

## **Creating sustainable competitive advantage and resilience in VET organisations: is capability building the answer?**

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VET organisations operate in an environment that is dynamic, diverse, complex and competitive. Their workforce requires the capabilities to meet clients' needs in a market where knowledge is an economic commodity as vital as goods and services.

To examine this issue and contribute to the previous research by Callan, Mitchell, Clayton and Smith (2007), this article presents the results from a study of a large metropolitan Institute of Technology. The study explores the importance of creating core and specialised/strategic capabilities as a key driver to enhance VET quality. Through an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, the authors developed a capability framework linked to the organisation's mission, vision and values. The article argues that the framework is intended to inform strategic human resource management practices for sustainable competitive advantage and organisational success. The findings offer a capability framework that is relevant and meaningful to employees, is responsive to the organisation's business needs and embraces organisational values. Lastly, the capability framework embraces the current and potential capabilities of VET practitioners, administration and support staff, and managers, providing a tool for organisational workforce development initiatives.

**Key words:** Core capabilities, strategic capabilities, capability framework, human resource management practice and workforce development.

### **Introduction**

The Australian VET environment is dynamic, diverse, complex and competitive and changes constantly to maintain and expand market share locally and overseas. The VET workforce requires a range of capabilities to operate successfully in the so-called Knowledge Era where knowledge is an economic commodity as vital as goods and services. In addition to job-specific skills, VET sector knowledge workers require generic capabilities including, research, acquiring new skills, problem solving, balancing productivity and creativity, and using information and communication technologies (Staron, Jasinski, & Weatherley, 2006, p.2).

This paper outlines a recent action research project to identify the capabilities required by some 740 staff in a major metropolitan Institute of Technology which delivers high level AQF VET and Higher Education qualifications to approximately 28,000 students. The staff comprises VET practitioners i.e. teachers and tutors, VET professionals i.e. educational managers, educational leaders, curriculum developers, quality assurance personnel and VET administrators i.e. clerical, financial, marketing, library, Human Resources, Information Technology and other non-educational support staff.

Many organisations are currently focussing on capability. At the employee level this refers to the knowledge, skills and attitudes including specialist expertise essential to a given role. At the organisational level, capability is needed to achieve strategic aims and objectives. Thus,

an organisation's capabilities are the sum of its combined employees' capabilities and the organisation's policies and systems (State Services Authority, 2006, p.1).

A capability framework is a tool which identifies and describes the essential capabilities an organisation needs (Townsend & Cairns, 2003). Ideally, the framework should be developed in consultation with all stakeholders so that it is understood and adopted by employees and management alike. An effective capability framework provides a common platform upon which human resource activities such as recruitment, induction, career planning, professional development, job design and workforce planning can be built. It is particularly useful for organisations when designing performance review and development systems that aim to provide opportunities for growth through negotiated learning, rather than remediation of failure through compulsory training (Hawke, 2008, p 7).

The adoption of an agreed capability framework provides potential employees, current employees and managers with a common language. This leads to a shared understanding of knowledge, skills and attitudes critical for either the organisation or for individual roles and a basis to identify when a capability is absent, present or in danger of being lost. The ageing workforce in VET and elsewhere presents a particular challenge in terms of loss of skills, experience and organisational knowledge (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008 p.334). A capability framework can be used to identify forthcoming gaps and to inform workforce development. This is consistent with the findings of Callan et al. (2008, p.15) who state that "...capability is concerned as much with future knowledge and skill requirements as with immediate requirements".

Competitive advantage in the Knowledge Era is also associated with business wisdom, which is greater than the sum of skills, knowledge, attitudes and experience (Staron et al., 2006, p.5). This concept of wisdom is relevant to capability development and has the following characteristics:

- it is strength based - it contributes to human well-being and the common good;
- it contributes to synthesis - wise thinking and actions pull components into an integrated whole;
- it is achievement-oriented - it has a very practical orientation which serves to guide thinking and action.

Therefore, in response to the mounting interest in sustaining and building capability in VET organisations by numerous researchers (Callan, 2001; Callan, 2005; Callan et al., 2007, Callan, 2008; Clayton et al., 2005; Foley & Conole, 2003; Harris et al., 2005; Mitchell et al., 2006; Mitchell, 2008; Staron et al., 2006), this paper will describe an exploratory process to better understand the concept of core and organisational capabilities in developing a capability framework for a large metropolitan Institute of Technology. The following paper is structured to include (i) a literature review, (ii) design and research methods (iii) the research results which are discussed in the context of existing literature. Finally, the paper will note the limitations of research, make suggestions for future research endeavours, and draw conclusions.

## Literature Review

The importance of core competencies and capabilities is commonly acknowledged in the literature and there is agreement that organisational competitiveness, i.e. competitive advantage, relies on core competencies and capabilities (Hafeez & Essmail, 2007; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). Further, competence as it is regularly defined and theorised in this literature, is basically a term that consists of observable current skills based on current knowledge (Harris, Guthrie, Hobart, & Lundberg, 1995). Therefore, in its purest form, the term competence and its derivatives for example, competencies and competency are behaviourist concepts based on demonstrable performance or actions (Townsend & Cairns, 2003, p.318).

Earlier studies by Selznick (1957) and Learned, Christensen, Andrews and Guth (1969) provide evidence that the concept of capabilities is not so contemporary. It may be this type of evidence that led Stephenson (1992) to define capability as an all round human quality, an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively – not just in familiar and highly focussed contexts but in response to new and changing circumstances. Stephenson and Weil (1992, p.2) advance the concept and suggest that capability can be defined in the sense that capable people have confidence in their ability to:

- take effective and appropriate action;
- explain what they are about;
- live and work effectively with others; and
- continue to learn from their experiences, both as individuals and in association with other, in a diverse and changing society.

Likewise, Townsend and Cairns (2003, p.318) note the fundamental attributes of the concept, which include:

- ability (current competence);
- self-efficiency (belief in one's 'capability' to perform satisfactorily); and
- shared appropriate values (such as trust and valuing diversity).

Working from these attributes, capability has two broad areas of meaning: potential and content. Generally, potential exists where there are possibilities inherent in the individual, which may take a tangible form (Stephenson & Weil, 1992, p.2). Therefore, potential can be expressed as what an individual could do or has the capacity to do in the future (Brown & McCartney, 2004), whereas, content suggests that there is something there in the individual, which emphasises the notion of existing ability (Brown & McCartney, 2004).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2006, p.3) defined core capabilities as those capabilities required of all employees in the [organisation], regardless of role or business unit. Earlier Leonard-Barton (1995, pp.271-272) described core capabilities as those comprising of managerial activities and systems or what she depicts as the whole system of knowledge management, which is encompassed by a distinctive competitive advantage. Specifically, she advances the notion and posit that core capabilities are determined by four distinct categorical dimensions: (a) knowledge and skills, (b) the physical and technical systems, (c) managerial systems of education and development, and (d) the values and norms of the organisation,

which are seen as determining what kinds of knowledge and knowledge building activities are encouraged (Espedal, 2005, pp.137-138).

Most VET literature on sustaining and building capability has focused on management, leadership, and VET practitioners. Collectively, the literature has revealed a proliferation of research efforts focusing on a wide range of pressing VET sector issues. They range from management to educational. For instance, management issues include:

- identifying senior manager and executive capabilities in VET organisations, leadership and management capability framework (Callan, 2001);
- the VET workforce of the future, workforce development and professional practice, organisational capability, and workforce planning (Dickie et al., 2004);
- workforce renewal, maintaining technical and vocational competency, retaining working knowledge (Clayton et al., 2005); and
- defining leadership, developing leaders, leadership capabilities in VET organisations (Callan et al., 2007).

Other researchers have focussed on educational and VET practitioner issues, for example:

- the current and future attributes, skills, knowledge and competencies of teachers and trainers, the provision, accessibility and nature of staff development for teachers and trainers, the inhibitors and enablers of staff development (Harris et al., 2001);
- the changing role of the VET practitioner (e.g., work roles and responsibilities), relationships with students and industry, role definition, training systems, and changing educational cultures and markets (Chappell & Johnston, 2003; Harris et al., 2005); and
- the changing VET environment, learners and clients, skills and resources needed by VET practitioners, innovation and quality (Mitchell et al., 2006).

More specifically, and largely through the work of Callan et al (2007) and Mitchell et al (2006), empirical research has focused on two critical issues: developing management and leadership capability in VET and the hybrid mix of educational and business capabilities required by VET practitioners. The importance of sustaining and building capability in VET organisations is highlighted in other studies from this literature (Chappell & Johnston, 2003; Dickie et al., 2003; Guthrie 2004).

VET organisations will require an extensive range of management and leadership, and VET practitioner capabilities to meet the challenges of a dynamic and competitive VET environment (Callan et al., 2007; Mitchell et al., 2006). This is as a result of change drivers such as a competitive training market, reduced government funding, skill shortages and qualification profiles, demographic changes in clients and staff, social policy initiatives, flexible service and delivery methods, and greater industry engagement and alignment.

Indeed, in many VET organisations, the importance of sustaining and building capability is apparent. A number of Federal Government funded projects, e.g. Reframing the Future and the Australian Flexible Learning Framework, have demonstrated the potential benefits of capability building, knowledge sharing and best practices in VET. Moreover, as evidenced in this literature, States and Territories have implemented professional development initiatives, e.g. VET Futures in Queensland and the Victorian TAFE Development Centre to build the

key capabilities and innovations that best support the growth and sustainability of VET organisations.

Finally, as evidenced in the literature, capability research has increasingly moved towards a systematic approach in developing management, leadership and VET practitioner capabilities. With the need to make the notion locally applicable, several capability frameworks, e.g. Callan, 2001; Foley & Canole, 2003; Queensland Department of Education Training and the Arts, 2005; Western Australian Department of Employment and Training, 2005, have been developed across the VET sector to assist both public and private training organisations to consider the capabilities required now and in the future for their staff (Callan et al., 2007).

While these researchers have made excellent progress in examining the management, leadership human resource management, educational processes and practices that may sustain and build capability in VET organisations, there is an opportunity to contribute to the rich research foundation. Therefore, this paper will attempt to build on existing research with a specific emphasis on addressing the alignment of core, specialised/strategic and human resource management capabilities with an organisation's business strategy and organisational values.

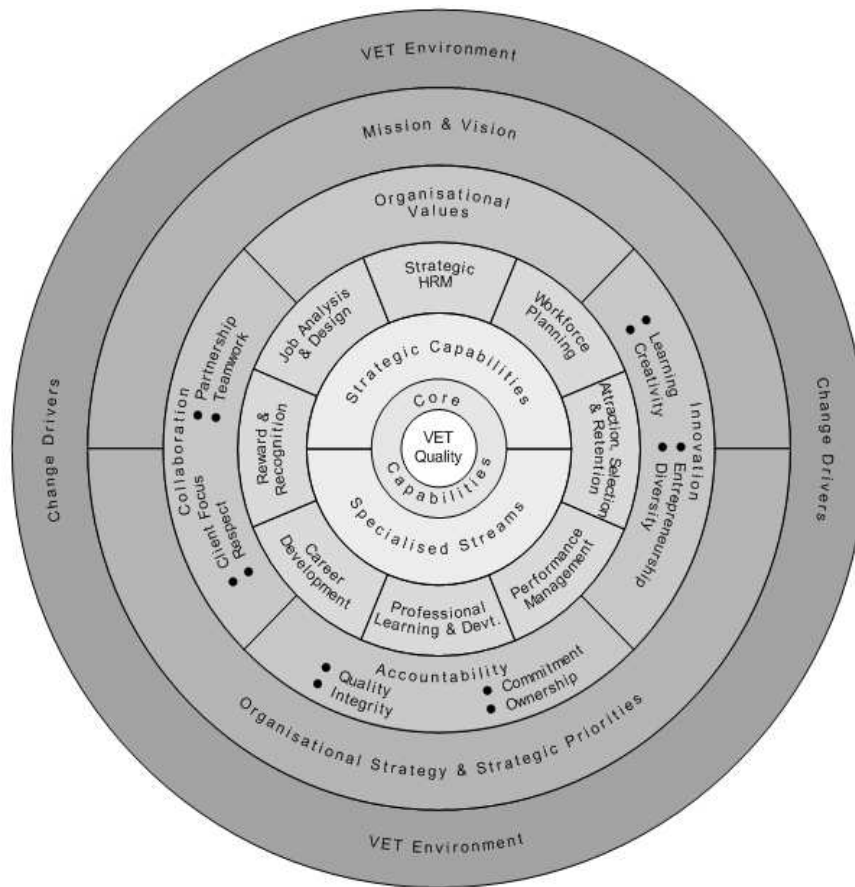
## **Design and Research Methods**

The purpose of the project was to design and develop a distinctive staff capability framework to build leadership and support the implementation and management of employee capability development within the organisation. The project goal was to identify core and specialised/strategic capabilities relevant to the organisation, thus assisting with capability development and continuous improvement of programs, products and services.

The project aligned closely to the organisation's strategic plan, mission, vision and values; including, for example, the goal 'to educate and empower people of all ages who aspire to build their skills and careers in industries relevant to the changing global marketplace'. The capability framework, when integrated with existing Human Resource (HR) systems and processes (e.g., job analysis and design; workforce planning; attraction, selection and retention; induction; performance, learning and innovation planning; and professional development), will support the achievement of the organisation's strategic goal: 'Staff to reflect the desired behaviours, [skills] and decision-making competencies required to drive performance'.

A research model was developed and the notion for the concept had surfaced in the findings of earlier research by Callan (2001), Callan (2005), Callan et al (2007), Callan (2008), Clayton et al (2005), Dilitis (1996); Foley and Conole (2003), Harris et al (2005), Hawke (2008), Henderson and Thomson (2003), Mitchell et al (2006), Mitchell (2008), Smith and Hawke (2008). Accordingly, a conceptual framework emerged and its constructs were supplemented from strategic management theory, leadership theory, and human resource management theory to analyse the factors that influence the sustainability and building of management and leadership capability in VET organisations.

Figure 1 Research Model



(Harris, 2008)

In terms of data analysis, the researchers used a grounded theory approach to identify ... patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen et al, 2007, p.461) from the qualitative data provided by the focus group, and subsequently, the survey. As Cohen et al (2007, p. 461) explain, ... [a] grounded theory and content analysis will proceed through a systematic series of analyses, including coding and categorisation, until theory emerges that ... can be used for predictive purposes.

The project team engaged the services of an experienced researcher and academic from an external organisation to act as mentor. This advisor was chosen because of his significant contribution to organisational development. Several meetings were held and processes fine-tuned prior to commencing the data collection. In order to provide transparency and raise organisational awareness of the project, the project manager developed a site on the organisation's intranet and uploaded information under the headings of: What is Capability; What is a Capability Framework; The Project Team; Goals; Aim; Priority Area; Anticipated Outcomes; Capability Framework and HR Practice; Focus Groups; and Key Milestones, and sent a broadcast Institute-wide inviting staff to view the information provided.

The project team then began their preparation to source qualitative data through focus groups randomly drawn from the research population. While there are recognised drawbacks to using focus groups, advantages include the possibility they can ...yield insights that might not otherwise have been available in a straight-forward interview; ... [and] produc[e] a large amount of data in a short amount of time (Cohen et al, 2007, p.376). In order to provide validity (Powell & Connaway, 2004), focus group and survey questions were drawn from a review and analysis of relevant national and international literature, case studies, best practice and previous validated instruments relating to capability frameworks. Prior to presenting the questions to the focus group participants, they were reviewed by a small reference group of VET professionals and VET practitioners who consented to be involved. This group provided feedback on validity, relevance and comprehension (Cohen et al, 2007, p.377) and recommended adjustments were made accordingly.

The final research questions were as follows:

1. What are the challenges faced by you and others in your current role?
2. What do you consider to be the core capabilities currently needed by [the organisation's] employees? (Emphasis should be placed on the alignment with [the organisation's] Values Statement.)
3. What additional emerging strategic capabilities do you think will be required by your specialised VET stream?
4. What do you consider are the main barriers to the development of these capabilities?

An email invitation was sent to all employees explaining the project and asking them to indicate both their interest in participating in a one and a half hour focus group (with lunch provided) and suitable dates and times. On receipt of their expressions of interest, they were immediately sent an invitation to attend a particular focus group session (date, time and venue outlined) which the researchers had organised according to staff employment roles. Roles were grouped according to Dickie, Eccles, FitzGerald, McDonald, Cully, Blythe, Stanwick and Brook's (2004, p.16) labels and descriptors:

- 'VET professionals'... those staff who provide leadership, management and support for teaching, training and assessment within RTO's but who are not directly involved in the delivery of nationally recognised training.
- 'VET practitioner' ... those staff of registered training organisations (RTO's) directly involved in the delivery of teaching, training and/or assessment programs that are nationally recognised.
- 'VET administration'... ancillary support staff, for example, performing important roles in client service, marketing, product development, library, finance and clerical.

Staff were informed that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time, with no disadvantage (Australian Government, 2007, pp.20-21).

Benefits to the agency in terms of ...gains in knowledge, insight and understanding (Australian Government, 2007, p.17) in order to benefit individuals and the organisation were explained. The study's sponsor was named and all participants were treated respectfully. Participants were informed of ...the likelihood and form of the research results (Australian Government, 2007, p. 20), and the reference group and focus groups had opportunity to input

on more than one occasion. Written approval from the CEO and the HR Unit Manager was obtained prior to commencing research. Assurances of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity were given and no information provided in the final report can be traced to any participant (Cohen et al, 2007, p.59). All information has been generalised and any identifiers removed. All data collected has been securely stored with no unauthorised access during and after the completion of the project, and information reported with honesty and integrity.

Ninety-five staff indicated interest in participating and eleven focus groups were held over four weeks. Group sizes varied from five to fifteen due to unforeseen circumstances which prevented some from attending their original session. Participants in each focus group were from the same employment role, i.e. VET Professional, VET Practitioner or VET Administrator. Careful facilitation minimised non-participation or domination (Cohen et al., 2007, p.377). The external project advisor facilitated the VET Professional focus groups, while the project group manager ran the VET Practitioner and VET Administration Staff sessions. To ensure overall reliability, both facilitators utilised a standardised procedure developed in collaboration with the project team. Two project group members took ethnographic notes during each focus group; one captured major themes on an electronic whiteboard in full view of participants and facilitator, while the other documented discussion content on a laptop at the back of the room.

From the recorded qualitative data, common themes were identified by open coding. This process required the research team to conduct a sequential analysis and note significant themes and critical concepts. To organise the data, a table was developed that showed the frequency of the themes across all of the focus groups. Comparisons were then made between the data collected, emerging themes and critical concepts and the literature. This helped with further analysis, interpretation and clarification. Axial coding was then used to separate themes and merge or cluster similar themes into larger categories based on their linkages to the research topic (Neuman, 2006). Selective coding then enabled the researchers to validate each theme against the original notes taken. These processes enabled the researchers to identify core capabilities and specialised/strategic capabilities in each employment role or stream, i.e. VET Professionals, VET Practitioners and VET Administrators.

While all responses were included in a summary developed by the researchers and made available to focus group participants, those responses sitting outside the common categories were noted as such and acknowledged as valuable individual perspectives. All focus group participants were invited, via a personal email, to provide feedback on the information provided, thus allowing for further contribution from the group and improved validation. 15 Core Capabilities, 12 VET Professional Capabilities, 11 VET Practitioner Capabilities and 10 VET Administrator Capabilities (refer Appendix A) were identified through these processes and the research team was now tasked with determining which were rated most highly by all staff within the organisation.

Due to the ease with which it could be distributed and analysed, the project team chose to use an online survey to seek the opinions of the organisations population (Wilson & McLean, 1994: cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 317), timeliness, generalisation ability and cost effectiveness. To minimise random sampling errors, all staff would be invited to participate (Cohen et al, 2007, 103-5). The survey was developed using current literature, research and existing survey instruments to provide validity, and also included new themes highlighted by focus group data. It was designed with careful consideration of purpose, audience, sequencing, relevance and ease of completion. A brief introduction, aim of the survey, survey



completion information (approximately fifteen minutes), definitions, marking, general instructions and details of a prize draw incentive were provided in the survey preamble.

The survey (refer Appendix B) consisted of 61 questions organised into seven discrete sections (A: Core Capabilities; B: Your Role; Either C: Specialised Capabilities – VET Professional, D: Specialised Capabilities – VET Practitioner or E: Specialised Capabilities – VET Administration; F: About You; and G: Other Comments) so that respondents were not overwhelmed by the task (Cohen et al, 2007, 338). Many questions were organised as 7-point rating scales (with anchor 7 being ‘extremely high level required’ through to anchor 1 which signified ‘not required’). As rating scales have limitations; for example, the researcher may infer a degree of sensitivity and subtlety from the data that they cannot bear (Cohen et. al., 2007, 327), opportunities were also provided for respondents to add further qualitative comments.

In order to establish reliability, the survey was reviewed by the reference group and piloted on a small, willing, randomly selected cohort prior to distribution. Minor adjustments were made to both the formatting and language used as a result of the feedback provided. It should be noted that focus group, pilot group and reference group participants could respond to the survey. Prior to emailing the electronic survey a number of broadcasts were sent organisation-wide alerting staff to the opportunity to participate, briefly detailing the purpose of the survey, providing contact details of the project team, encouraging them to log on to the Capability Framework website (intranet), welcoming their voluntary input and acknowledging the value of their perspectives for both the organisation and the individual.

The survey tool link was then sent out via an Institute broadcast and staff were given three weeks to respond. A number of regular, gentle follow up emails (Cohen et al., 2007, p.346) were sent, visits were made by members of the project team to staffrooms to explain the project aims and invite questions, and the opportunity to enter a prize draw was promoted. By clicking on the link, completing and submitting the survey respondents were automatically indicating their consent to participate. It should also be noted that participants could easily opt out of the survey at any time with no consequence.

Of the 621 available SBIT staff surveyed, 59% (n = 367) responded. With such an encouraging result, the survey yielded much data including demographic information such as current primary work role, gender, age group, business unit and employment status. Quantitative data obtained from rating scale responses was processed into descriptive statistics, analysed and represented as bar charts and percentages. The majority of respondents were female (68%, n = 248). Most (30%, n = 110) were aged between 40 – 49 years of age, followed by 25% (n = 108) aged between 50 – 59 years. The survey sample was representative, in terms of gender and age, of the total staff profile. The largest proportion of respondents were either employed in one particular faculty (22%, n = 81) or one particular business unit (19%, n = 70). The employment status of most respondents was permanent (55%, n = 202).

The project team manually transcribed the qualitative information from the open-ended questions and organised resulting data according to themes. Although there are concerns with such an approach, including the loss of individual integrity, the possibility data will become decontextualised and that additional, relevant factors may be overlooked (Cohen et al., 2007, pp. 467-467), the researchers were careful to ensure information which did not fit with any of

the themes was reported as such. The same coding processes used to analyse qualitative data from the focus groups was used to identify common themes from the survey.

## **Results and Discussion**

### *Focus Groups*

In order to address the first research question (*What are the challenges faced by you and others in your current role?*), the most frequent responses included, the strategic positioning of the institute, funding/budget challenges, coping with the pace of change, building trust, transparent communication, age of the VET workforce, being responsive to new market and educational challenges, disempowered in the decision making process, the need for open and transparent communication, and being accountable. These results are consistent with previous VET research (Callan et al., 2007; Clayton et al., 2005; Guthrie, Perkins, & Nguyen, 2006; Harris et al, 2005) and it is clear that these issues are not unique to the institute and therefore, could be generalised throughout the VET sector.

To address the second and third research questions (*What do you consider to be the core capabilities currently needed by [the organisation's] employees? Emphasis should be placed on the alignment with [the organisation's] Values Statement*) and (*What additional emerging strategic capabilities do you think will be required by your specialised VET stream?*), data from the 11 focus groups could be organised into 28 core capabilities, some of which could then be clustered through the coding process described in the methodology section.

The 15 which appeared most frequently were used in designing the survey (refer Appendix B). Participants believed key priorities for staff across the organisation included customer/client focus; personal attributes, skills and values; knowledge of the training sector; communication and collaboration. Other capabilities which appeared frequently centred on teamwork and respect for diversity, suggesting that interpersonal skills were considered essential in the workplace. Innovation was also rated highly.

The three VET Professional focus groups identified 22 strategic capabilities. Strategic thinking, change management, change leadership, corporate vision and people management were nominated by all groups. Personal attributes, finance and budgeting, resource and product development and networking were listed by two of the three groups. These findings indicate participants working in a management capacity believed resource management skills (both people and financial) were essential capabilities. The 22 strategic professional capabilities were then organised through the coding process into the 12 listed in the survey (refer Appendix B).

From the five VET Practitioner groups, 30 capabilities were tabled with 19 strategic capabilities identified by all five groups. While the majority of these related to teaching, learning, assessment and current pedagogy, administrative skills and personal attributes were also deemed important. While another 11 capabilities emerged, these only appeared in one or two of the focus groups. The 19 practitioner capabilities were further reduced, using the coding process, to 11 major themes for the survey (refer Appendix B).

15 major themes emerged from the three VET Administration focus groups. These included business and communication skills, educational support, value adding to the business and a positive attitude. Some of the strategic characteristics listed had previously been identified as core capabilities so the project team chose to include them as core capabilities only. Using the

coding process the number of specialised administrative capabilities was combined into 10 themes for the survey (refer Appendix B).

To address the final research question (*What do you consider are the main barriers to the development of these capabilities?*), the most frequent responses included, time to develop capabilities and industry currency, administrative workload, inadequate business/operational processes, budget/financial constraints, lack of reward and recognition, a lack of trust and transparency, inadequate change management strategies, and a lack of succession planning. These inhibitors are consistent with previous VET research (Callan et al., 2007; Clayton et al., 2005; Guthrie, Perkins, & Nguyen, 2006; Harris et al, 2005) and in particular, the accessibility to professional development.

#### *Capability Framework Survey*

The results of the survey confirmed strong agreement with the core (refer Appendix C) and specialised/strategic capabilities (refer Appendices D, E, & F). The majority of respondents (75% +) indicated that the level of capabilities required in their role ranged from a moderate to an extremely high level. There was overwhelming support for the organisation's values which are embedded in the framework and research model. The results also indicated a number of synergies between capabilities and organisation's values e.g., between core capabilities and specialised/strategic descriptions. This has allowed for a realignment and reduction of discreet capabilities.

The clustering of common themes from the qualitative data has reaffirmed core capabilities and Institute values. Additional qualitative comments expressed open support for the project and framework, with several commenting they were pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute. A small number of responses conveyed some sense of negativity with regard to the intent and usefulness of the capability framework which is to be developed. For a detailed overview of the findings described below, refer to the summary table in Appendix G.

14 of the 15 core capabilities listed in the survey were rated of high to extremely high importance by between 72% and 95% of respondents. Communication skills, Customer/client focus, Collaboration, Teamwork, Self management, and Respect for diversity and valuing difference were ranked in this range by over 90% of staff. Business acumen was considered by only 53% of staff to be of high to extremely high importance.

VET Professionals scored the following capabilities highly, with between 90% and 96% indicating they believed staff working in these roles required a high to very high level: Leadership of individuals and teams; Personal attributes and skills; Coaching and mentoring; Leading and managing change; Partnership and relationship management; and Performance Management. Of the remaining six capabilities listed in the survey, Advanced ICT skills and analysis scored the lowest, with 67% of respondents considering them to be of high to very high importance.

VET Practitioners were asked to rate the importance of 11 specialised capabilities and those which ranked most highly were as follows:

*Table 1 Capability - % indicating a high to very high level was required*

Capability	%
Learner/client focus	98
Communication skills	97
Flexible, adaptive, creative teaching	94
Pedagogical expertise	93
Instructional design skills	89
Coaching/mentoring	89
Industry/technical currency	84
Educational technology skills	84

Results indicated that a significant number of VET practitioners in the organisation believed administrative and financial capabilities were lower priorities, and their main focus was teaching and learning.

VET Administration staff were asked to rank 10 capabilities. 70% or more believed a high to very high level was required for eight of the 10. Value add to the business and positive attitude was ranked highest (89%) while Business communication skills (87%), Knowledge sharing (82%), Co-ordination of services and resources (76%), Coaching and mentoring (75%) and Learner and teacher support (73%) followed. Designing and maintaining business systems was ranked lowest with 64% of administrative staff considering a high to very high level was required.

Findings suggest the capabilities provided in the survey were comprehensive. In order to refine the capabilities while ensuring the integrity of the findings, the research team and project mentor clustered capabilities using the same coding process used throughout the project. The resulting Capability Framework consisted of 10 Core Capabilities of which 7 aligned to the Institute values of Collaboration, Accountability and Innovation, 11 VET Professional Capabilities, 11 VET Practitioner Capabilities, and eight VET Administrator Capabilities (refer Appendix H).

## **Conclusions and limitations**

This study is one of several research endeavours to systematically analyse the approaches to build and sustain leadership capability within the VET sector. The findings add to those from previous studies and will enhance understanding of the numerous challenges in the VET environment and organisational factors which may inhibit development of management, leadership and VET practitioner capabilities in VET organisations. However, the study was restricted to a single large public VET institution in a Queensland metropolitan area. To further enhance the ability to generalise and test the validity of this study's findings, future research should replicate the findings with larger samples and in a variety of organisational contexts. An example would be small and medium public sector VET organisations located in metropolitan and regional areas. The study should also be replicated in other Australian states.

Also, while much crude data was produced, some of the detailed information was lost in the clustering process that was necessary to keep the survey to a manageable size. Further, perspectives of the large body of casual and sessional staff were not accorded a priority insofar as focus groups were mainly scheduled at times that suited full-time employees. The

study will not track actual use of the capability framework within HR planning and reporting mechanisms. Subsequent studies into these areas would prove very useful for HR theory and practice and in particular, workforce development.

Nevertheless, the findings in this paper confirm the potential value of developing a capability framework in a large VET organisation. The results strongly suggest that such a framework, constructed with meaningful input from the three main categories of VET staff and explicitly linked to organisational values, offers most staff a model for developing key capabilities in ways that enhance both organisational and personal performance. The organisation is now actively implementing a performance learning and innovation system linked to the capability framework. Throughout the project, respondents consistently expressed support for the opportunity to contribute to the framework that was afforded by the project's design and methods. Overall, this research model and fundamental capability framework is likely not only to aid VET organisations to make informed decisions on how they develop core and specialised/strategic capabilities, but to also generate interest and debate, and facilitate future research.

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### Focus Group Qualitative Analysis – Results of Coding Process

#### Core Capabilities

- Customer/client focus
- Self management
- Knowledge of the training system
- Communication skills
- Collaboration
- Knowledge of SBIT's scope of business and organisational awareness
- Respect for diversity and valuing difference
- Personal management of change
- Innovation and creativity
- Teamwork
- Continuous self-directed learning
- Business acumen
- Ethics and values
- Information and communication technologies
- Quality

#### Specialised/Strategic Capabilities – VET Professionals

- Strategic thinking and planning
- Leading and managing change
- Corporate vision and direction
- Leadership of individuals and teams
- Performance management
- Partnership and relationship management
- Personal attributes and skills
- Financial management
- Managing creativity
- Advanced ICT skills and analysis
- Coaching and mentoring
- Research partnering and evidence based business development

#### Specialised/Strategic Capabilities – VET Practitioners

- Learner/client focus
- Pedagogical expertise (blended and multimode)
- Industry/technical currency
- Communication skills
- Instructional design skills
- Educational technology skills
- Administrative systems
- Flexible, adaptive and creative teaching and learning
- Ability to coach and mentor others
- Planning and budgeting
- Planning and future focus

#### Specialised/Strategic Capabilities – VET Administration

- Business communication skills
- Learner and teacher support
- Value add to the business and positive attitude
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Designing and maintaining business systems
- Coordination of services and resources
- Change leadership
- Knowledge sharing
- Information and communication technologies
- Coaching and mentoring

### Capability Framework Survey

#### Introduction

This Reframing the Future project, Developing a SBIT Capability Framework, will support many aspects of life at SBIT. These areas include workforce planning, the attraction, selection and retention of staff, the Performance, Learning and Innovation Planning conversations between staff and managers, and staff professional development. This project is also aligned to one of SBIT's Strategic Goals: that staff "reflect the desired behaviours, [skills] and decision-making competencies required to drive performance."

To date, more than 90 staff have participated in focus groups to design the draft SBIT Capability Framework. Their input has resulted in the design of the draft Capability Framework that is the focus of the survey that is described below.

#### Aim of the survey

To develop this SBIT Capability Framework further, we need your help in testing the appropriateness of the capability framework to your current role at SBIT. The aim of this survey is to test the appropriateness for a larger sample of staff of the capabilities that have emerged from these focus groups. Your input into this survey will shape further the design and implementation of a comprehensive SBIT Capability Framework that is relevant and meaningful to all staff and is responsive to business needs.

The survey asks your opinions on the core capabilities that you believe all SBIT staff need. Next it asks about the specialised capabilities required by VET Professionals, VET Practitioners or VET Administration. You only need to answer the specialised capabilities for your current role that matches one of these three categories of staff. The survey provides advice to help you to select which of these three categories is most appropriate for you to complete.

#### Survey completion

Completion of the survey will require approximately 15 minutes. We ask that you complete the survey once only, and in one sitting. Although the survey is divided into seven sections, you will need to do five sections only:

Section A: Core Capabilities

Section B: Your Role

*Either*

Section C: Specialised Capabilities - VET Professionals

*or*

Section D: Specialised Capabilities - VET Practitioner

*or*

Section E: Specialised Capabilities - VET Administration

Section F: About You

Section G: Other Comments

Your participation is completely voluntary. However, in order for the results to be meaningful and useful, **we need each of you to participate** and to let us know what you think.

The capability development project team of SBIT is administering the survey, analysing the data, and preparing the reports. **Please be assured that project team members routinely work with confidential data and will respect and protect your identity.** The survey data will be stored in a secure location, and will not include any personally identifying information. Results will only be reported in the aggregate and in no case will it be possible to determine an individual's identity. By completing the survey you are giving your **informed consent**.

#### Prizes draw

In appreciation of your time, you may wish to enter a draw for one of several prizes, including movie tickets, coffee vouchers and a Bookstore gift certificate. If you wish to be included in the prizes on offer, after you have

completed the survey please forward your details to [mark.harris@southbank.edu.au](mailto:mark.harris@southbank.edu.au), message line: Prize Draw – Capability Development Project, click on Message Options and set sensitivity to Confidential.

If you have any questions about the process or the survey, please contact the Project Facilitator, Mark Harris, Strategy and Governance on 0419 679 425 or Ext: 5395 or via email [mark.harris@southbank.edu.au](mailto:mark.harris@southbank.edu.au)

**Thank you in advance** for sharing your opinions with us. We look forward to using the results to develop an effective framework which will be instrumental in enhancing capability and well-being at SBIT.

### **Definitions**

- Individual capability is an all round human quality, an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively – not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts, but also in response to new and changing circumstances (Stephenson, 1992).
- Capability is also about potential, that is, what the individual can achieve (Mitchell, 2008).
- Core capabilities are the capabilities of individual staff that when combined result in a competitive advantage for an organisation over other organisations (O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2004).
- A capability framework establishes a shared understanding of the capabilities critical to an organisations success, sustainability and growth. It guides the future development of behaviours among staff that will support an organisation's vision, strategy and culture.

### **Marking and General Instructions**

Please rate each of the following on a 1-7 scale. The scale is from 1 for 'not required' at all in your current role, through to 7 where the skill or attribute needs to be at an 'extremely high level' for completion of your current role.

#### **Scale:**

1. Not Required
2. Very Low Level Required
3. Moderately Low Level Required
4. Moderate Level Required
5. High Level Required
6. Very High Level Required
7. Extremely High Level Required

## Section A: Core Capabilities

1. Think of the staff working at Southbank, and the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively, regardless of their role in the organisation. For each of the following capabilities, please mark (circle, select the bulls eye etc) the number from 1 to 7 that best represents the level of proficiency you believe is required by all staff on each of the listed capabilities.

<b>Core Capabilities</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
1. Customer/client focus  Capability description: Is committed to understanding and meeting the expectations and requirements of internal and external customers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Self management  Capability description: Takes responsibility for own actions; organises own workload to achieve outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Knowledge of the training system  Capability description: Demonstrates a sound understanding of the VET sector; applies this knowledge to provide appropriate solutions to meet external and internal customer needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Communication skills  Capability description: Conveys information (written and verbal) clearly and respectfully, listens effectively; demonstrates appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Collaboration  Capability description: Works cooperatively to achieve common objectives; builds positive working relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Knowledge of SBIT's scope of business and organisational awareness  Capability description: Understands SBIT's business, customer and market goals, and applies resources to meet those goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Respect for diversity and valuing difference  Capability description: Supports equal and fair treatment and opportunity for all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section A: Core Capabilities (Continued)**

<b>Core Capabilities</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
8. Personal management of change  Capability description: Responds flexibility to change; takes responsibility for implementing changes relevant to work role	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
9. Innovation and creativity  Capability description: Thinks outside the box; generates new ideas; open to new ways of improving workplace practices	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
10. Teamwork  Capability description: Shares information; able to work cooperatively with others to achieve team goals; solves problems through consultation with others in team	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
11. Continuous self-directed learning  Capability description: Identifies their personal learning needs on an ongoing basis; applies this learning to meet personal and organisational objectives and priorities	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
12. Information and communication and technologies (ICT) skills  Capability description: Applies information technology as a tool to work more effectively, and can access and manage information effectively	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
13. Business acumen  Capability description: Understands the nature of Institute funding; has knowledge of the business unit's budget; strives to achieve high quality services with efficient use of the resources available	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

**Section A: Core Capabilities (Continued)**

Core Capabilities	1. Not Required	2. Very Low Level Required	3. Moderately Low Level Required	4. Moderate Level Required	5. High Level Required	6. Very High Level Required	7. Extremely High Level Required
14. Ethics and values  Capability description: Adheres to SBIT's core values: collaboration, innovation, accountability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Quality  Capability description: Sets personal standards of excellence and continuous improvement, and adheres to SBIT's quality assurance (QA) standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. If you have any other comments about the core capabilities that are required by staff who work at SBIT, please provide them below. For example, what other core capabilities for SBIT staff who operate at any level did you expect to see mentioned, but they were not? Please take care to avoid specific situations or names that may identify you.

**Section B: Your role**

1. What position most accurately describes your current role? (Please mark only one response). You will then be directed to complete **either** section C, D or E.

**'VET professionals'** are those staff who provide leadership, management and support for teaching, training and assessment within RTO's but who are not directly involved in the delivery of nationally recognised training (Dickie, et al., 2004, p.16).

**Please Go to Section C**

**'VET practitioner'** describes those staff of registered training organisations (RTO's) directly involved in the delivery of teaching, training and/or assessment programs that are nationally recognised (Dickie, et al., 2004, p.16).

**Please Go to Section D**

**'VET administration'** are ancillary support staff, for example, performing important roles in client service, marketing, product development, library, finance and clerical (Dickie, et al., 2004).

**Please Go to Section E**

### Section C: Specialised Capabilities - VET Professionals

- 1. These capabilities may be relevant to your role as manager/team or business unit leader.** Please rate each of the following on the 1-7 scale based on the level required for your role, where 1 is 'not required' through to 7 which indicates that an 'extremely high level is required'.

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Professionals</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
<p>1. Strategic thinking and planning</p> <p>Capability description: Analyses the various positions the Institute can adopt in response to various political, economic, social and market environments, and applies various resources to achieve targeted strategic priorities</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>2. Leading and managing change</p> <p>Capability description: Undertakes a lead role in planning, leading and managing, and communicating significant change across the Institute; as a change leader</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>3. Corporate vision and direction</p> <p>Capability description: Communicates a compelling and inspired vision or sense of core purpose; demonstrates entrepreneurial attitudes that drives the achievement of the Institute's strategic and commercial aims and educational priorities, and effectively communicates this to colleagues</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>4. Leadership of individuals and teams</p> <p>Capability description: Supports individuals to determine and to understand their role, responsibilities and strengths; identifies and fosters team work, guides teams to achieve common goals, and inspires strong morale and team spirit</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>5. Performance management</p> <p>Capability description: Adopts a balanced view of organisational performance that applies measurement around customer/client satisfaction, staff satisfaction, financial performance and innovation</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section C: Specialised Capabilities - VET Professionals (Continued)**

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Professionals</b>		<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
6.	<p>Partnership and relationship management</p> <p>Capability description: Manages partnerships and relationships within and outside SBIT to achieve the best outcomes for educational and service delivery</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	<p>Personal attributes and skills</p> <p>Capability description: Is positive, respectful, approachable and consultative; has a sense of humour, is committed to ongoing professional renewal; serves as a role model around the alignment of vision, values and behaviours</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	<p>Financial management</p> <p>Capability description: Employs financial management systems to make shorter term operational and longer term strategic decisions; exhibits responsiveness and keenness of insight in operating a financially profitable educational business</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	<p>Managing creativity, innovation &amp; intelligence</p> <p>Capability description: Develops processes to share, acquire, protect, create, rejuvenate and store knowledge; supports, encourages and manages innovation and resource development; researches the marketplace for potential ideas that can value-add</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	<p>Research partnering and evidence based business development</p> <p>Capability description: Identifies collaborative research opportunities across multidisciplinary teams and with key stakeholders; advocates and sponsors relevant proposals and projects</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



**Section C: Specialised Capabilities - VET Professionals (Continued)**

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Professionals</b>		<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
11.	Advanced ICT skills and analysis  Capability description: Establishes systemic processes for ongoing comparison and trialling of a range of diverse technologies and respected information sources that can promote more effective decision making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Coaching and mentoring  Capability description: Relates sensitively to staff and works through agreed processes to build trust and confidence; models expertise in practice or through conversation; observes, analyses and reflects upon professional practice; provides information and feedback; demonstrates good questioning skills; listens actively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section C: Specialised Capabilities - VET Professionals (Continued)**

2. If you have any other comments about the specialised capabilities that are required by staff who work at SBIT in your role or related roles as a VET Professional, please provide them below. For example, what other specialised capabilities for those in your role did you expect to see mentioned, but they were not? Please take care to avoid specific situations or names that may identify you.

## Section D: Specialised Capabilities - VET Practitioner Capabilities

**1. These capabilities may be relevant to your role as educator.** Please rate each of the following on the 1-7 scale based on the level required for your role, where 1 is 'not required' through to 7 which indicates that an 'extremely high level is required'.

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Practitioners</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
<p>1. Learner/client focus</p> <p>Capability description: Able to tailor teaching, learning and assessment to suit individual learning styles, learner needs and workplace contexts; promotes and supports self-directed learning</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>2. Pedagogical expertise (blended and multimode)</p> <p>Capability description: Able to apply a wide range of up to date adult learning theories and methods including project work, self-directed learning, workplace learning, mentoring and coaching</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>3. Industry/technical currency</p> <p>Capability description: Demonstrates up to date industry knowledge; undertakes annual return to industry or the workplace; maintains industry networks and attends industry professional development</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>4. Communication skills</p> <p>Capability description: Builds positive and productive relationships with learners; encourages respectful discussion and debate; uses diverse opportunities and methods to communicate with learners; timely feedback is provided on assessment</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>5. Instructional design skills</p> <p>Capability description: Able to develop training programs and a wide variety of assessment/recognition tools, resources and support materials to meet diverse learner and workplace needs and quality standards</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section D: Specialised Capabilities - VET Practitioner Capabilities (Continued)**

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Practitioners</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
<p>6. Educational technology skills</p> <p>Capability description: Demonstrates knowledge and expertise in using current and emerging ICT; embeds ICT effectively in teaching, learning and assessment; is knowledgeable of the potential of ICT to manage flexible delivery</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>7. Flexible, adaptive and creative teaching and learning</p> <p>Capability description: Able to engage, motivate and inspire learners by designing relevant, challenging and stimulating learning experiences and promotes critical thinking, reflection and questioning</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>8. Administration systems</p> <p>Capability description: Shows knowledge of and ability to handle administrative tasks associated with student attendance, progress and enrolment status within designated timeframes; has a good working knowledge of student support services</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>9. Ability to coach/mentor others</p> <p>Capability description: Passionately believes in helping others to achieve and develop; participates in forums such as networks and communities of practice to share learning; supports the team's new, part-time and casual staff</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>10. Planning and budgeting</p> <p>Capability description: Has a good knowledge of and/or contributes to work unit budgets and resource planning</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Practitioners</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
11. Planning and future focus – business acumen  Capability description: Uses industry and professional networks and research to access information and to identify new initiatives, innovative products or services; supports new training initiatives; contributes to ongoing improvement of tools and frameworks of educational practice	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

2. If you have any other comments about the specialised capabilities that are required by staff who work at SBIT in your role or related roles as a VET Practitioner, please provide them below. For example, what other specialised capabilities for those in your role did you expect to see mentioned, but they were not? Please take care to avoid specific situations or names that may identify you.

## Section E: Specialised Capabilities - VET Administration

**1. These capabilities may be relevant to your role as administration or support personnel.** Please rate each of the following on the 1-7 scale based on the level required for your role, where 1 is 'not required' through to 7 which indicates that an 'extremely high level is required'.

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Administration</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
1. Business communication skills  Capability description: Organises and presents information and concepts in a clear manner; liaises and communicates to a level that suits the needs of their audience; demonstrates appropriate emotional responses in a variety of situations; selects the most appropriate medium and format to communicate effectively and efficiently	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Learner and teacher support  Capability description: Manages systems, equipment and resources that assist learners; able to work cooperatively with other staff to accomplish joint tasks and common priorities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Value add to the business and positive attitude  Capability description: Produces goods and services in a responsive manner even when time targets and priorities are difficult; consistently meets the standards and expectations of internal and external customers/clients; builds positive working relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Entrepreneurial skills  Capability description: Comfortably handles risk and uncertainty; effectively copes with change; makes good business decisions based upon a mixture of analysis, experience, judgement and knowledge of resources; able to attend to a diverse range of activities; is flexible and adaptive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section E: Specialised Capabilities - VET Administration (Continued)**

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Administration</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
<p>5. Designing and maintaining business systems</p> <p>Capability description: Understands the nature of business systems; able to apply a range business improvement processes to adapt current administrative systems to meet the requirements of new IT, audit and related systems; monitors the efficiency and effectiveness of the Institute's business systems</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>6. Coordination of services and resources</p> <p>Capability description: Sets objectives, goals and priorities; breaks down work into the process steps; develops schedules and plans for task completion; assigns tasks to staff; anticipates problems and adjusts accordingly; coordinates and uses resources efficiently and effectively; values time; measures and evaluates results against performance and quality standards</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>7. Change leadership</p> <p>Capability description: Models and inspires alignment of vision, values and behaviours; understands the various roles that teams and individuals must play in leading change</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>8. Knowledge sharing</p> <p>Capability description: Mutually exchanges knowledge and jointly creates new knowledge to increase the achievement of individual and organisational goals and priorities</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>9. Information and communication and technologies (ICT) skills</p> <p>Capability description: Has knowledge and can use advanced systems to achieve business requirements and to manage student administration</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Specialised Capabilities VET Administration</b>	<b>1. Not Required</b>	<b>2. Very Low Level Required</b>	<b>3. Moderately Low Level Required</b>	<b>4. Moderate Level Required</b>	<b>5. High Level Required</b>	<b>6. Very High Level Required</b>	<b>7. Extremely High Level Required</b>
10. Coaching and mentoring  Capability description: builds trust, open and transparent relationships; clarifies roles and expectations; promotes a culture of aligning personal outcomes with organisational goals and priorities; celebrates effort and success; provides constructive feedback; promotes on-going reflection and encourages new ways of thinking	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

2. If you have any other comments about the specialised capabilities that are required by staff who work at SBIT in your role or related roles as a VET Practitioner Administration, please provide them below. For example, what other specialised capabilities for those in your role did you expect to see mentioned, but they were not? Please take care to avoid specific situations or names that may identify you.

## Section F: About You

This part of the survey is aimed at providing information to help us answer some important questions. SBIT recognises the diversity and different needs of people. For example, information on your gender, age and faculty/unit will help us design and implement a comprehensive capability framework that is relevant and meaningful to all staff and is responsive to business needs. It will also help us to determine the representedness of the sample that replied to this survey.

Once again, we are completely committed to protecting your privacy and respect the confidentiality of this information.

**Please mark ONLY ONE response for each of the following questions:**

**1. What is your gender?**

- Female       Male

**2. To which age group do you belong?**

- Up to 29 years of age       40 – 49 years of age       60 – 69 years of age  
 30 – 39 years of age       50 – 59 years of age       Over 70 years of age

**3. In which faculty/unit are you employed?**

- Business and Community Education Faculty       Health Sciences Faculty       Design, Arts and Hospitality Faculty  
 Strategy and Governance       Product Innovation       Corporate Services  
 Market and Business Development       Other (Please specify)

**4. What is your *current* employment status?**

- Casual       Institute contract  
 Permanent       Other (Please specify)  
 Fixed term

## Section G: Other Comments

1. If you have any other comments about the core or specialised capabilities or the capability framework project, please provide them below. Please take care to avoid specific situations or names that may identify you.



Figure 2

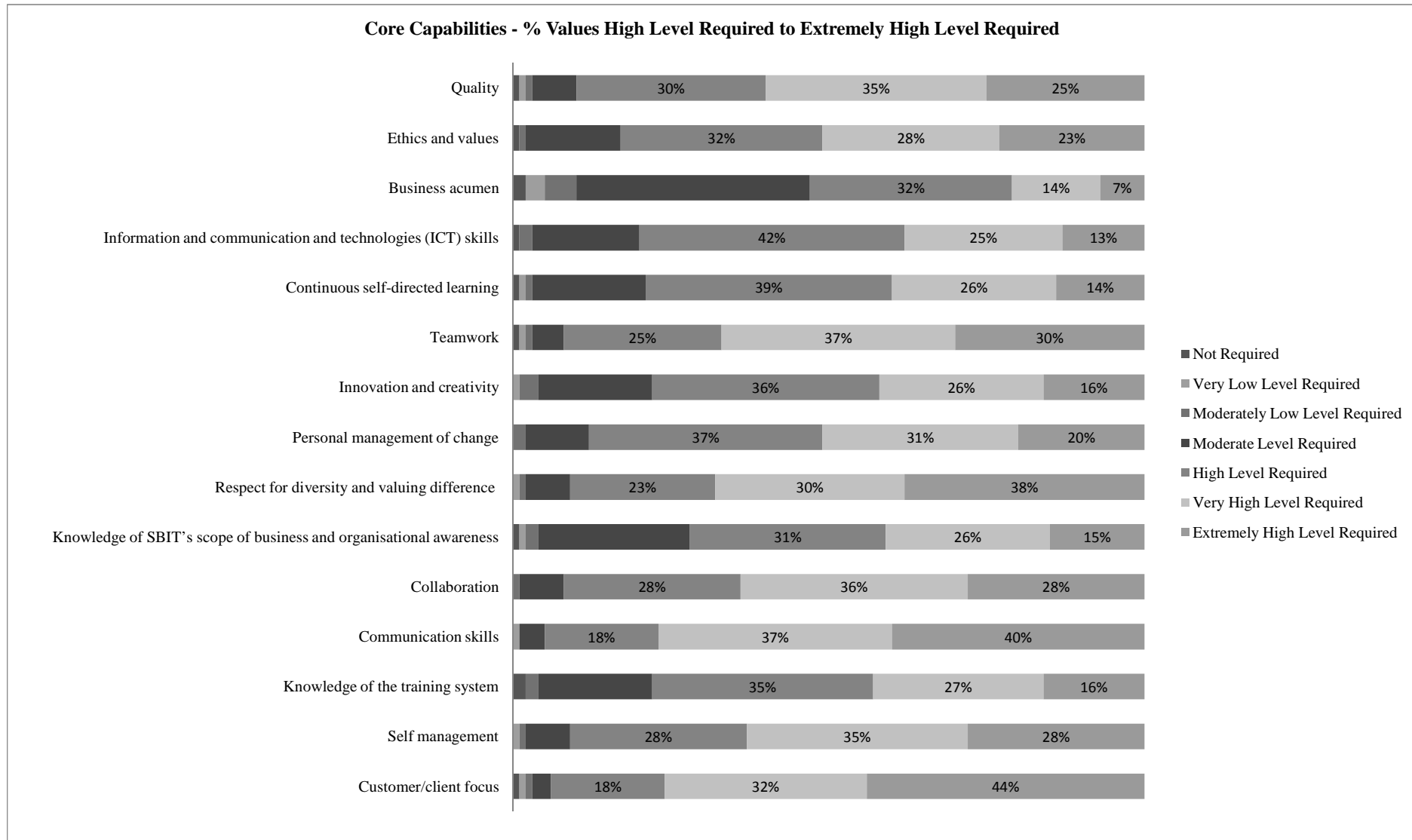


Figure 3

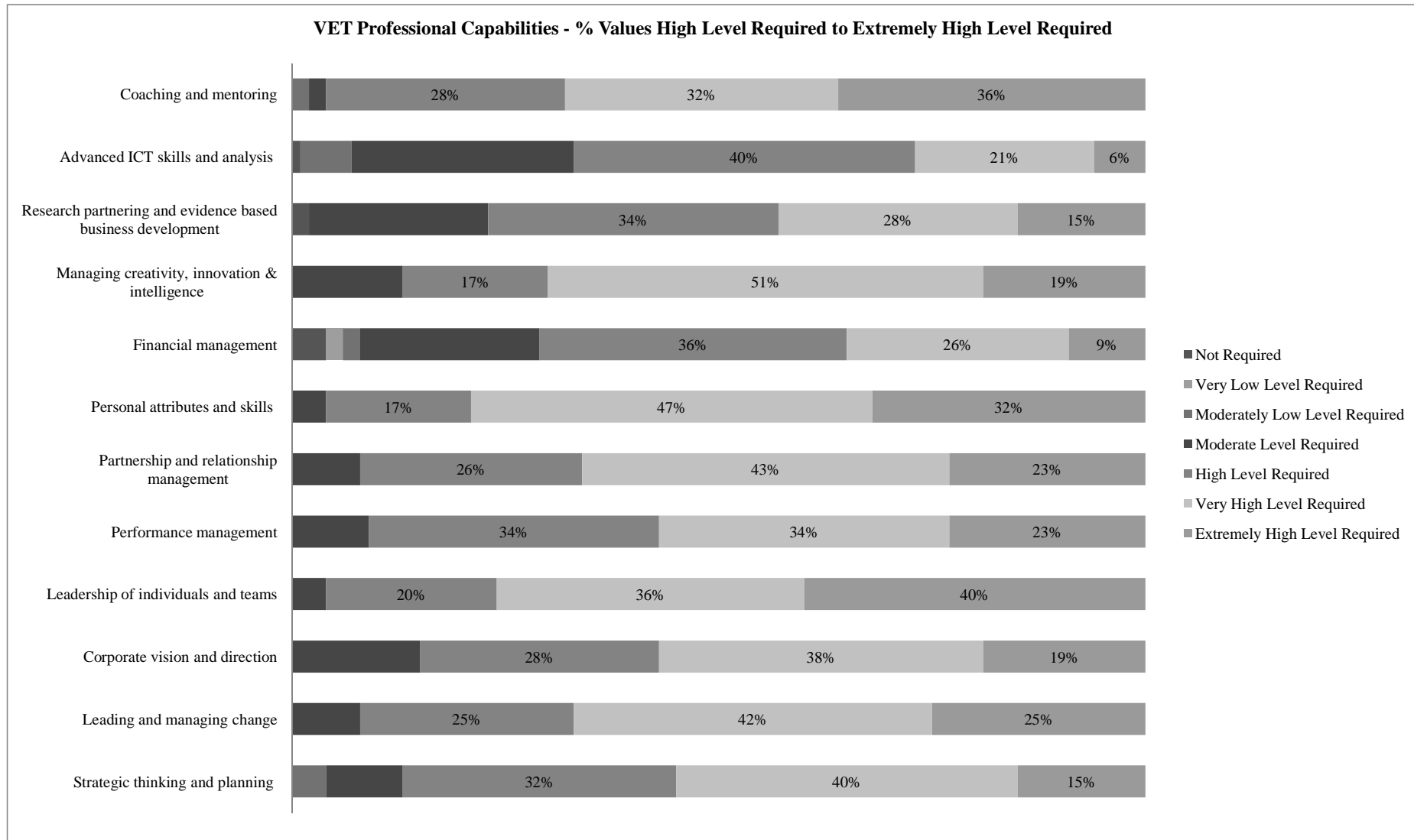


Figure 4

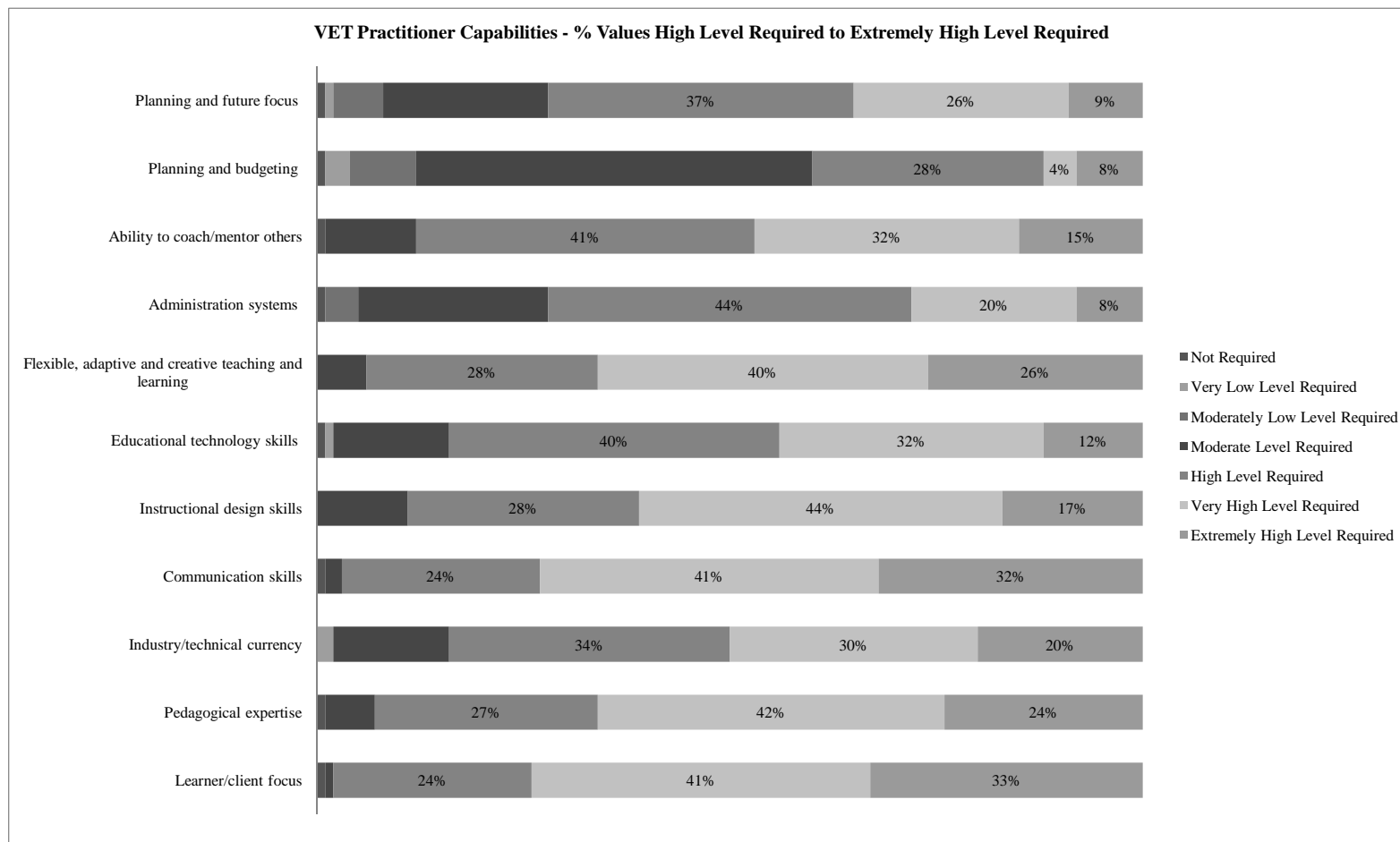
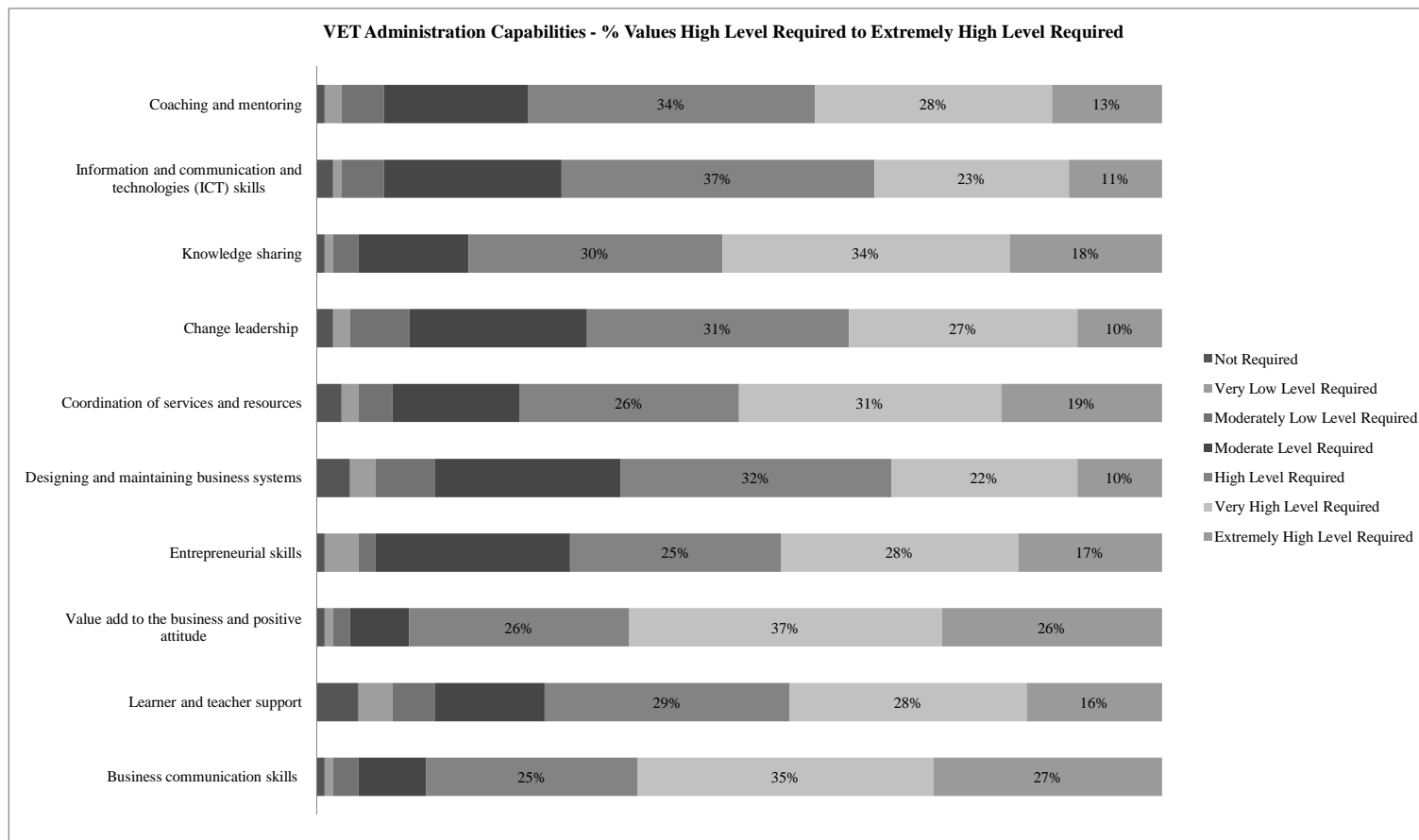


Figure 5



## Core Capabilities

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low Level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	1.	(n)	2.	(n)	3.	(n)	4.	(n)	5.	(n)	6.	(n)	7.	(n)		
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	(m)	Sd.
<b>1. Customer/client focus</b>	1	(2)	1	(2)	1	(4)	4	(16)	18	(67)	32	(116)	44	(160)	6.08	1.05
Capability description: Is committed to understanding and meeting the expectations and requirements of internal and external customers																
<b>2. Self management</b>	0	(0)	1	(2)	1	(4)	7	(25)	28	(102)	35	(130)	28	(104)	5.81	0.99
Capability description: Takes responsibility for own actions; organises own workload to achieve outcomes																
<b>3. Knowledge of the training system</b>	2	(7)	0.5	(1)	2	(7)	18	(65)	35	(128)	27	(100)	16	(59)	5.29	1.18
Capability description: Demonstrates a sound understanding of the VET sector; applies this knowledge to provide appropriate solutions to meet external and internal customer needs																
<b>4. Communication skills</b>	0	(0)	1	(2)	0	(0)	4	(19)	18	(67)	37	(134)	40	(145)	6.08	0.93
Capability description: Conveys information (written and verbal) clearly and respectfully, listens effectively; demonstrates appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy																
<b>5. Collaboration</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(3)	7	(25)	28	(102)	36	(133)	28	(104)	5.83	0.96
Capability description: Works cooperatively to achieve common objectives; builds positive working relationships																
<b>6. Knowledge of SBIT's scope of business and organisational awareness</b>	1	(2)	1	(5)	2	(7)	24	(88)	31	(113)	26	(96)	15	(56)	5.22	1.16
Capability description: Understands SBIT's business, customer and market goals, and applies resources to meet those goals																
<b>7. Respect for diversity and valuing difference</b>	0	(0)	1	(3)	1	(4)	7	(29)	23	(84)	30	(109)	38	(138)	5.92	1.08
Capability description: Supports equal and fair treatment and opportunity for all																
<b>8. Personal management of change</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(6)	10	(40)	37	(134)	31	(114)	20	(73)	5.56	0.98
Capability description: Responds flexibly to change; takes responsibility for implementing changes relevant to work role																

**Core Capabilities - Continued**

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	1.	(n)	2.	(n)	3.	(n)	4.	(n)	5.	(n)	6.	(n)	7.	(n)		
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	(m)	Sd.
<b>9. Innovation and creativity</b>	0	(0)	1	(6)	3	(12)	18	(61)	36	(132)	26	(97)	16	(59)	5.30	1.13
Capability description: Thinks outside the box; generates new ideas; open to new ways of improving workplace practices																
<b>10. Teamwork</b>	1	(2)	1	(2)	1	(5)	5	(22)	25	(93)	37	(134)	30	(109)	5.83	1.05
Capability description: Shares information; able to work cooperatively with others to achieve team goals; solves problems through consultation with others in team																
<b>11. Continuous self-directed learning</b>	1	(3)	1	(3)	1	(3)	18	(70)	39	(142)	26	(96)	14	(50)	5.27	1.07
Capability description: Identifies their personal learning needs on an ongoing basis; applies this learning to meet personal and organisational objectives and priorities																
<b>12. Information and communication and technologies (ICT) skills</b>	1	(3)	0	(0)	2	(7)	17	(64)	42	(154)	25	(92)	13	(47)	5.25	1.04
Capability description: Applies information technology as a tool to work more effectively, and can access and manage information effectively																
<b>13. Business acumen</b>	2	(8)	3	(10)	5	(20)	37	(131)	32	(119)	14	(53)	7	(26)	4.65	1.21
Capability description: Understands the nature of Institute funding; has knowledge of the business unit's budget; strives to achieve high quality services with efficient use of the resources available																
<b>14. Ethics and values</b>	1	(4)	0	(0)	1	(5)	15	(53)	32	(117)	28	(104)	23	(84)	5.52	1.13
Capability description: Adheres to SBIT's core values: collaboration, innovation, accountability																
<b>15. Quality</b>	1	(3)	1	(3)	1	(3)	7	(30)	30	(111)	35	(127)	25	(90)	5.68	1.06
Capability description: Sets personal standards of excellence and continuous improvement, and adheres to SBIT's quality assurance (QA) standards																

### VET Professional Capabilities (Specialised/Strategic)

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	1.	(n)	2.	(n)	3.	(n)	4.	(n)	5.	(n)	6.	(n)	7.	(n)		
1. <b>Strategic thinking and planning</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(2)	9	(5)	32	(17)	40	(21)	15	(8)	5.52	0.99
Capability description: Analyses the various positions the Institute can adopt in response to various political, economic, social and market environments, and applies various resources to achieve targeted strategic priorities																
2. <b>Leading and managing change</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	8	(5)	25	(13)	42	(22)	25	(13)	5.81	0.92
Capability description: Undertakes a lead role in planning, leading and managing, and communicating significant change across the Institute; as a change leader																
3. <b>Corporate vision and direction</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	15	(8)	28	(15)	38	(20)	19	(10)	5.60	0.96
Capability description: Communicates a compelling and inspired vision or sense of core purpose; demonstrates entrepreneurial attitudes that drives the achievement of the Institute's strategic and commercial aims and educational priorities, and effectively communicates this to colleagues																
4. <b>Leadership of individuals and teams</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(2)	20	(11)	36	(19)	40	(21)	6.11	0.86
Capability description: Supports individuals to determine and to understand their role, responsibilities and strengths; identifies and fosters team work, guides teams to achieve common goals, and inspires strong morale and team spirit																
5. <b>Performance management</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	9	(5)	34	(18)	34	(18)	23	(12)	5.69	0.93
Capability description: Adopts a balanced view of organisational performance that applies measurement around customer/client satisfaction, staff satisfaction, financial performance and innovation																

VET Professional Capabilities (Specialised/Strategic) – Continued

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	1.	(n)	2.	(n)	3.	(n)	4.	(n)	5.	(n)	6.	(n)	7.	(n)		
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	(m)	Sd.
6. <b>Partnership and relationship management</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	8	(4)	26	(14)	43	(23)	23	(12)	5.81	0.87
Capability description: Manages partnerships and relationships within and outside SBIT to achieve the best outcomes for educational and service delivery																
7. <b>Personal attributes and skills</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(2)	17	(9)	47	(25)	32	(17)	6.07	0.80
Capability description: Is positive, respectful, approachable and consultative; has a sense of humour, is committed to ongoing professional renewal; serves as a role model around the alignment of vision, values and behaviours																
8. <b>Financial management</b>	4	(2)	2	(1)	2	(1)	21	(11)	36	(19)	26	(14)	9	(5)	5.00	1.31
Capability description: Employs financial management systems to make shorter term operational and longer term strategic decisions; exhibits responsiveness and keenness of insight in operating a financially profitable educational business																
9. <b>Managing creativity, innovation &amp; intelligence</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	13	(7)	17	(9)	51	(27)	19	(10)	5.75	0.91
Capability description: Develops processes to share, acquire, protect, create, rejuvenate and store knowledge; supports, encourages and manages innovation and resource development; researches the marketplace for potential ideas that can value-add																
10. <b>Research partnering and evidence based business development</b>	2	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	21	(11)	34	(18)	28	(15)	15	(8)	5.30	1.15
Capability description: Identifies collaborative research opportunities across multidisciplinary teams and with key stakeholders; advocates and sponsors relevant proposals and projects																



VET Professional Capabilities (Specialised/Strategic) – Continued

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	1.	(n)	2.	(n)	3.	(n)	4.	(n)	5.	(n)	6.	(n)	7.	(n)		
11. <b>Advanced ICT skills and analysis</b>	2	(1)	0	(0)	6	(3)	26	(14)	40	(21)	21	(11)	6	(3)	4.86	1.11
Capability description: Establishes systemic processes for ongoing comparison and trialling of a range of diverse technologies and respected information sources that can promote more effective decision making																
12. <b>Coaching and mentoring</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(1)	2	(1)	28	(15)	32	(17)	36	(19)	5.98	0.95
Capability description: Relates sensitively to staff and works through agreed processes to build trust and confidence; models expertise in practice or through conversation; observes, analyses and reflects upon professional practice; provides information and feedback; demonstrates good questioning skills; listens actively																

### VET Practitioner Capabilities (Specialised/Strategic)

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	1.	(n)	2.	(n)	3.	(n)	4.	(n)	5.	(n)	6.	(n)	7.	(n)		
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	(m)	Sd.
<b>1. Learner/client focus</b>	1	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(2)	24	(29)	41	(51)	33	(40)	6.01	0.91
Capability description: Able to tailor teaching, learning and assessment to suit individual learning styles, learner needs and workplace contexts; promotes and supports self-directed learning																
<b>2. Pedagogical expertise (blended and multimode)</b>	1	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	6	(7)	27	(33)	42	(52)	24	(30)	5.82	0.95
Capability description: Able to apply a wide range of up to date adult learning theories and methods including project work, self-directed learning, workplace learning, mentoring and coaching																
<b>3. Industry/technical currency</b>	0	(0)	2	(2)	0	(0)	14	(17)	34	(42)	30	(37)	20	(25)	5.52	1.06
Capability description: Demonstrates up to date industry knowledge; undertakes annual return to industry or the workplace; maintains industry networks and attends industry professional development																
<b>4. Communication skills</b>	1	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(2)	24	(30)	41	(51)	32	(39)	6.00	0.91
Capability description: Builds positive and productive relationships with learners; encourages respectful discussion and debate; uses diverse opportunities and methods to communicate with learners; timely feedback is provided on assessment																
<b>5. Instructional design skills</b>	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	11	(13)	28	(35)	44	(54)	17	(21)	5.67	0.88
Capability description: Able to develop training programs and a wide variety of assessment/recognition tools, resources and support materials to meet diverse learner and workplace needs and quality standards																
<b>6. Educational technology skills</b>	1	(1)	1	(1)	0	(0)	14	(17)	40	(49)	32	(39)	12	(16)	5.32	1.02
Capability description: Demonstrates knowledge and expertise in using current and emerging ICT; embeds ICT effectively in teaching, learning and assessment; is knowledgeable of the potential of ICT to manage flexible delivery																

VET Practitioner Capabilities (Specialised/Strategic) – Continued

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	1.	(n)	2.	(n)	3.	(n)	4.	(n)	5.	(n)	6.	(n)	7.	(n)		
	%		%		%		%		%		%		%		(m)	Sd.
<b>7. Flexible, adaptive and creative teaching and learning</b>	0	(0)	1	(1)	0	(0)	6	(7)	28	(34)	40	(49)	26	(32)	5.83	0.93
Capability description: Able to engage, motivate and inspire learners by designing relevant, challenging and stimulating learning experiences and promotes critical thinking, reflection and questioning																
<b>8. Administration systems</b>	1	(1)	0	(0)	4	(5)	23	(28)	44	(54)	20	(25)	8	(10)	5.02	1.02
Capability description: Shows knowledge of and ability to handle administrative tasks associated with student attendance, progress and enrolment status within designated timeframes; has a good working knowledge of student support services																
<b>9. Ability to coach/mentor others</b>	1	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	11	(14)	41	(51)	32	(39)	15	(18)	5.46	0.96
Capability description: Passionately believes in helping others to achieve and develop; participates in forums such as networks and communities of practice to share learning; supports the team's new, part-time and casual staff																
<b>10. Planning and budgeting</b>	1	(1)	3	(4)	8	(10)	48	(59)	28	(34)	4	(5)	8	(10)	4.43	1.13
Capability description: Has a good knowledge of and/or contributes to work unit budgets and resource planning																
<b>11. Planning and future focus – business acumen</b>	1	(1)	1	(1)	6	(7)	20	(25)	37	(46)	26	(32)	9	(11)	5.06	1.12
Capability description: Uses industry and professional networks and research to access information and to identify new initiatives, innovative products or services; supports new training initiatives; contributes to ongoing improvement of tools and frameworks of educational practice																

## VET Administration Capabilities (Specialised/Strategic)

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	1.	(n)	2.	(n)	3.	(n)	4.	(n)	5.	(n)	6.	(n)	7.	(n)		
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	(m)	Sd.
<b>1. Business communication skills</b>	1	(1)	1	(1)	4	(5)	9	(19)	25	(47)	35	(67)	27	(51)	5.69	1.12
Capability description: Organises and presents information and concepts in a clear manner; liaises and communicates to a level that suits the needs of their audience; demonstrates appropriate emotional responses in a variety of situations; selects the most appropriate medium and format to communicate effectively and efficiently																
<b>2. Learner and teacher support</b>	6	(12)	4	(8)	5	(9)	13	(24)	29	(55)	28	(53)	16	(30)	4.99	1.61
Capability description: Manages systems, equipment and resources that assist learners; able to work cooperatively with other staff to accomplish joint tasks and common priorities																
<b>3. Value add to the business and positive attitude</b>	2	(3)	1	(1)	2	(3)	7	(13)	26	(50)	37	(71)	26	(50)	5.71	1.15
Capability description: Produces goods and services in a responsive manner even when time targets and priorities are difficult; consistently meets the standards and expectations of internal and external customers/clients; builds positive working relationships																
<b>4. Entrepreneurial skills</b>	1	(2)	4	(8)	2	(3)	24	(45)	25	(47)	28	(54)	17	(32)	5.18	1.33
Capability description: Comfortably handles risk and uncertainty; effectively copes with change; makes good business decisions based upon a mixture of analysis, experience, judgement and knowledge of resources; able to attend to a diverse range of activities; is flexible and adaptive																
<b>5. Designing and maintaining business systems</b>	4	(8)	3	(6)	7	(14)	22	(42)	32	(62)	22	(40)	10	(19)	4.78	1.42
Capability description: Understands the nature of business systems; able to apply a range business improvement processes to adapt current administrative systems to meet the requirements of new IT, audit and related systems; monitors the efficiency and effectiveness of the Institute's business systems																

VET Administration Capabilities (Specialised/Strategic) – Continued

Item	Not Required		Very Low Level Required		Moderately Low level Required		Moderate Level Required		High Level Required		Very High Level Required		Extremely High Level Required		Mean	Std. Deviation
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	(m)	Sd.
<b>6. Coordination of services and resources</b>	3	(5)	2	(3)	4	(8)	15	(28)	26	(50)	31	(60)	19	(37)	5.31	1.36
Capability description: Sets objectives, goals and priorities; breaks down work into the process steps; develops schedules and plans for task completion; assigns tasks to staff; anticipates problems and adjusts accordingly; coordinates and uses resources efficiently and effectively; values time; measures and evaluates results against performance and quality standards																
<b>7. Change leadership</b>	2	(4)	2	(4)	7	(4)	21	(40)	31	(60)	27	(51)	10	(18)	4.95	1.29
Capability description: Models and inspires alignment of vision, values and behaviours; understands the various roles that teams and individuals must play in leading change																
<b>8. Knowledge sharing</b>	1	(1)	1	(1)	3	(6)	13	(24)	30	(58)	34	(65)	18	(35)	5.46	1.13
Capability description: Mutually exchanges knowledge and jointly creates new knowledge to increase the achievement of individual and organisational goals and priorities																
<b>9. Information and communication and technologies (ICT) skills</b>	4	(7)	1	(1)	5	(9)	21	(40)	37	(70)	23	(43)	11	(21)	4.97	1.30
Capability description: Has knowledge and can use advanced systems to achieve business requirements and to manage student administration																
<b>10. Coaching and mentoring</b>	2	(3)	2	(3)	5	(9)	17	(33)	34	(64)	28	(53)	13	(25)	5.14	1.27
Capability description: builds trust, open and transparent relationships; clarifies roles and expectations; promotes a culture of aligning personal outcomes with organisational goals and priorities; celebrates effort and success; provides constructive feedback; promotes on-going reflection and encourages new ways of thinking																

## Capability Framework

### Core Capabilities

- Customer/client focus (Institute Value – Collaboration)
- Communication skills
- Collaboration and Teamwork (Institute Value – Collaboration)
- Learning and Self Management (Institute Value – Accountability)
- Quality (Institute Value – Accountability)
- Personal Management of Change (Institute Value – Accountability)
- Ethics and Values
- Information, Communication and Technologies (ICT)
- Innovation and Creativity (Institute Value – Innovation)
- Business Acumen (Institute Value – Innovation)

### Specialised/Strategic Capabilities - VET Professional

- Leadership of individuals and teams
- Personal attributes and skills
- Coaching and mentoring
- Leading and managing Change
- Partnership and Relationship Management, and Evidence Based Business Development
- Managing Creativity, Innovation and Intelligence
- Performance Management
- Corporate Vision and Direction
- Strategic Thinking and Planning
- Financial Management
- Advanced ICT Skills and Analysis

### Specialised/Strategic - VET Practitioner Capabilities

- Learner/Client Focus
- Communication Skills
- Flexible, Adaptive and Creative Teaching and Learning
- Pedagogical Expertise (Blended and Multimode)
- Instructional Design Skills
- Industry/Technical Currency
- Ability to Coach/Mentor Others
- Educational Technology Skills
- Planning and Future Focus – (Business Acumen)
- Administrative Systems
- Planning and Budgeting

### Specialised/Strategic - VET Administration Capabilities

- Value Add to the Business and Positive Attitude
- Coordination of Services and Resources
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Change Leadership
- Learner and Teacher Support
- Information, Communication and Technologies (ICT)
- Designing and Maintaining Business Systems