graduates from the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.

Table 14

Sub-sector of Fasset registered with

	Frequency	Percentage
Investment Entities and Trusts and Company Secretary Services	4	16
Stock Broking and Financial Markets	3	12
Development Organisations	0	0
Accounting, Bookkeeping, Auditing and Tax Services	14	56
Activities Auxiliary to Financial Intermediation	2	8
Business and Management Consulting Services	2	8
SARS and Government Departments	0	0
Total	25	100
Missing	0	0
Total	25*	100

*From the 24 organisations that participated in the questionnaire, one organisation indicated registration with 2 sub-sectors of Fasset.

The largest number of organisations (56% or 14 out of the 25) represents the Accounting, Bookkeeping, Auditing and Tax Services sub-sector of Fasset. 16% of organisations are registered as Investment Entities and Trusts and Company Secretary Services. None of the organisations that participated in the research are registered with Fasset under the sub-sector of Development Organisations or SARS and Government Organisations.

Descriptive statistics with reference to the two samples (graduates and organisations) are described in the following section.

4.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Both samples (graduates and organisations) answered 35 questions relating to work readiness skills. The mean for questions 1-10 should be interpreted as follows:

- 1 Totally disagree
- 2 Disagree to a large extent
- 3 Slightly disagree
- 4 Slightly agree
- 5 Agree to a large extent
- 6 Totally agree

The means for questions 11-35 should be interpreted as follows:

- 1 Not at all
- 2 To a slight extent
- 3 To a moderate extent
- 4 To a large extent
- 5 Completely

Descriptive statistics for graduates and organisations with reference to the 35 work readiness skills are provided in table 15.

Table 15

Descriptive statistics for graduates and organisations

Question		Graduates			Organisations		
		N	Mean	Std deviation	N	Mean	Std deviation
1	Entry level graduates need work experience in order to become employed.	330	3.98	1.889	24	3.25	1.567
2	Only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions.	332	2.38	1.605	24	4.25	1.847
3	Only graduates with a diploma will be employed in entry level positions.	331	2.35	1.606	23	2.48	1.620
4	Entry level graduates in this organisation should have high levels of self-discipline in order to succeed.	334	5.58	.837	24	5.42	.584
5	Leadership skills are expected from entry level graduates.	334	4.57	1.360	24	4.17	1.049
6	It is essential for an entry level graduate to manage his/her own career development in order to secure employment.	334	5.33	1.004	24	4.75	.944
7	Entry level graduates should be able to use physical resources (such as fax machines and photo copiers) effectively.	333	5.06	1.140	24	5.21	.884
8	It is expected from entry level graduates to independently plan their time.	334	5.37	1.040	24	4.63	1.209
9	It is required from entry level graduates to understand how this organisation functions in relation to its competitors.	331	5.36	.966	24	4.46	1.444
10	Entry level graduates should be able to function effectively in a team.	334	5.66	.603	24	5.63	.576
11	To what extent do excellent oral communication skills contribute towards employment in entry level graduate positions?	334	4.31	.641	24	4.29	.751
12	To what extent do excellent written communication skills contribute towards employment in entry level graduate positions?	333	4.17	.768	24	3.96	.859

Question		Graduates			Organisations		
		N	Mean	Std deviation	N	Mean	Std deviation
13	To what extent are negotiation skills required for entry level graduate positions?	334	3.78	.921	24	2.67	1.049
14	To what extent is adaptability to changing circumstances a requirement for entry level graduates?	333	4.10	.972	24	3.96	.624
15	To what extent is the success of an entry level graduate driven by their own effort?	333	4.32	.703	24	4.29	.624
16	To what extent does self-motivation play a role in the success of an entry level graduate?	334	4.61	.568	24	4.38	.576
17	To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates?	334	3.91	.863	24	3.29	1.233
18	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to show commitment towards their work?	333	4.75	.527	24	4.67	.565
19	To what extent does the mature attitude of an entry level graduate play a role in employment?	334	4.33	.771	23	4.00	.798
20	To what extent are high levels of self-confidence a requirement for entry level graduate positions?	331	4.50	.634	23	3.78	.850
21	To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues and superiors?	333	4.49	.661	23	4.43	.662
22	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves by means of a well formatted CV secure employment?	334	4.08	.913	23	3.78	1.043
23	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to write a cover letter to respond to job advertisements secure employment?	334	3.96	.984	23	3.22	1.085
24	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves well in an interview secure employment?	334	4.50	.688	23	4.26	.810
25	To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to use a computer to execute their daily tasks?	332	4.24	.730	23	4.65	.885
26	To what extent is problem solving skills required from entry level graduates?	334	4.09	.775	24	3.71	1.122
27	To what extent is decision making skills required from entry level graduates?	334	3.89	.942	24	3.33	1.129
28	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand cause-and-effect relationships?	331	3.97	.834	24	3.38	1.209
29	To what extent are advanced numeracy skills required for entry level graduate positions?	334	4.08	.788	24	4.21	.977
30	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand economic influences on the organisation?	334	4.13	.817	23	3.39	1.076
31	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand how changes in the world impact on the functioning of the organisation?	334	4.12	.848	24	3.29	1.122
32	To what extent are listening skills required from entry level graduates?	333	4.67	.552	23	4.17	.778
33	To what extent are entry level graduates faced with interpersonal conflict?	332	3.10	1.059	24	2.96	1.083
34	To what extent should entry level graduates be able to effectively manage their time?	334	4.59	.632	24	4.33	.702
35	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand environmental influences on the organisation?	334	4.14	.807	24	3.38	1.096

With reference to questions 1-10, graduates who participated in the research indicated “agree to a large extent” with reference to the following statements:

1. Entry level graduates should be able to function effectively in a team. (A mean of 5.66 was obtained for this statement).
2. Entry level graduates should have high levels of self-discipline in order to succeed. (A mean of 5.58 was obtained for this statement).
3. It is expected from entry level graduates to independently plan their time. (A mean of 5.37 was obtained for this statement).
4. It is required from entry level graduates to understand how the organisation functions in relation to its competitors. (A mean of 5.36 was obtained for this statement).
5. It is essential for an entry level graduate to manage his/her own career development in order to secure employment. (A mean of 5.33 was obtained for this statement).
6. Entry level graduates should be able to use physical resources (such as fax machines and photo copiers) effectively. (A mean of 5.06 was obtained for this statement).

Organisations also indicated the “agree to a large extent” for the following three statements:

1. Entry level graduates should be able to function effectively in a team. (A mean of 5.63 was obtained for this statement).
2. Entry level graduates should have high levels of self-discipline in order to succeed. (A mean of 5.42 was obtained for this statement).
3. Entry level graduates should be able to use physical resources (such as fax machines and photo copiers) effectively. (A mean of 5.21 was obtained for this statement).

Graduates and organisations “disagreed to a large extent” with the statement “only graduates with a diploma will be employed in entry level positions” (a mean of 2.38 for graduates and 2.48 for organisations was obtained). In addition to this statement, graduates also “disagreed to a large extent” with the statement “only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions”.

With reference to questions 11-35, most graduates indicated “to a large extent” when answering the following questions:

1. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to show commitment towards their work? (A mean of 4.75 was obtained).
2. To what extent does self-motivation play a role in the success of an entry level graduate? (A mean of 4.61 was obtained).
3. To what extent should entry level graduates be able to effectively manage their time? (A mean of 4.59 was obtained.)

With reference to the same questions, most organisations indicated “to a large extent” when answering the following questions:

1. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to show commitment towards their work? (A mean of 4.67 was obtained.)
2. To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to use a computer to execute their daily tasks? (A mean of 4.65 was obtained.)
3. To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues and superiors? (A mean of 4.43 was obtained.)

It is interesting to note that both groups indicated “to a slight extent” or “to a moderate extent” with reference to the following questions:

1. To what extent are negotiation skills required for entry level graduate positions? (A mean of 3.78 was obtained from graduates and a mean of 2.67 from organisations).
2. To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates? (A mean of 3.91 was obtained from graduates and a mean of 3.29 from organisations)?
3. To what extent are entry level graduates faced with interpersonal conflict? (A mean of 3.10 was obtained from graduates and 2.96 from organisations)?

Graduates and organisations were also asked to rate 3 categories of skills/competencies from 1-3, according to what they perceive to be the first, second and third most important. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Rating of categories of skills/competencies

Category of skills/competency	Graduates			Organisations		
	N	Mean	Std Dev	N	Mean	Std Dev
Academic and technical skills (i.e. skills obtained during studies)	294	1.72	.761	20	1.30	.571
Basic/transferable skills (communication skills, personality characteristics [adaptability, self-reliance, self-discipline, motivation, innovation, positive work ethic, mature attitude, confidence, leadership, self development]; interpersonal skills and teamwork, occupational skills [i.e. job search strategies], information technology skills, effective management of resources, time management skills, world and local awareness)	294	1.83	.772	20	1.80	.523
Work experience	293	2.45	.737	20	2.90	.308

Both groups rated the categories of skills/competencies as follows:

1. Work experience;
2. Basic/transferable skills; and
3. Technical skills.

It is interesting to note that organisations slightly disagreed with the fact that entry level graduates need work experience in order to become employed. They also slightly agreed with the fact that only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions. However, the majority of organisations that participated in this research indicated that work experience is rated higher than academic and technical skills (when asked to rate these 3 categories of skills).

Graduates and organisations were lastly asked to rate a list of skills/competencies from 1-10, indicating a 1 next to the most important skill/competency, 2 next to the second most important, etc. Descriptive statistics for graduates and organisations are presented in tables 17 and 18 respectively.

Table 17

Descriptive statistics for ranking of the list of skills/competencies for graduates

Skill/competency	N	Mean	Std dev
Oral communication	228	4.20	3.033
Self-discipline	222	4.20	2.724
Confidence	200	4.52	2.630
Written communication	162	4.81	2.682
Self-reliance	66	5.24	2.542
Leadership	138	5.32	2.760
Mature attitude	92	5.33	2.883
Occupation skills (job search strategies)	50	5.46	3.253
Motivation	131	5.46	2.647
Interpersonal skills and teamwork	199	5.62	2.784
Adaptability	121	5.63	2.646
Positive work ethic	153	5.63	2.805
Time management	221	5.68	2.699
Negotiation skills	102	5.69	2.811
Decision making skills	160	6.06	2.669
Self development	92	6.11	2.438
Information technology skills	122	6.17	2.925
Innovation	74	6.22	2.962
Problem solving skills	190	6.24	2.691
Numeracy skills	109	6.69	2.788
An awareness of how changes in the world impact on the organisation	86	7.33	2.920
Effective management of resources	59	7.37	2.413

Graduates rated the following skills/competencies as the 10 most important:

1. Oral communication (a mean of 4.20 was obtained)
2. Self discipline (a mean of 4.20 was obtained)
3. Confidence (a mean of 4.52 was obtained)
4. Written communication (a mean of 4.81 was obtained)
5. Self reliance (a mean of 5.24 was obtained)
6. Leadership (a mean of 5.32 was obtained)
7. Mature attitude (a mean of 5.33 was obtained)
8. Occupation skills (job search strategies) (a mean of 5.46 was obtained)
9. Motivation (a mean of 5.46 was obtained)
10. Interpersonal skills and teamwork (a mean of 5.62 was obtained)

Table 18

Descriptive statistics for ranking of the list of skills/competencies for organisations

Skill/competency	N	Mean	Std dev
Mature attitude	5	2.40	.894
Innovation	1	3.00	
Numeracy skills	12	3.00	2.796
Oral communication	13	3.38	2.755
Occupation skills (job search strategies)	2	3.50	3.536
Positive work ethic	13	4.46	2.436
Problem solving skills	9	4.67	2.958
Motivation	9	4.78	2.489
Self-discipline	11	4.82	2.676
Interpersonal skills and teamwork	15	5.27	2.282
Self development	5	5.60	1.817
Confidence	7	6.00	3.512
Negotiation skills	1	6.00	
Time management	13	6.46	2.696
Leadership	5	6.60	3.507
Decision making skills	4	6.75	1.708
Written communication	12	6.83	2.329
Adaptability	8	7.13	2.416
Information technology skills	11	7.18	2.272
Self-reliance	4	7.25	2.754
Effective management of resources	7	8.14	2.116
An awareness of how changes in the world impact on the organisation	2	9.50	.707

Organisations rated the following skills/competencies as the 10 most important:

1. Mature attitude (a mean of 2.40 was obtained)
2. Innovation (a mean of 3.00 was obtained)
3. Numeracy skills (a mean of 3.00 was obtained)
4. Oral communication (a mean of 3.38 was obtained)
5. Occupation skills (job search strategies) (a mean of 3.50 was obtained)
6. Positive work ethic (a mean of 4.46 was obtained)
7. Problem solving skills (a mean of 4.67 was obtained)
8. Motivation (a mean of 4.78 was obtained)
9. Self-discipline (a mean of 4.82 was obtained)
10. Interpersonal skills and teamwork (a mean of 5.27 was obtained)

The skills/competencies that were rated by both groups as important (i.e. under the top ten skills/competencies) are: oral communication, self-discipline, mature attitude, occupational skills (i.e. job search strategies), motivation, interpersonal skills and teamwork. These skills are listed as transferable/basic skills in section 2.3.2 of this dissertation.

It is clear from the literature (refer to chapter 3) as well as the results from this research that more skills are needed from graduates for entry level positions. Davies (2000) stresses the fact that it is expected from graduates to make a significant contribution to the organisation and to take ownership of their careers. Jorgensen (2004) argues that the acquired skills from further studies do not necessarily lead to the skills/competencies valued by the labour market. Nabi (2003) maintains that graduate employability skills are varied and that it consists of academic skills as well as core/key skills. In line with this, Zinser (2003) refers to academic, technical and social skills as work readiness skills.

When comparing the work readiness skills identified by the literature and the prominent skills identified by this research, it is clear that some common work readiness skills as identified by Addis (2003) such as personal development (e.g. mature attitude and motivation) and occupational skills (job search strategies) have been identified by the research. Some of the work readiness skills (such as effective communication and working effectively with others) identified by Greenwood et al. (1987) as far back as the late 80's were also identified by this research. Not only was self-discipline rated by organisations and graduates as one of the 10 most important work readiness skills, Falconer and Pettigrew (2003) also identified this skills as an important basic/transferable skill. Some of the top 10 work readiness skills rated by organisations and graduates that are in line with the research of Zinser (2003) on employability skills include the effective management of resources, effective communication skills, interpersonal skills and effective teamwork. Teamwork, and effective oral and written communication, are also two of the work readiness skills identified by Falconer and Pettigrew (2003) with specific reference to the financial services profession.

It appears from the results of the research, that workplace knowledge and learning is not highly contextual as argued by Munby et al. (2003) and that there are common work readiness skills that

are relevant across different jobs. It also appears from the research that adaptability, which is an important skill for South African talent, according to Birt et al. (2004), has not been identified by graduates or organisations as one of the 10 most important work readiness skills.

Thus, it appears that although there are some common basic/transferable work readiness skills there are many opinions regarding exactly what these skills entail.

The differences between the organisation and graduate groups are discussed in the following section.

4.5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and t-tests for equality of means were performed to determine the differences between the following groups:

- Graduates and organisations;
- Graduates who have completed a degree and graduates who have completed a diploma;
- Graduates with no work experience and graduates with work experience due to part time work.

As mentioned in section 3.5, Levene's test is used to calculate homogeneity of variance (Field, 2005). Levene's test, tests the hypothesis that the variances in the groups are equal (i.e. that the differences between the variances are zero) (Field, 2005).

The cut-off points for practical significance of differences between the means of groups were discussed in section 3.5. For the purposes of this study, d values higher than 0.5 will be regarded as practical significant.

The information obtained from statistical analysis is presented in Tables 19-22. The corresponding questions (for B1-B35, C1-C3 and D1-D22) are provided in Appendix B.

Table 19

T-test for graduates and organisations

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
B1	Equal variances assumed	1.839	0.176	1.836	352	0.067	0.726	0.395	-0.052	1.503
	Equal variances not assumed			2.157	28.094	0.04	0.726	0.336	0.037	1.415
B2	Equal variances assumed	0.844	0.359	-5.458	354	0*	-1.87	0.343	-2.545	-1.2
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.83	25.571	0	-1.87	0.387	-2.667	-1.07
B3	Equal variances assumed	0.022	0.881	-0.369	352	0.712	-0.13	0.347	-0.809	0.554
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.366	25.1	0.717	-0.13	0.349	-0.847	0.591
B4	Equal variances assumed	0.279	0.598	0.961	356	0.337	0.167	0.174	-0.175	0.509
	Equal variances not assumed			1.31	30.251	0.2	0.167	0.128	-0.093	0.428
B5	Equal variances assumed	3.303	0.07	1.439	356	0.151	0.408	0.284	-0.149	0.966
	Equal variances not assumed			1.8	28.854	0.082	0.408	0.227	-0.056	0.872
B6	Equal variances assumed	0.138	0.71	2.728	356	0.007*	0.576	0.211	0.161	0.992
	Equal variances not assumed			2.876	26.875	0.008	0.576	0.2	0.165	0.988
B7	Equal variances assumed	0.691	0.406	-0.611	355	0.542	-0.15	0.238	-0.613	0.323
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.761	28.823	0.453	-0.15	0.191	-0.536	0.245
B8	Equal variances assumed	2.205	0.138	3.371	356	0.001*	0.749	0.222	0.312	1.186
	Equal variances not assumed			2.958	25.506	0.007	0.749	0.253	0.228	1.27
B9	Equal variances assumed	8.022	0.005	4.231	353	0	0.898	0.212	0.481	1.316
	Equal variances not assumed			2.999	24.515	0.006*	0.898	0.299	0.281	1.516
B10	Equal variances assumed	0.017	0.897	0.265	356	0.791	0.034	0.127	-0.216	0.284
	Equal variances not assumed			0.276	26.757	0.785	0.034	0.122	-0.217	0.284
B11	Equal variances assumed	0.822	0.365	0.1	356	0.92	0.014	0.137	-0.256	0.283
	Equal variances not assumed			0.087	25.469	0.931	0.014	0.157	-0.31	0.337
B12	Equal variances assumed	0.107	0.744	1.264	355	0.207	0.207	0.164	-0.115	0.529
	Equal variances not assumed			1.147	25.724	0.262	0.207	0.18	-0.164	0.578
B13	Equal variances assumed	0.019	0.891	5.645	356	0*	1.109	0.196	0.723	1.495
	Equal variances not assumed			5.038	25.608	0	1.109	0.22	0.656	1.561
B14	Equal variances assumed	9.948	0.002	0.699	355	0.485	0.141	0.202	-0.256	0.537
	Equal variances not assumed			1.019	31.68	0.316	0.141	0.138	-0.141	0.422
B15	Equal variances assumed	1.673	0.197	0.181	355	0.857	0.027	0.148	-0.264	0.317
	Equal variances not assumed			0.2	27.388	0.843	0.027	0.133	-0.246	0.3
B16	Equal variances assumed	0.027	0.869	1.936	356	0.054	0.233	0.12	-0.004	0.469
	Equal variances not assumed			1.915	26.326	0.066	0.233	0.122	-0.017	0.483
B17	Equal variances assumed	9.324	0.002	3.266	356	0.001	0.616	0.188	0.245	0.986
	Equal variances not assumed			2.404	24.647	0.024*	0.616	0.256	0.088	1.143
B18	Equal variances assumed	1.897	0.169	0.751	355	0.453	0.084	0.112	-0.136	0.304
	Equal variances not assumed			0.708	25.975	0.485	0.084	0.119	-0.16	0.328

		Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for equality of means						
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean difference	Std error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
B19	Equal variances assumed	1.24	0.266	1.978	355	0.049*	0.329	0.167	0.002	0.657
	Equal variances not assumed			1.919	24.912	0.066	0.329	0.172	-0.024	0.683
B20	Equal variances assumed	1.025	0.312	5.152	352	0*	0.722	0.14	0.446	0.998
	Equal variances not assumed			3.994	23.731	0.001	0.722	0.181	0.349	1.095
B21	Equal variances assumed	0.003	0.955	0.363	354	0.717	0.052	0.143	-0.229	0.332
	Equal variances not assumed			0.362	25.126	0.72	0.052	0.143	-0.242	0.346
B22	Equal variances assumed	1.78	0.183	1.516	355	0.13	0.301	0.199	-0.09	0.692
	Equal variances not assumed			1.35	24.381	0.189	0.301	0.223	-0.159	0.761
B23	Equal variances assumed	1.064	0.303	3.455	355	0.001*	0.738	0.214	0.318	1.158
	Equal variances not assumed			3.171	24.555	0.004	0.738	0.233	0.258	1.217
B24	Equal variances assumed	1.019	0.314	1.614	355	0.107	0.242	0.15	-0.053	0.537
	Equal variances not assumed			1.399	24.234	0.174	0.242	0.173	-0.115	0.599
B25	Equal variances assumed	0.005	0.946	-2.595	353	0.01*	-0.41	0.16	-0.728	-0.1
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.194	24.119	0.038	-0.41	0.189	-0.804	-0.02
B26	Equal variances assumed	6.378	0.012	2.268	356	0.024	0.384	0.17	0.051	0.718
	Equal variances not assumed			1.651	24.603	0.112	0.384	0.233	-0.096	0.865
B27	Equal variances assumed	1.47	0.226	2.738	356	0.006*	0.553	0.202	0.156	0.95
	Equal variances not assumed			2.341	25.354	0.027	0.553	0.236	0.067	1.039
B28	Equal variances assumed	8.408	0.004	3.258	353	0.001	0.595	0.183	0.236	0.954
	Equal variances not assumed			2.369	24.613	0.026*	0.595	0.251	0.077	1.112
B29	Equal variances assumed	2.278	0.132	-0.753	356	0.452	-0.13	0.169	-0.461	0.206
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.625	25.197	0.538	-0.13	0.204	-0.548	0.293
B30	Equal variances assumed	3.594	0.059	4.112	355	0*	0.74	0.18	0.386	1.095
	Equal variances not assumed			3.236	23.778	0.004	0.74	0.229	0.268	1.213
B31	Equal variances assumed	4.704	0.031	4.515	356	0	0.828	0.183	0.467	1.189
	Equal variances not assumed			3.544	24.922	0.002*	0.828	0.234	0.347	1.309
B32	Equal variances assumed	0.467	0.495	4.065	354	0*	0.499	0.123	0.257	0.74
	Equal variances not assumed			3.024	23.558	0.006	0.499	0.165	0.158	0.84
B33	Equal variances assumed	0.532	0.466	0.616	354	0.538	0.138	0.224	-0.303	0.579
	Equal variances not assumed			0.604	26.28	0.551	0.138	0.229	-0.331	0.607
B34	Equal variances assumed	0.337	0.562	1.884	356	0.06	0.253	0.135	-0.011	0.518
	Equal variances not assumed			1.72	25.751	0.097	0.253	0.147	-0.05	0.557
B35	Equal variances assumed	3.255	0.072	4.387	356	0*	0.769	0.175	0.424	1.113
	Equal variances not assumed			3.371	24.827	0.002	0.769	0.228	0.299	1.239
C1	Equal variances assumed	5.806	0.017	2.408	312	0.017	0.418	0.173	0.076	0.759
	Equal variances not assumed			3.089	23.839	0.005*	0.418	0.135	0.139	0.697
C2	Equal variances assumed	7.801	0.006	0.19	312	0.85	0.033	0.176	-0.312	0.379
	Equal variances not assumed			0.266	25.018	0.792	0.033	0.125	-0.225	0.291
C3	Equal variances assumed	39.18	0	-2.687	311	0.008	-0.45	0.166	-0.773	-0.12
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.495	36.422	0*	-0.45	0.081	-0.611	-0.28

		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
D1	Equal variances assumed	0.751	0.387	0.949	239	0.344	0.817	0.861	-0.879	2.514
	Equal variances not assumed			1.034	13.713	0.319	0.817	0.79	-0.881	2.515
D2	Equal variances assumed	2.184	0.141	-2.535	172	0.012*	-2.02	0.796	-3.59	-0.45
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.865	13.259	0.013	-2.02	0.705	-3.538	-0.5
D3	Equal variances assumed	.	.	-0.111	101	0.912	-0.31	2.825	-5.917	5.289
	Equal variances not assumed			.	.	.	-0.31	.	.	.
D4	Equal variances assumed	0.224	0.636	-1.557	127	0.122	-1.5	0.962	-3.4	0.406
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.687	8.151	0.129	-1.5	0.888	-3.537	0.543
D5	Equal variances assumed	0.013	0.909	-1.528	68	0.131	-2.01	1.314	-4.63	0.615
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.422	3.3175	0.242	-2.01	1.412	-6.267	2.252
D6	Equal variances assumed	0.086	0.769	-0.738	231	0.462	-0.62	0.841	-2.276	1.036
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.749	11.051	0.469	-0.62	0.827	-2.44	1.2
D7	Equal variances assumed	0.848	0.359	0.748	138	0.455	0.68	0.909	-1.117	2.477
	Equal variances not assumed			0.79	9.2877	0.449	0.68	0.861	-1.259	2.619
D8	Equal variances assumed	.	.	1.078	73	0.284	3.216	2.982	-2.727	9.16
	Equal variances not assumed			.	.	.	3.216	.	.	.
D9	Equal variances assumed	1.644	0.202	1.452	164	0.148	1.166	0.803	-0.42	2.751
	Equal variances not assumed			1.636	14.84	0.123	1.166	0.713	-0.355	2.687
D10	Equal variances assumed	5.589	0.02	2.254	95	0.027	2.926	1.298	0.349	5.504
	Equal variances not assumed			5.848	9.6559	0*	2.926	0.5	1.806	4.046
D11	Equal variances assumed	2.988	0.085	-1.452	205	0.148	-1.49	1.023	-3.501	0.531
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.108	6.2377	0.309	-1.49	1.34	-4.735	1.765
D12	Equal variances assumed	0.02	0.888	-1.011	141	0.314	-1.28	1.268	-3.787	1.225
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.808	4.1815	0.463	-1.28	1.586	-5.61	3.048
D13	Equal variances assumed	0.613	0.436	0.459	95	0.648	0.509	1.109	-1.693	2.71
	Equal variances not assumed			0.598	4.8195	0.577	0.509	0.851	-1.704	2.722
D14	Equal variances assumed	1.715	0.192	0.483	212	0.629	0.356	0.737	-1.097	1.81
	Equal variances not assumed			0.574	17.301	0.574	0.356	0.621	-0.953	1.666
D15	Equal variances assumed	0.111	0.74	0.834	50	0.408	1.96	2.35	-2.76	6.68
	Equal variances not assumed			0.771	1.0688	0.575	1.96	2.542	-25.82	29.74
D16	Equal variances assumed	2.081	0.152	-1.113	131	0.268	-1.01	0.907	-2.804	0.784
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.375	13.187	0.192	-1.01	0.735	-2.594	0.575
D17	Equal variances assumed	0.184	0.67	-0.807	64	0.423	-0.77	0.954	-2.676	1.136
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.896	7.9758	0.396	-0.77	0.859	-2.752	1.212
D18	Equal variances assumed	0.013	0.909	-1.016	232	0.31	-0.78	0.77	-2.3	0.735
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.017	13.454	0.327	-0.78	0.769	-2.44	0.874
D19	Equal variances assumed	2.491	0.116	-0.516	162	0.606	-0.69	1.344	-3.347	1.959
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.789	3.3772	0.482	-0.69	0.88	-3.324	1.937
D20	Equal variances assumed	0.777	0.38	4.348	119	0*	3.688	0.848	2.009	5.368
	Equal variances not assumed			4.338	13.523	0.001	3.688	0.85	1.859	5.518

		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig (t-tailed)	Mean difference	Std error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
D21	Equal variances assumed	0.008	0.928	1.703	197	0.09	1.57	0.922	-0.248	3.388
	Equal variances not assumed			1.562	8.6388	0.154	1.57	1.005	-0.718	3.859
D22	Equal variances assumed	2.866	0.094	-1.047	86	0.298	-2.17	2.077	-6.304	1.955
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.68	1.947	0.069	-2.17	0.591	-4.784	0.435

*statistical significant difference $p \leq 0.05$

From Table 19, a statistical significant difference between the organisations and graduates groups were found on 21 items.

Equal variances are assumed for the following items, i.e. the variances of the two groups are roughly equal (Field, 2005):

- Only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions.
- It is essential for a graduate to manage his/her career development in order to secure employment.
- It is expected from entry level graduates to independently plan their time.
- To what extent are negotiation skills required for entry level positions?
- To what extent does the mature attitude of an entry level graduate play a role in employment?
- To what extent are high levels of self-confidence a requirement for entry level graduate positions?
- To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to write a cover letter to respond to job advertisements secure employment?
- To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to use a computer to execute their daily tasks?
- To what extent are decision making skills required from entry level graduates?

- To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand economic influences on the organisation?
- To what extent are listening skills required from entry level graduates?
- To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand environmental influences on the organisation?
- Rating of written communication
- Rating of numeracy skills

Equal variances are not assumed for the following items, i.e. the variances between the two groups with reference to these items are significantly different (Field, 2005):

- It is required from entry level graduates to understand how organisations function in relation to its competitors.
- To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates?
- To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand cause-and-effect relationships in an organisation?
- To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand how changes in the world impact on the functioning of the organisation?
- Rating of oral communication
- Rating of work experience
- Rating of mature attitude

The practical difference (d values) between the graduate and organisations is presented in Table 20. Significant differences between these groups were found for 21 items. The p (statistical significance values) and d values (practical significance) for each item is also provided.

Table 20

Significant differences between items for graduates and organisations

Items	P	Graduates		Organisations		D
		Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev	
Only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions.	0	2.38	1.605	4.25	1.847	1.012**
It is essential for an entry level graduate to manage his/her own career development in order to secure employment.	0.007	5.33	1.004	4.75	0.944	0.578*
It is expected from entry level graduates to independently plan their time.	0.001	5.37	1.040	4.63	1.209	0.612*
It is required from entry level graduates to understand how organisations function in relation to its competitors.	0.006	5.36	0.966	4.46	1.444	0.623*
To what extent are negotiation skills required for entry level graduate positions?	0	3.78	0.921	2.67	1.049	1.058*
To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates?	0.024	3.91	0.863	3.29	1.233	0.503*
To what extent does the mature attitude of an entry level graduate play a role in employment?	0.049	4.33	0.771	4.00	0.798	0.414
To what extent are high levels of self-confidence a requirement for entry level graduates positions?	0	4.50	0.634	3.78	0.850	0.847**
To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to write a cover letter to respond to job advertisements secure employment?	0.001	3.96	0.984	3.22	1.085	0.682*
To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to use a computer to execute their daily tasks?	0.01	4.24	0.730	4.65	0.885	0.463
To what extent is decision making skills required from entry level graduates?	0.006	3.89	0.942	3.33	1.129	0.496
To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand cause-and-effect relationships?	0.026	3.97	0.834	3.38	1.209	0.488
To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand economic influences on the organisation?	0	4.13	0.817	3.39	1.076	0.688*
To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand how changes in the world impact on the functioning of the organisation?	0.002	4.12	0.848	3.29	1.122	0.74*
To what extent are listening skills required from entry level graduates?	0	4.67	0.552	4.17	0.778	0.643*
To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand environmental influences on the organisation?	0	4.14	0.807	3.38	1.096	0.693*
Ranking the importance of academic and technical skills (i.e. skills obtained during studies)	0.005	1.72	0.761	1.30	0.571	0.552*
Ranking the importance of work experience	0	2.45	0.737	2.90	0.308	0.611*
Ranking the importance of written communication	0.012	4.81	2.682	6.83	2.329	0.753*
Ranking the importance of a mature attitude	0	5.33	2.883	2.40	0.894	1.016**
Ranking the importance of numeracy skills	0	6.69	2.788	3.00	2.796	1.32**

* $d \geq 0.5$ medium effect** $d \geq 0.8$ large effect

It is clear from Table 20 that significant differences were found in terms of the following skills/competencies which graduates valued more than organisations:

- Negotiation skills;
- Managing one's own career;
- Independently managing one's time;
- Understanding how organisations function in relation to its competitors;
- Self-confidence;
- Writing a cover letter to respond to job advertisements;
- Understanding economic influences on the organisation;
- Understanding how changes in the world impact on the functioning of the organisation;
- Listening skills; and
- Understanding the impact of environmental influences on the organisation.

A significant difference was also found in terms of the following statement: "Only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions". Organisations valued this statement more than graduates.

In terms of the rating of the skills/competencies, there were significant differences in terms of the following skills/competencies that organisations rated as more important than graduates:

- Academic and technical skills (skills obtained during studies);
- Innovation;
- Mature attitude; and
- Numeracy skills.

There were significant differences in terms of the following skills/competencies which graduates rated as more important than organisations:

- Work experience; and
- Written communication.

There were no significant differences found between the rating of the skills/competencies by organisations and graduates on the following:

- Negotiation skills;
- Mature attitude;
- Ability to use a computer to execute daily tasks;
- Decision making skills; and
- Understanding cause-and-effect relationships.

Differences with reference to graduates who have completed a degree and graduates who have completed a diploma were also calculated. No significant differences were found between these two groups.

Differences with reference to graduates who have work experience due to previous part time work and graduates with no work experience are discussed next.

Table 21

T-test for graduates with no work experience and graduates with part time work experience

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
B1	Equal variances assumed	3.47	0.063	0.387	301	0.699	0.084	0.218	-0.344	0.512
	Equal variances not assumed			0.384	288.045	0.701	0.084	0.219	-0.346	0.515
B2	Equal variances assumed	2.812	0.095	1.301	304	0.194	0.238	0.183	-0.122	0.598
	Equal variances not assumed			1.292	287.625	0.197	0.238	0.184	-0.125	0.6
B3	Equal variances assumed	1.896	0.17	1.177	303	0.24	0.211	0.179	-0.142	0.564
	Equal variances not assumed			1.171	292.361	0.242	0.211	0.18	-0.143	0.565
B4	Equal variances assumed	0.247	0.619	-0.739	305	0.461	-0.072	0.097	-0.263	0.119
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.745	304.88	0.457	-0.072	0.096	-0.261	0.118
B5	Equal variances assumed	0.55	0.459	-1.014	305	0.311	-0.154	0.152	-0.453	0.145
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.01	293.531	0.314	-0.154	0.153	-0.454	0.146

		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
B6	Equal variances assumed	4.102	0.044	-1.238	305	0.217	-0.143	0.116	-0.371	0.085
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.22	270.263	0.224	-0.143	0.118	-0.375	0.088
B7	Equal variances assumed	3.783	0.053	-1.953	304	0.052	-0.247	0.126	-0.496	0.002
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.93	276.597	0.055	-0.247	0.128	-0.499	0.005
B8	Equal variances assumed	2.607	0.107	0.799	305	0.425	0.094	0.118	-0.137	0.325
	Equal variances not assumed			0.812	299.944	0.418	0.094	0.116	-0.134	0.322
B9	Equal variances assumed	2.079	0.15	-0.797	302	0.426	-0.088	0.111	-0.306	0.13
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.794	290.348	0.428	-0.088	0.111	-0.307	0.131
B10	Equal variances assumed	2.657	0.104	-1.271	305	0.205	-0.088	0.069	-0.225	0.048
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.269	298.227	0.205	-0.088	0.07	-0.225	0.049
B11	Equal variances assumed	0.725	0.395	0.068	305	0.946	0.005	0.073	-0.138	0.148
	Equal variances not assumed			0.068	303.309	0.946	0.005	0.072	-0.137	0.147
B12	Equal variances assumed	0.005	0.942	-0.675	304	0.5	-0.06	0.089	-0.236	0.115
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.673	295.124	0.502	-0.06	0.089	-0.236	0.116
B13	Equal variances assumed	1.112	0.293	-1.147	305	0.252	-0.121	0.105	-0.328	0.086
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.146	298.361	0.253	-0.121	0.105	-0.328	0.087
B14	Equal variances assumed	0.945	0.332	0.123	304	0.902	0.014	0.111	-0.205	0.233
	Equal variances not assumed			0.123	293.497	0.902	0.014	0.112	-0.206	0.234
B15	Equal variances assumed	0.695	0.405	-2.839	304	0.005*	-0.225	0.079	-0.382	-0.07
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.816	285.905	0.005	-0.225	0.08	-0.383	-0.07
B16	Equal variances assumed	0.279	0.598	-0.644	305	0.52	-0.042	0.066	-0.172	0.087
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.643	297.816	0.521	-0.042	0.066	-0.172	0.087
B17	Equal variances assumed	3.135	0.078	-2.136	305	0.033*	-0.208	0.097	-0.399	-0.02
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.126	293.71	0.034	-0.208	0.098	-0.4	-0.02
B18	Equal variances assumed	0.535	0.465	-0.911	304	0.363	-0.055	0.06	-0.173	0.064
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.915	303.371	0.361	-0.055	0.06	-0.173	0.063
B19	Equal variances assumed	0.108	0.743	-1.115	305	0.266	-0.096	0.086	-0.265	0.073
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.106	287.255	0.27	-0.096	0.086	-0.266	0.075
B20	Equal variances assumed	1.333	0.249	-1.505	303	0.133	-0.108	0.072	-0.25	0.033
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.501	294.891	0.135	-0.108	0.072	-0.25	0.034
B21	Equal variances assumed	1.615	0.205	-1.156	304	0.248	-0.088	0.076	-0.237	0.062
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.17	303.441	0.243	-0.088	0.075	-0.236	0.06
B22	Equal variances assumed	4.982	0.026	-0.479	305	0.632	-0.05	0.105	-0.257	0.156
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.475	282.044	0.635	-0.05	0.106	-0.259	0.159
B23	Equal variances assumed	1.204	0.273	-1.35	305	0.178	-0.153	0.113	-0.375	0.07
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.346	296.568	0.179	-0.153	0.113	-0.376	0.071
B24	Equal variances assumed	0.141	0.708	-0.384	305	0.701	-0.03	0.078	-0.184	0.124
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.383	296.728	0.702	-0.03	0.078	-0.184	0.124

		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
B25	Equal variances assumed	0.436	0.51	-1.026	303	0.306	-0.084	0.082	-0.245	0.077
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.018	284.427	0.31	-0.084	0.083	-0.247	0.079
B26	Equal variances assumed	0.404	0.525	-2.516	305	0.012*	-0.218	0.087	-0.388	-0.05
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.509	296.609	0.013	-0.218	0.087	-0.389	-0.05
B27	Equal variances assumed	3.06	0.081	-1.11	305	0.268	-0.118	0.107	-0.328	0.091
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.103	289.506	0.271	-0.118	0.107	-0.33	0.093
B28	Equal variances assumed	1.302	0.255	-1.114	302	0.266	-0.106	0.095	-0.292	0.081
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.107	287.574	0.269	-0.106	0.095	-0.293	0.082
B29	Equal variances assumed	0.356	0.551	-0.124	305	0.901	-0.011	0.09	-0.188	0.165
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.124	296.212	0.902	-0.011	0.09	-0.188	0.166
B30	Equal variances assumed	0.18	0.672	1.032	305	0.303	0.096	0.093	-0.087	0.28
	Equal variances not assumed			1.034	302.067	0.302	0.096	0.093	-0.087	0.28
B31	Equal variances assumed	0.035	0.851	0.169	305	0.866	0.016	0.096	-0.173	0.205
	Equal variances not assumed			0.169	302.446	0.866	0.016	0.096	-0.172	0.205
B32	Equal variances assumed	1.103	0.294	0.536	304	0.592	0.034	0.063	-0.091	0.159
	Equal variances not assumed			0.537	301.356	0.592	0.034	0.063	-0.09	0.158
B33	Equal variances assumed	0.193	0.661	0.478	303	0.633	0.058	0.122	-0.181	0.298
	Equal variances not assumed			0.479	301.685	0.632	0.058	0.121	-0.181	0.297
B34	Equal variances assumed	0.537	0.464	-0.899	305	0.37	-0.066	0.073	-0.21	0.078
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.901	303.006	0.368	-0.066	0.073	-0.209	0.078
B35	Equal variances assumed	0.407	0.524	1.047	305	0.296	0.097	0.093	-0.085	0.28
	Equal variances not assumed			1.047	299.422	0.296	0.097	0.093	-0.085	0.28
C1	Equal variances assumed	0.306	0.581	-0.405	267	0.686	-0.038	0.093	-0.22	0.145
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.403	252.598	0.687	-0.038	0.093	-0.221	0.146
C2	Equal variances assumed	1.1	0.295	0.926	267	0.356	0.087	0.094	-0.098	0.273
	Equal variances not assumed			0.927	261.116	0.355	0.087	0.094	-0.098	0.273
C3	Equal variances assumed	0.544	0.461	-0.329	266	0.742	-0.03	0.091	-0.209	0.149
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.328	254.951	0.743	-0.03	0.091	-0.21	0.15
D1	Equal variances assumed	1.792	0.182	-0.528	208	0.598	-0.224	0.425	-1.062	0.614
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.53	204.826	0.597	-0.224	0.423	-1.059	0.61
D2	Equal variances assumed	0.934	0.336	-0.613	145	0.541	-0.274	0.446	-1.156	0.609
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.616	143.269	0.539	-0.274	0.444	-1.151	0.604
D3	Equal variances assumed	0.794	0.375	0.772	91	0.442	0.455	0.589	-0.715	1.624
	Equal variances not assumed			0.759	72.5999	0.45	0.455	0.599	-0.739	1.649
D4	Equal variances assumed	0.004	0.95	1.635	110	0.105	0.816	0.499	-0.173	1.806
	Equal variances not assumed			1.635	103.292	0.105	0.816	0.499	-0.174	1.806
D5	Equal variances assumed	0.056	0.814	-0.052	59	0.958	-0.035	0.666	-1.368	1.298
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.052	55.9805	0.958	-0.035	0.666	-1.369	1.3

		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
D6	Equal variances assumed	3.293	0.071	-0.725	202	0.469	-0.282	0.389	-1.048	0.485
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.739	194.768	0.461	-0.282	0.381	-1.034	0.47
D7	Equal variances assumed	3.29	0.072	-0.442	120	0.659	-0.21	0.474	-1.148	0.729
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.444	117.162	0.658	-0.21	0.472	-1.145	0.726
D8	Equal variances assumed	0.133	0.717	0.266	62	0.791	0.201	0.756	-1.311	1.713
	Equal variances not assumed			0.267	57.06	0.79	0.201	0.753	-1.306	1.709
D9	Equal variances assumed	0.952	0.331	1.062	138	0.29	0.516	0.486	-0.444	1.476
	Equal variances not assumed			1.071	128.872	0.286	0.516	0.481	-0.437	1.468
D10	Equal variances assumed	0.234	0.63	2.215	79	0.03*	1.437	0.649	0.1456	2.729
	Equal variances not assumed			2.188	58.6619	0.033	1.437	0.657	0.1228	2.752
D11	Equal variances assumed	0.879	0.35	-1.682	182	0.094	-0.65	0.387	-1.413	0.113
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.687	181.472	0.093	-0.65	0.385	-1.411	0.11
D12	Equal variances assumed	1.278	0.26	-2.148	129	0.034*	-1.044	0.486	-2.006	-0.08
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.169	124.532	0.032	-1.044	0.482	-1.997	-0.09
D13	Equal variances assumed	0.226	0.636	-0.171	80	0.864	-0.095	0.557	-1.204	1.013
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.172	79.9725	0.864	-0.095	0.555	-1.2	1.009
D14	Equal variances assumed	0.573	0.45	0.253	182	0.801	0.105	0.414	-0.713	0.922
	Equal variances not assumed			0.256	167.3	0.798	0.105	0.408	-0.701	0.91
D15	Equal variances assumed	0.016	0.899	-3.373	45	0.002*	-2.891	0.857	-4.617	-1.16
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.378	41.3141	0.002	-2.891	0.856	-4.619	-1.16
D16	Equal variances assumed	3.388	0.068	3.041	110	0.003*	1.64	0.539	0.5712	2.709
	Equal variances not assumed			3.081	109.013	0.003	1.64	0.532	0.5851	2.695
D17	Equal variances assumed	0.262	0.611	-1.502	54	0.139	-0.935	0.623	-2.184	0.314
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.47	43.8531	0.149	-0.935	0.636	-2.218	0.347
D18	Equal variances assumed	2.339	0.128	-0.219	198	0.827	-0.082	0.375	-0.823	0.658
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.219	194.366	0.827	-0.082	0.376	-0.824	0.66
D19	Equal variances assumed	0.139	0.71	0.18	148	0.857	0.079	0.437	-0.784	0.942
	Equal variances not assumed			0.18	146.013	0.857	0.079	0.436	-0.783	0.941
D20	Equal variances assumed	0.961	0.329	1.942	99	0.055	1.064	0.548	-0.023	2.152
	Equal variances not assumed			1.953	97.5236	0.054	1.064	0.545	-0.017	2.146
D21	Equal variances assumed	0.011	0.918	0.605	173	0.546	0.248	0.411	-0.562	1.059
	Equal variances not assumed			0.605	155.49	0.546	0.248	0.41	-0.562	1.059
D22	Equal variances assumed	0.673	0.415	-0.835	79	0.406	-0.525	0.629	-1.777	0.727
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.831	75.258	0.408	-0.525	0.632	-1.784	0.733

From Table 21, a statistical significant difference between graduates with no work experience and graduates with part time experience were found on 7 items. Equal variances are assumed for the following items, i.e. the variances of the two groups are roughly equal (Field, 2005):

- To what extent is the success of an entry level graduate driven by their own effort?
- To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates?
- To what extent are problem solving skills required from entry level graduates?
- Rating of mature attitude.
- Rating of leadership.
- Rating of occupational skills (job search strategies).
- Rating of information technology skills.

Table 22 indicates the 2 factors with significant differences between the graduates with no work experience and the graduates with work experience.

Table 22

Significant differences between items for graduates with no work experience and people with work experience due to part time work

Items	P	No work experience		Part time work experience		D
		Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev	
Rating of occupational skills (job search strategies)	0.016	4.26	2.917	7.15	2.889	0.990**
Rating of information technology skills	0.003	7.14	2.642	5.5	2.985	0.549*

* $d \geq 0.5$ medium effect

** $d \geq 0.8$ large effect

It is clear from Table 22 that there was a significant difference between graduates with no work experience and graduates with work experience in terms of valuing occupational skills and information technology skills. Graduates with no work experience regard occupational skills (job search strategies) as more important than graduates with work experience and graduates with work experienced valued information technology skills more than graduates without work experience.

There were no significant difference between the rating of the following items by graduates with no work experience and graduates with work experience due to part time work:

- Success of entry level graduate is driven by their own effort;

- Innovation;
- Problem solving skills;
- Mature attitude; and
- Leadership.

The difference between the skills in the Fasset Work Readiness programme and the skills deemed necessary by graduates and organisations is discussed in the next section.

4.6 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SKILLS IN THE FASSET WORK READINESS PROGRAMME AND THE SKILLS DEEMED IMPORTANT BY GRADUATES AND ORGANISATIONS

The Fasset Work Readiness Programme consists of a number of modules as described in section 2.7.5 of this dissertation. A statistical test was performed in order to determine whether graduates and organisations who participated in this research perceive the skills that are included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme as more important than other skills that could be included in a work readiness programme according to research.

The research questionnaires were developed to include all the work readiness skills/competencies as identified by literature (refer to chapters 2 and 3). When completing the research questionnaires, graduates and organisations ranked work readiness skills/competencies according to importance by indicating 1-10 next to the list of skills/competencies provided in the last section of the questionnaire. The 10 most important skills for graduates and organisations respectively are described in section 4.

As ranking of skills/competencies is involved, a non-parametric test was performed for graduates and organisations respectively in order to determine the fit between the work readiness skills/competencies that they deem important and the skills/competencies addressed by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.

From the rankings done by graduates, an average ranking was calculated for each respondent for the skills that are included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and the skills they ranked that are not included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme. These two averages were then compared in order to determine whether there is a significant difference between the skills that they value as important to be included in a work readiness programme and the skills that are not included in the work readiness programme.

Table 23

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for graduates

	Z	Significance
Skills in the programme vs skills not included in the programme	-2.675	0.007

The results of the non-parametric test showed that graduates perceive the skills that are included in the Fasset Work Readiness programme as more important than the skills that are not included in the programme. The result of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for graduates was significant.

The same procedure was followed for the organisations and the result is shown in Table 24.

Table 24

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for organisations

	Z	Significance
Skills in the programme vs skills not included in the programme	-0.876	0.381

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks performed for organisations was not significant and showed that organisations who participated in the research don't necessarily see the skills that are included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme as more important than other work readiness skills.

In summary, Table 25 shows the 10 most important work readiness skills/competencies as ranked by organisations and graduates as well as the skills that are included in the work readiness programme.

Table 25

Summary of skills ranked by graduates and organisations and skills/competencies included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme

Skills ranked by graduates	Skills ranked by organisations	Work readiness skills/competencies identified by research, included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme
Oral communication Self discipline Confidence Written communication Self reliance Leadership Mature attitude Occupation skills (job search strategies) Motivation Interpersonal skills and teamwork	Mature attitude Innovation Numeracy skills Oral communication Occupation skills (job search strategies) Positive work ethic Problem solving skills Motivation Self-discipline Interpersonal skills and teamwork	Oral communication Written communication Interpersonal skills and teamwork Occupational skills (job search strategies) Information technology skills Time management

The skills/competencies included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme, which are also valued by graduates, are:

- Oral communication;
- Written communication;
- Interpersonal skills and teamwork; and
- Occupational skills (job search strategies);

It appears that graduates also value the following skills, which are not included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme:

- Self discipline;
- Confidence;
- Self reliance;
- Leadership;

- Mature attitude; and
- Motivation.

Graduates indicated that the skills/competencies that they rated as important work readiness skills which are also included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme (i.e. oral communication, written communication, interpersonal skills and teamwork and job search strategies) are more important to them than other work readiness skills not included in the Fasset Work Readiness programme (i.e. self-discipline, confidence, self-reliance, leadership, mature attitude and motivation).

The skills/competencies included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme, valued by organisations, are:

- Oral communication;
- Interpersonal skills and teamwork; and
- Occupational skills (job search strategies).

It appears that organisations also value the following skills/competencies which are not included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme:

- Mature attitude;
- Innovation;
- Numeracy skills;
- Positive work ethic;
- Problem solving skills;
- Motivation; and
- Self-discipline.

Thus, organisations who participated in the research thus don't see the skills which are included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme which they regard as important (i.e. oral communication, interpersonal skill and teamwork and occupational skills) as more important than

other work readiness skills (i.e. mature attitude, innovation, numeracy skills, positive work ethic, problem solving skills, motivation and self-discipline) which are not included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.

Based on the above, H1 (There is no significant difference between the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness programme and the skills required for entry level graduate position in the Fasset sector) is rejected, as organisations that participated in the research don't necessarily regard the skills included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme as more important than other work readiness skills.

H2 (There is no significant difference between the skills required for entry level graduate positions in the Fasset sector and the skills deemed by graduates to be important) is partially rejected because of the fact that graduates who participated in the research regard some of the skills included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme as important.

A discussion of the research findings is presented next.

4.7 DISCUSSION

The sample of graduates consists of 335 people, most of them (48.7%) with part time work experience and the second biggest portion of them (43.3%) with no work experience at all. 66.3% of the graduates obtained their qualification in the last year. The biggest portion of the sample (67.1%) has completed a degree, where only 29% of the sample has completed a diploma. The sample of organisations consists of 24 organisations. 45.8% of these organisations have more than 150 employees and the biggest portion of this sample (41.7%) recruit 1-5 graduates annually. Most of the organisations from this sample are registered with the auditing, bookkeeping and tax sub-sector of Fasset.

Graduates in general agreed that the following skills/competencies are required in the workplace:

- Self-discipline;

- To manage their own career development;
- To use physical resources (such as fax machines and photo copiers) effectively;
- To independently manage their own time;
- To understand the organisation's functioning in relation to its competitors; and
- To function effectively in a team.

Organisations in general agreed that the following skills/competencies are required in the workplace:

- Self-discipline,
- To use physical resources (such as fax machines and photo copiers) effectively; and
- To function effectively in a team.

Graduates and organisations disagreed with the statement that only people with a diploma will be employed in entry level positions. Graduates further disagreed with the statement that only people with a degree will be employed in entry level positions.

It is clear from the results that graduates value self-motivation, commitment towards your work and effective time management and organisations value commitment towards your work, building and maintaining effective relationships and using a computer to execute the daily tasks associated with the position.

When asked to rank 3 categories of skills/competencies both groups indicated the categories in the following order of importance:

1. Work experience;
2. Basic/transferable skills (communication skills, personality characteristics, interpersonal skills and teamwork, occupational skills, information technology skills, effective management of resources, time management and world and local awareness); and
3. Technical skills (i.e. skills obtained during studies).

Both groups rated the following skills as important when asked to indicate the 10 most important skills/competencies in the world of work:

- Oral communication;
- Self-discipline;
- Mature attitude;
- Occupational skills;
- Motivation;
- Interpersonal skills; and
- Effective functioning in a team.

Organisations who participated in the research thus don't see the skills which are included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme which they regard as important (i.e. oral communication, interpersonal skill and teamwork and occupational skills) as more important than other work readiness skills (i.e. mature attitude, innovation, numeracy skills, positive work ethic, problem solving skills, motivation and self-discipline) which are not included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.

4.8 CONCLUSION

The objective of the research was to conceptualize the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions and to determine if the skills and competencies that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and deemed by graduates to be important, are in accordance with the skills and competencies sought by employers in the Fasset sector.

Two questionnaires were developed, one for organisations registered with Fasset, and one for graduates. The questionnaires were administered to both groups and the data from 335 graduates and 24 organisations were used for the purposes of statistical analysis.

The reliability as well as a preliminary investigation into the validity of the questionnaire for graduates and organisations (by specifically commenting on factor analysis and cronbach alpha coefficient) was described in this chapter. It was concluded (by means of calculating cronbach alpha coefficient) that the measuring instruments have acceptable levels of reliability.

The graduates and organisation samples were described in terms of the relevant biographical information obtained from the questionnaires. Furthermore, differences between the graduate and organisations group, and differences within the graduate group in terms of the type of qualification and work experience are addressed in this chapter. The fit between the research findings and the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme were lastly addressed.

The next chapter concludes this dissertation by providing recommendations and comments on limitations in terms of this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Some conclusions, limitations and recommendations in terms of work readiness and graduate recruitment are discussed in this chapter. The discussion includes a conclusion from a theoretical and empirical perspective, the implications of the study and final recommendations on the topic.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation deals with the skills that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and the skills required from entry-level graduates in the Fasset sector. It further addresses graduates' perceptions about the skills required in the workplace for entry level positions. A theoretical and empirical overview is provided in this section.

5.2.1 Theoretical overview

The selection processes of organisations are aimed at evaluating whether candidates can perform job related tasks and requirements. Graduates have the expectation that their technical skills obtained during their studies will equip them with the appropriate skills required in the workplace. However, this is not the case.

Some essential work readiness or employability skills are required from graduates in order to function effectively in the workplace. These skills are more than the technical and academic skills obtained during their studies. Graduates are thus expected to have a broader range of skills in order to provide the relevant organisation with the competitive advantage required to survive and compete in the business world.

With the above said, South African research has, however, shown that although a degree doesn't necessarily guarantee work readiness, graduates have a better chance in finding employment than people without a qualification.

By reviewing literature relevant to work readiness and graduate recruitment, it became clear that 3 categories of skills are required from graduates for entry level positions:

1. Academic and technical skills;
2. Transferable/basic skills; and
3. Practical experience.

Although these skills are presented as separate categories, they overlap to a certain extent.

By having the above 3 categories of skills, a graduate would be deemed to be "work ready" (i.e. ready to make a contribution to the employer's organisation). As mentioned earlier, it is unfortunately not the case that graduates are competent in these three areas after completing a degree or a diploma.

Internships, apprenticeships, learnerships, co-operative programmes, graduate development programmes and work readiness programmes are some initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges of work readiness and graduate recruitment.

The Fasset Work Readiness Programme has been initiated to assist graduates making the transition from studies to the work place. The programme consists of theoretical, class-room based training (including a number of modules such as business communication, time management, conflict management, effective meeting skills etc.) and practical work place experience which includes training in Information Technology. In addition to these components, learners are exposed to team building and activities relating to effective team functioning.

Two questionnaires have been developed – one aimed at unemployed graduates and one aimed at employers registered with Fasset. The purpose of the questionnaire for graduates was to measure

the perceptions of graduates regarding the skills required in the workplace. The purpose of the questionnaire for Fasset registered organisations was to measure the skills required by these employers in the workplace for entry level graduates.

Some important conclusions from the above mentioned research are provided in the next section.

5.2.2 Empirical overview

335 graduates between the ages of 18 and 34 participated in the research. The mean age was 24. Most graduates that took part in the research indicated limited or no work experience. This can be explained by the fact that most of the respondents obtained their qualification during the last year or two. Most of the respondents completed a degree rather than a diploma.

Most of the 24 organisations that participated in the research consist of more than 150 graduates and most of these organisations are registered as Accounting, Bookkeeping, Auditing and Tax Services. There is a variation in the number of graduates recruited annually by these organisations.

Both groups perceived self-discipline, the use of physical resources and effective team functioning as essential skills required in the workplace. In addition, graduates value the ability of graduates to manage their own career development, effective time management and understanding the organisation's functioning in relation to its competitors.

Both groups disagreed with the statement that only people with a diploma will be employed in entry level positions. Graduates further disagreed with the statement that only people with a degree will be employed in entry level positions. Graduates, thus, don't regard a qualification (degree or diploma) as important in securing employment. Organisations believe that a degree is important in securing employment.

It is clear from the results that graduates value self-motivation, commitment towards your work and effective time management and organisations value commitment towards your work,

building and maintaining effective relationships and using a computer to execute the daily tasks associated with the position.

Both groups regarded work experience as the most important, basic/transferable skills as second most important and technical skills as third most important for obtaining an entry level position.

Both groups rated oral communication, self-discipline, mature attitude, occupational skills, motivation, interpersonal skills and effective team functioning, as skills that are regarded as some of the top 10 skills.

Furthermore, oral and written communication, interpersonal skills and teamwork, occupational skills (job search strategies), Information Technology and time management, were skills that are addressed by the work readiness programme and also perceived by graduates and organisations as essential skills required in the workplace.

Significant differences were found in terms of the following skills/competencies which graduates valued more than organisations: managing one's own career; independently managing one's time; understanding how organisations function in relation to its competitors; self-confidence; writing a cover letter to respond to job advertisements; understanding economic influences on the organisation; understanding how changes in the world impact on the functioning of the organisation; listening skills; and understanding the impact of environmental influences on the organisation.

A significant difference was also found in terms of the following statement: "Only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions". Organisations valued this statement more than graduates. Thus, it appears that organisations are more inclined to recruit people who have completed a degree.

In terms of the rating of the skills/competencies, there were significant differences in terms of the following skills/competencies that organisations rated as more important than graduates:

academic and technical skills (skills obtained during studies); innovation; mature attitude; occupational skills (job search strategies); numeracy skills; and problem solving skills.

There were significant differences in terms of the following skills/competencies which graduates rated as more important than organisations: work experience; written communication; adaptability; self-reliance; time management; and an awareness of how changes in the world impact on the organisation.

No significant differences were found between graduates who have completed a degree and graduates who have completed a diploma.

As with any other study, certain limitations to the research are present. These limitations are discussed in the following section.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The way in which the samples have been selected as well as the sample sizes are two important considerations in terms of the generalizations of results. Generalizations from the research can only be made to Fasset registered employers who have participated in the research and not to all Fasset registered employers. Especially because of the fact that only 24 Fasset registered employers have participated in the research, generalizations to the broader Fasset sector should be avoided.

In the same manner can generalizations also only be made to the graduates who have participated in the research and not to all graduates in the population. It might also be the case that South African situation is quite unique and different from the graduates recruitment practices found elsewhere in the world.

Recommendations are provided in the following section.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations in terms of work readiness programmes in general, specific recommendations in terms of work readiness programmes and future research are provided in this section. It is proposed that these recommendations have the potential of contributing to more effective work readiness programmes.

5.4.1 Recommendations for work readiness programmes

Specific reference is made to 3 recommendations in terms of work readiness programmes in general.

5.4.1.1 Increased role of industry

The involvement from industry in work readiness programmes should be increased. Although employers are generally supportive of work readiness programmes, greater commitment to hiring of learners is required. Employers could possibly be more involved in the recruitment (e.g. development of selection criteria) for the learners that are selected for the work readiness programme in order to ensure greater support and commitment.

5.4.1.2 Partnerships between training institutions and industry

It is essential that work readiness programmes are tailored to address the skills required in the workplace. It is, therefore, necessary that training institutions and potential employers work in collaboration to achieve this integration.

5.4.1.3 Continued research

Work readiness programmes must continue to evolve and develop in response to the needs of the industry/workplace. In order to achieve this, regular input from the workplace is essential as employers have changing needs in such a turbulent business environment. Work readiness

programmes can only be successful if they meet the needs of the industry and it is therefore essential that continued research is conducted to determine what the needs of the industry are.

Specific recommendations for the Fasset Work Readiness Programme are provided in the next section.

5.4.2 Recommendations for the Fasset Work Readiness Programme

It appears that the Fasset Work Readiness Programme plays a valuable role in addressing the skills required in the workplace and preparing graduates for the transition from studies to work. Having said that, this research has indicated possible areas for inclusion in the programme in order to meet the needs of industry.

5.4.2.1 Extension of curriculum of Fasset Work Readiness Programme

Although some of these skills might be addressed and developed indirectly by the Fasset Work Readiness Programme, it appears that graduates and employers would value the following skills as part of a work readiness programme: self discipline, confidence, self-reliance, leadership, mature attitude, innovation, numeracy skills, positive work ethic and problem solving skills. It will probably increase the credibility and success in terms of the placement of learners for the Fasset Work Programme if more emphasis is placed on the above mentioned skills and competencies. It is, therefore, recommended that the above skills are included in the curriculum of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.

Recommendations for future research are provided in the next section.

5.4.3 Recommendations for future research

This study was limited to the responses of 24 organisations registered with Fasset. The scope of the study can firstly be extended to include more Fasset registered organisations. The scope of the study can secondly be extended to include other sectors of the economy. Thirdly, employers'

skills needs for graduates, across different sectors of the economy, can be compared. Lastly, should researchers consider the use of the work readiness questionnaires developed for the purposes of this study; it is recommended that the questionnaires are validated as this was beyond the scope of this study.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The objective of the research was to conceptualize the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions and to determine if the skills and competencies that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme and deemed by graduates to be important, are in accordance with the skills and competencies sought by employers in the Fasset sector.

Background and orientation to the research was discussed after which a comprehensive literature review of the relevant constructs was provided. The research methodology, research findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations were also addressed.

In summary, the study was successful in achieving the following specific aims:

- a) To conceptualize work readiness and the skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions.
- b) To determine if the skills and competencies that are required from graduates for entry level positions in the Fasset sector are in accordance with the skills advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme.
- c) To determine which skills graduates regard as important for the world of work.

The skills and competencies required from graduates for entry level positions were conceptualized by means of an extensive literature review (including South African as well as international research). The research indicated that although Fasset registered employers regard some of the skills/competencies that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme (i.e. oral communication, interpersonal skills and teamwork) as important, they value

other work readiness skills that are not directly addressed by the Fasset Work Readiness Programme (i.e. mature attitude, innovation, positive work ethic) just as much. Graduates regard the skills/competencies that are included in the Fasset Work Readiness Programme as more important than other work readiness skills that are not addressed by the programme. Graduates in general agreed that self-discipline, career development, the effective use of physical resources, independent time management, understanding an organisation's functioning in relation to its competitors and effective team work are important skills/competencies in the world of work.

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Questionnaire - Organisations

Work readiness programmes have been introduced to bridge the gap between studies and work. The Fasset Work Readiness Programme is such an initiative which gives previously disadvantaged, unemployed graduates (people with a degree or diploma) the opportunity to advance their work related skills in order to find employment.

The purpose of this study is to determine if the skills that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme in accordance with the skills that are sought after in the employment market for entry level graduate positions. By taking only a few minutes to complete this questionnaire, you will be of great assistance to the researcher, who is embarking on this study as part of a Masters Dissertation in Industrial Psychology.

Please complete both sections of this questionnaire.

SECTION A – BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

This section is for statistical purposes only.

Instructions:

Please answer the questions below by indicating an "X" in the appropriate box.

1. The size of this organisation is:

1-5 employees	
6-20 employees	
21-50 employees	
51-150 employees	
More than 150 employees	

2. The number of graduates recruited annually by this organisation is:

None	
1-5 graduates	
6-10 graduates	
11-20 graduates	
21-50 graduates	
51 or more graduates	

3. Seta registered with _____

4. If registered with Fasset, sub-sector of Fasset that the organisation represents:

Investment Entities and Trusts and Company Secretary Services	
Stock broking and Financial Markets	
Development Organisations	
Accounting, Bookkeeping, Auditing and Tax Services	
Activities Auxiliary to Financial Intermediation	
Business and Management Consulting Services	
SARS and Government Departments	

SECTION B – WORK READINESS SKILLS

Instructions:

Please answer the following questions by marking an “X” across the relevant block.

1. Entry level graduates need work experience in order to become employed by this organisation.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

2. Only graduates with a degree will be employed by this organisation in entry level positions.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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3. Only graduates with a diploma will be employed by this organisation in entry level positions.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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4. Entry level graduates in this organisation should have high levels of self-discipline in order to succeed.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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5. Leadership skills are expected from entry level graduates in this organisation.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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6. It is essential for an entry level graduate to manage his/her own career development in order to secure employment in this organisation.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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7. Entry level graduates should be able to use physical resources (such as fax machines and photo copiers) effectively in this organisation.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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8. It is expected from entry level graduates to independently plan their time in this organisation.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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9. It is required from entry level graduates to understand how this organisation functions in relation to its competitors.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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10. Entry level graduates should be able to function effectively in a team in this organisation.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

11. To what extent do excellent oral communication skills contribute towards employment in entry level graduate positions in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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12. To what extent do excellent written communication skills contribute towards employment in entry level graduate positions in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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13. To what extent are negotiation skills required for entry level graduate positions in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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14. To what extent is adaptability to changing circumstances a requirement for entry level graduates in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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15. To what extent is the success of an entry level graduate driven by their own effort in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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16. To what extent does self-motivation play a role in the success of an entry level graduate in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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17. To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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18. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to show commitment towards their work in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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19. To what extent does the mature attitude of an entry level graduate play a role in employment in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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20. To what extent are high levels of self-confidence a requirement for entry level graduate positions in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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21. To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues and superiors?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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22. To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves by means of a well formatted CV secure employment in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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23. To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to write a cover letter to respond to job advertisements secure employment in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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24. To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves well in an interview secure employment in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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25. To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to use a computer to execute their daily tasks?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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26. To what extent is problem solving skills required from entry level graduates in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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27. To what extent is decision making skills required from entry level graduates in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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28. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand cause-and-effect relationships in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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29. To what extent are advanced numeracy skills required for entry level graduate positions in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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30. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand economic influences on your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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31. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand how changes in the world impact on the functioning of your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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32. To what extent are listening skills required from entry level graduates in your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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33. To what extent are entry level graduates in this organisation faced with interpersonal conflict?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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34. To what extent should entry level graduates in your organisation be able to effectively manage their time?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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35. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand environmental influences on your organisation?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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Please rate the following categories of skills/competencies from 1-3 in terms of importance by writing a 1 next to the most important category of skills/competencies, 2 next to the second most important category of skills/competencies and 3 next to the 3rd most important category of skills/competencies.

Category of skill		1,2,3
1	Academic and technical skills (i.e. skills obtained during studies)	
2	Basic/transferable skills (communication skills; personality characteristics [adaptability; self-reliance; self-discipline; motivation; innovation; positive work ethic; mature attitude; confidence; leadership; self development]; interpersonal skills and teamwork; occupational skills [i.e. job search strategies]; information technology skills; effective management of resources; time management skills; world and local awareness)	
3	Work experience	

Please rate the following skills/competencies from 1-10 in terms of importance by indicating the 10 most important skills/competencies. Write a 1 next to the most important skill/competency, 2 next to the second most important skill/competency and 3 next to the 3rd most important skill/competency, 4 next to the 4th most important skills/competency etc.

Skill/competency	Rating
Oral communication	
Written communication	
Negotiation skills	
Adaptability	
Self-reliance	
Self-discipline	
Motivation	
Innovation	
Positive work ethic	
Mature attitude	
Confidence	
Leadership	
Self development	
Interpersonal skills and teamwork	
Occupation skills (job search strategies)	
Information technology skills	
Effective management of resources	
Time management	
Decision making skills	
Numeracy skills	
Problem solving skills	
An awareness of how changes in the world impact on the organisation	

Are there any skills not referred to in this questionnaire which should be incorporated into a work readiness programme? Please name them.

Questionnaire - Graduates

Work readiness programmes have been introduced to bridge the gap between studies and work. The Fasset Work Readiness Programme is such an initiative which gives previously disadvantaged, unemployed graduates (people with a degree or diploma) the opportunity to advance their work related skills in order to find employment in an entry level position (first full-time employment for the employee).

The purpose of this study is to determine which skills graduates regard as important for the world of work. Please note that the questionnaire will not be evaluated in terms of your selection for the Thusanani Programme. By taking only a few minutes to complete this questionnaire, you will be of great assistance to the researcher, who is embarking on this study as part of a Masters Dissertation in Industrial Psychology. Thank you for your assistance in this regard.

Please complete both sections of this questionnaire.

SECTION A – BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

This section is for statistical purposes only.

Instructions: Please answer the questions below by indicating an "X" in the appropriate box.

1. My age is:

20 years or younger	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25 years or older	

2. I have the following work experience:

No work experience at all	
Work experience due to part time work	
Work experience due to full time work	

Duration of work experience in months _____

3. I have the following qualification:

Diploma	
Degree	
Other	

4. I have obtained my degree or diploma:

In the last year	
In the last 2-4 years	
In the last 5-7 years	
In the last 8-9 years	
Longer than 10 years ago	

SECTION B – WORK READINESS SKILLS

Instructions: Please answer the following questions by marking an “X” across the relevant block.

1. Entry level graduates need work experience in order to become employed.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

2. Only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

3. Only graduates with a diploma will be employed in entry level positions.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

4. Entry level graduates should have high levels of self-discipline in order to succeed.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

5. Leadership skills are expected from entry level graduates.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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6. It is essential for an entry level graduate to manage his/her own career development in order to secure employment.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

7. Entry level graduates should be able to use physical resources (e.g. fax machines and photo copiers) effectively.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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8. It is expected from entry level graduates to independently plan their time.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

9. It is required from entry level graduates to understand how the organisation functions in relation to its competitors.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
------------------	----------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------------------	---------------

10. Entry level graduates should be able to function effectively in a team in the workplace.

Totally disagree	Disagree to a large extent	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree to a large extent	Totally agree
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11. To what extent do excellent oral communication skills contribute towards securing employment in entry level graduate positions?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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12. To what extent do excellent written communication skills contribute towards securing employment in entry level graduate positions?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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13. To what extent are negotiation skills required for entry level graduate positions?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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14. To what extent is adaptability to changing circumstances a requirement for entry level graduate positions?

Not at all	To a slight extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent	Completely
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15. To what extent is the success of an entry level graduate driven by the graduate's own effort?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
16. To what extent does self-motivation play a role in the success of an entry level graduate?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
17. To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
18. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to show commitment towards their work?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
19. To what extent does the mature attitude of an entry level graduate play a role in employment?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
20. To what extent are high levels of self-confidence a requirement for entry level graduate positions?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
21. To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues and superiors?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
22. To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves by means of a well formatted CV secure employment?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
23. To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to write a cover letter to respond to job advertisements secure employment?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
24. To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves well in an interview secure employment?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
25. To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to use a computer to execute their daily tasks?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
26. To what extent are problem solving skills required from entry level graduates?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
27. To what extent are decision making skills required from entry level graduates?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
28. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand cause-and-effect relationships?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
29. To what extent are advanced numeracy skills required for entry level graduate positions?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
30. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand economic influences on the organisation?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
31. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand how changes in the world impact on the functioning of an organisation?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
32. To what extent are listening skills required from entry level graduates in the workplace?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|

33. To what extent are entry level graduates faced with interpersonal conflict in organisations?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
34. To what extent should entry level graduates be able to effectively manage their time in the workplace?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
35. To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand environmental influences on an organisation?
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Not at all | To a slight extent | To a moderate extent | To a large extent | Completely |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|

Please rate the following categories of skills/competencies in terms of importance by writing a 1 next to the most important category of skills/competencies, 2 next to the second most important category of skills/competencies and 3 next to the 3rd most important category of skills/competencies.

Category of skill/competency	1,2,3
Academic and technical skills (i.e. skills obtained during studies)	
Basic/transferrable skills (communication skills; personality characteristics [adaptability; self-reliance; self-discipline; motivation; innovation; positive work ethic; mature attitude; confidence; leadership; self development]; interpersonal skills and teamwork; occupational skills [i.e. job search strategies]; information technology skills; effective management of resources; time management skills; world and local awareness)	
Work experience	

Please rate the following skills/competencies in terms of importance by indicating the 10 most important skills/competencies. Write a 1 next to the most important skill/competency, 2 next to the second most important skill/competency and 3 next to the 3rd most important skill/competency, etc.

Skill/competency	Rating
Oral communication	
Written communication	
Negotiation skills	
Adaptability	
Self-reliance	
Self-discipline	
Motivation	
Innovation	
Positive work ethic	
Mature attitude	
Confidence	
Leadership	
Self development	
Interpersonal skills and teamwork	
Occupation skills (job search strategies)	
Information technology skills	
Effective management of resources	
Time management	
Decision making skills	
Numeracy skills	
Problem solving skills	
An awareness of how changes in the world impact on the organisation	

Are there any skills not referred to in this questionnaire which should be incorporated into a work readiness programme? Please name them.

Corresponding questions

B1	Entry level graduates need work experience in order to become employed.
B2	Only graduates with a degree will be employed in entry level positions.
B3	Only graduates with a diploma will be employed in entry level positions.
B4	Entry level graduates should have high levels of self-discipline in order to succeed.
B5	Leadership skills are expected from entry level graduates.
B6	It is essential for an entry level graduate to manage his/her own career development in order to secure employment.
B7	Entry level graduates should be able to use physical resources (e.g. fax machines and photo copiers) effectively.
B8	It is expected from entry level graduates to independently plan their time.
B9	It is required from entry level graduates to understand how the organisation functions in relation to its competitors.
B10	Entry level graduates should be able to function effectively in a team in the workplace.
B11	To what extent do excellent oral communication skills contribute towards securing employment in entry level graduate positions?
B12	To what extent do excellent written communication skills contribute towards securing employment in entry level graduate positions?
B13	To what extent are negotiation skills required for entry level graduate positions?
B14	To what extent is adaptability to changing circumstances a requirement for entry level graduate positions?
B15	To what extent is the success of an entry level graduate driven by the graduate's own effort?
B16	To what extent does self-motivation play a role in the success of an entry level graduate?
B17	To what extent is innovation required from entry level graduates?
B18	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to show commitment towards their work?
B19	To what extent does the mature attitude of an entry level graduate play a role in employment?
B20	To what extent are high levels of self-confidence a requirement for entry level graduate positions?
B21	To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues and superiors?
B22	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves by means of a well formatted CV secure employment?
B23	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to write a cover letter to respond to job advertisements secure employment?
B24	To what extent does the ability of an entry level graduate to present themselves well in an interview secure employment?
B25	To what extent is it required from entry level graduates to use a computer to execute their daily tasks?
B26	To what extent are problem solving skills required from entry level graduates?
B27	To what extent are decision making skills required from entry level graduates?
B28	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand cause-and-effect relationships?

B29	To what extent are advanced numeracy skills required for entry level graduate positions?
B30	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand economic influences on the organisation?
B31	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand how changes in the world impact on the functioning of an organisation?
B32	To what extent are listening skills required from entry level graduates in the workplace?
B33	To what extent are entry level graduates faced with interpersonal conflict in organisations?
B34	To what extent should entry level graduates be able to effectively manage their time in the workplace?
B35	To what extent are entry level graduates expected to understand environmental influences on an organisation?
C1	Rating of Academic and technical skills (i.e. skills obtained during studies)
C2	Rating of basic/transferable skills (communication skills; personality characteristics [adaptability; self-reliance; self-discipline; motivation; innovation; positive work ethic; mature attitude; confidence; leadership; self development]; interpersonal skills and teamwork; occupational skills [i.e. job search strategies]; information technology skills; effective management of resources; time management skills; world and local awareness)
C3	Rating of work experience
D1	Ranking of oral communication
D2	Ranking of written communication
D3	Ranking of negotiation skills
D4	Ranking of adaptability
D5	Ranking of self-reliance
D6	Ranking of self-discipline
D7	Ranking of motivation
D8	Ranking of innovation
D9	Ranking of positive work ethic
D10	Ranking of mature attitude
D11	Ranking of confidence
D12	Ranking of leadership
D13	Ranking of self development
D14	Ranking of interpersonal skills and teamwork
D15	Ranking of occupation skills (job search strategies)
D16	Ranking of information technology skills
D17	Ranking of effective management of resources
D18	Ranking of time management
D19	Ranking of decision making skills
D20	Ranking of numeracy skills
D21	Ranking of problem solving skills
D22	Ranking of an awareness of how changes in the world impact on the organisation

Dear Employer

I am currently completing my Master's degree in Industrial Psychology and am doing research on graduate recruitment and work readiness. The purpose of this study is to determine if the skills that are advanced by means of the Fasset Work Readiness Programme in accordance with the skills that are sought after in the employment market for entry level graduate positions.

By taking only a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire, you will assist me to complete my research. I am dependent on the results of the questionnaires in order to complete my Dissertation.

Please forward the completed questionnaire to melandi@sh-a.co.za by Monday, 10 April 2006.

I am looking forward to your response.

Many thanks

Melandi Raftopoulos

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