



Taking Early Careers Global  
**Global Employers'  
Insights Survey**

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Employers and University  
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# Foreword

Where graduate recruitment was once an activity conducted by employers on a country by country basis, early career talent management is now a global endeavour for many.

As interest in a global approach to the recruitment and development of early career hires has grown, employers have sought market insights that will help them develop strategies and practices that will meet their global business objectives.

The goal of this report is to produce valuable knowledge and benchmark data that will enable global early career leaders and senior talent leaders to better manage their functions.

Research and analysis on a range of issues affecting graduate, intern and vocational recruitment and development exists at a country level to some extent – but rarely at a global level.

We consulted with partner associations, with employers and other stakeholders to understand knowledge gaps and knowledge requirements of the global early careers sector. The result of that work is this report.

Through the production and dissemination of our findings, through the ongoing conversations we hope will flow from this research, we aim to foster a stronger understanding of the global early career landscape.

**The goal of this report is to produce valuable knowledge and benchmark data that will enable global early career leaders and senior talent leaders to better manage their functions.**





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# Executive summary

This research investigates the practice of global early talent teams through a survey of specialists working with global early talent.

It shows that the typical global team is 15 people strong and based in multiple locations; is focused on graduate and intern hiring; is most likely to set strategies for recruitment targets and selection / assessment; is least likely to be involved in learning and development; is likely to be accountable for all early career (EC) spend and be measured against vacancies filled and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) performance indicators; is more likely to influence and coordinate local teams rather than line manage them.

## Global strategies combine local expertise

Global teams face the challenge of delivering competitive advantage through a globalised approach without compromising performance in local markets. More than half of respondents work in a structure that includes local teams in addition to the global team (54%). We found that teams are least likely to line manage local early careers teams directly (22%), and most likely to adopt an influencing and coordinating role (46%).

Global teams are rarely equally focused on the whole globe. Most are predominantly focused on North America (69%), Europe (52%) and Asia Pacific (47%). In fact, more than half (59%) of these 'global teams' are actually only responsible for one region, with another 5% only responsible for 2 regions. Just over a third (36%) of respondents can make a more genuine claim to be recruiting globally and report that they have responsibility for 3 or more regions.

## EC teams focus on graduates and interns

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents have responsibility for hiring graduates and interns (90% and 89% respectively) and that vocational pathways are also a consideration for many global teams, just over half (51%) having responsibilities for vocational hiring, e.g. apprentices. Of those that had responsibilities for high school graduates and apprentices, they were most likely to be focused on Europe. Just over a third were also responsible for experienced hires (37%).

**“The overwhelming majority of survey respondents have responsibility for hiring graduates and interns (90% and 89% respectively)”**



### **North America dominates hiring volumes**

Most global teams are not headquartered in a central location but spread out across multiple locations (81%). Global hiring patterns vary significantly across respondents, but our data suggests that the largest proportion of teams are focused on hiring targets for North America.

North America accounts for 41% of hiring, Asia Pacific 27% and Europe 25%. Central and South America, the Middle East and Africa account for only 7% of the total.

### **Global teams focus on attraction and selection**

At a strategic level, global teams are most likely to be involved in selection and assessment (73%) and setting recruitment targets and KPIs (60%). They are also commonly involved in developing recruitment marketing strategies (48%) and in the development of the employer brand (40%).

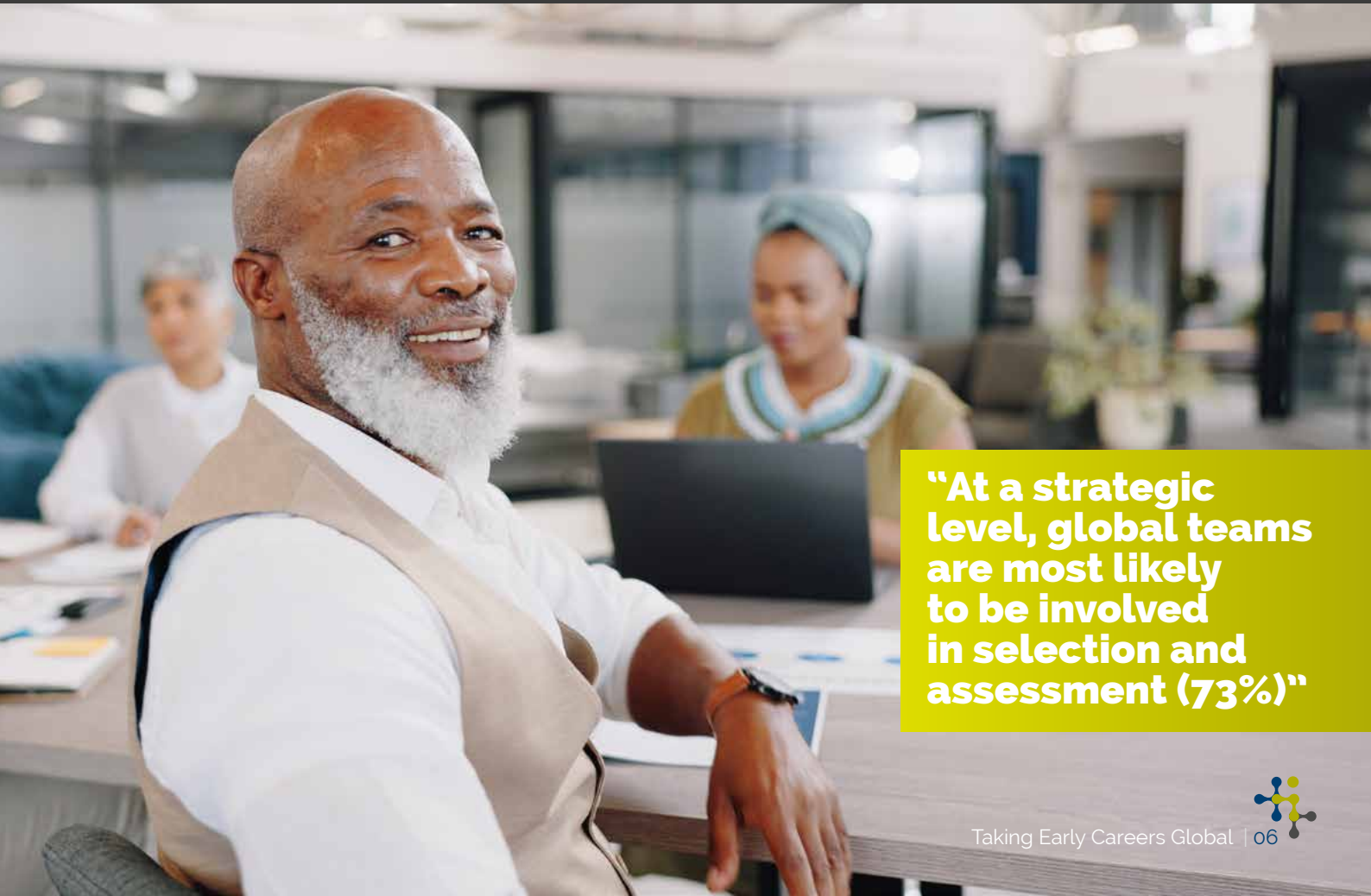
Learning development strategies are least likely to be set at a global level. Only a third (34%) of respondents are strategically involved in the learning and development of new hires (34%). Another third (35%) of teams have no responsibility for learning and development at all.

Over half (55%) of respondents organise strategic workforce planning at a global level. But this also implies that 45% do not do this, with workforce planning then either managed locally or in a partnership between the global and local teams.

### **Data used to manage recruitment and EDI performance**

The overwhelming majority (81%) of respondents use recruitment data for strategy purposes. When it comes to using data to manage performance, the most common areas where data is used is monitoring the number of vacancies filled (89%) followed by EDI management (82%).

Retention levels and recruitment brand performance are the next most common performance measures (52% and 51%). As discussed above, global teams are typically less involved in learning and development and so unsurprisingly are less likely to use data to manage this area of the business. For example, only 36% use job performance data to monitor the success of the early career hires that they recruit.



**“At a strategic level, global teams are most likely to be involved in selection and assessment (73%)”**



## Three key challenges faced by global teams

1

Navigating the delicate balance between adhering to a global or central framework for talent and career management whilst accommodating local or regional nuances.

2

Allocating limited resources across a wide range of responsibilities.

3

Dealing with the scarcity of early-career talent in some sectors, occupations and demographic groups.



### EDI strategies focus on attraction and selection

EDI is also a strong focus for global teams. Almost two-thirds (65%) manage the delivery of EDI initiatives which suggests that EDI is a globally managed activity for many employers. There is a notable focus on EDI data with almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents using it for setting EDI strategy.

Gender (87%) and race (82%) are the most commonly addressed EDI categories, followed by disability (55%). Global teams seek to influence EDI through marketing and attraction strategies (80%) and selection criteria, assessment tools, and processes (71%).

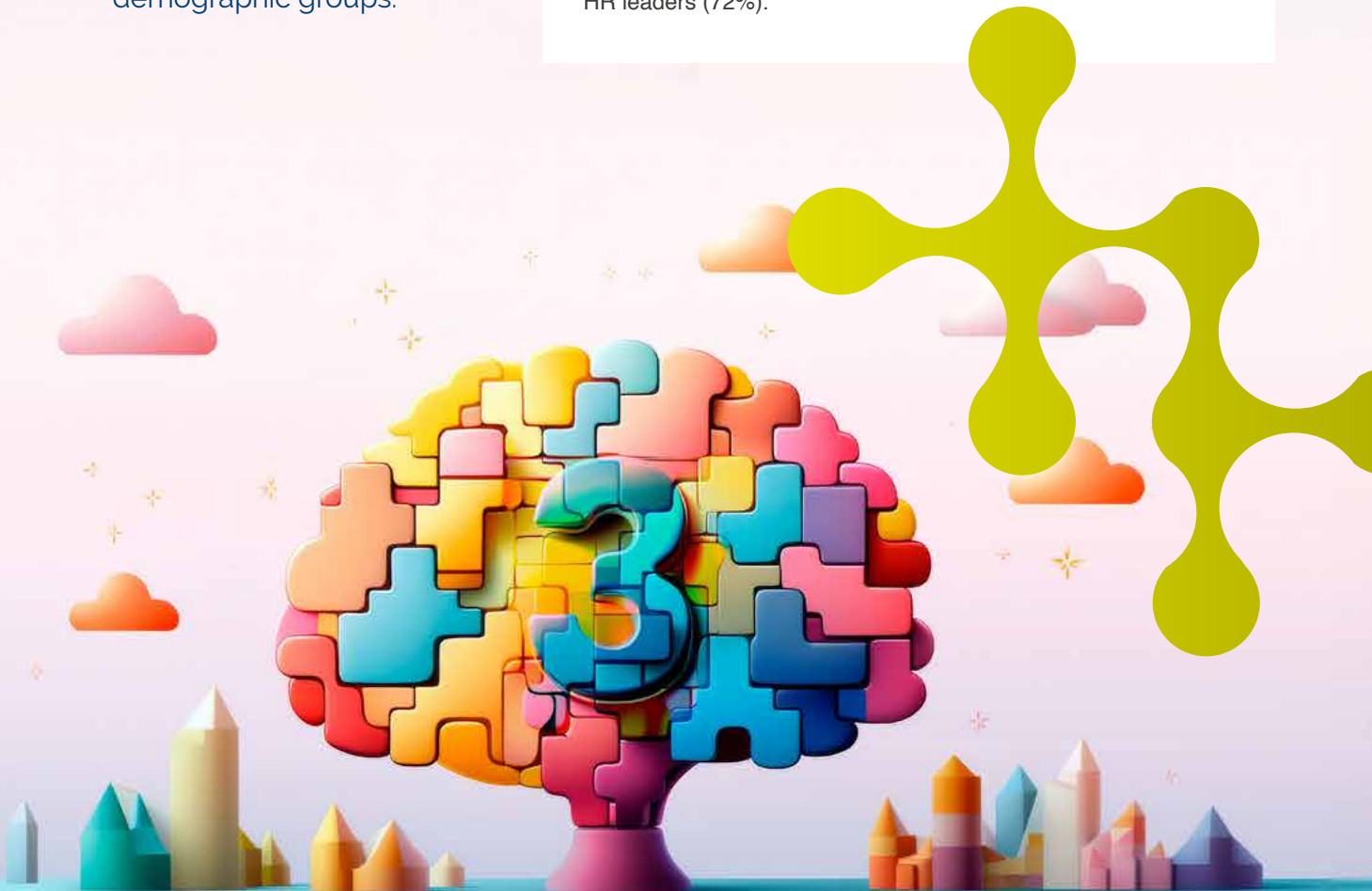


### Three key challenges faced by global teams

As part of the research, we wanted to understand what challenges global early career teams face. Respondents identified three significant issues:

1. Navigating the delicate balance between adhering to a global or central framework for talent and career management whilst accommodating local or regional nuances.
2. Allocating limited resources across a wide range of responsibilities.
3. Dealing with the scarcity of early-career talent in some sectors, occupations and demographic groups.

In meeting these challenges, the most important stakeholders that global teams seek to influence are local and regional business leaders (88%) and HR leaders (79%). This suggests that meeting the needs of regional and local level leaders is a higher priority than those of global business leaders (66%) and HR leaders (72%).





1

# Introduction

Scarcity of talent is a strategic concern for global businesses. Competition and technology are forcing change and there is a limited supply of skilled labour in many economies. In advanced economies the current unemployment rate is below 5%.<sup>1</sup> Over half of CEOs think their workforce lacks skills,<sup>2</sup> and over a third expect labour and skills shortages to disrupt their business strategy.<sup>3</sup>

To solve their talent challenges globalised organisations increasingly take an international approach to talent acquisition and development. And there is an increasing recognition that a global approach to talent management starts in the early career phase. Key factors that have influenced this shift include:

- labour markets are now global – 6.4 million students moved to another country to study in 2021;<sup>4</sup>
- technology enables global solutions to selection and assessment, with recruitment operations able to be outsourced anywhere in the world;
- many employer brands now have a global reach;
- training strategies often aim to develop a global mindset amongst hires; and
- as the Black Lives Matter movement demonstrates, the EDI challenge crosses international borders.

Organisations find themselves searching for global solutions to this international competition for talent. Given this, understanding the distinct practices and strategies employed by global EC recruitment teams has become increasingly important.

INEUCS and its member organisations have developed the *Taking early careers global: Global employers' insights survey*, to gain insights from a range of employers engaged in the global recruitment of early career talent. The information in this report provides valuable insights into their experiences, challenges, and expectations of a global approach to EC recruitment. These data can be used by organisations to inform the development of their global EC strategies and operations.

The research investigated how companies manage global EC recruitment and development strategic goals, how they operate in different geographical areas, how stakeholder interactions are managed, and the balance between global and local recruitment team reporting structures. The research also examined operational details like budgeting, team structure, and data management, as well as responsibilities for EDI, and vocational EC pathways such as apprenticeships.

<sup>1</sup> International Monetary Fund (2024). *Unemployment rate*. [https://www.imf.org/external/data-mapper/LUR@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO\\_WORLD](https://www.imf.org/external/data-mapper/LUR@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO_WORLD)

<sup>2</sup> PwC (2024, January 15). *PwC's 27<sup>th</sup> annual global CEO survey: Thriving in an age of continuous reinvention*. <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/c-suite-insights/ceo-survey.html>

<sup>3</sup> Deloitte (2023). *Fall 2023 Fortune/Deloitte CEO survey insights*. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/chief-executive-officer/articles/ceo-survey.html>

<sup>4</sup> IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (2021). *Internationally mobile students globally, 2012-2021*. <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/international-students#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20there%20were%20over,programmes%20in%20high%2Dincome%20countries>

**To solve their talent challenges globalised organisations increasingly take an international approach to talent acquisition and development. And there is an increasing recognition that a global approach to talent management starts in the early career phase.**



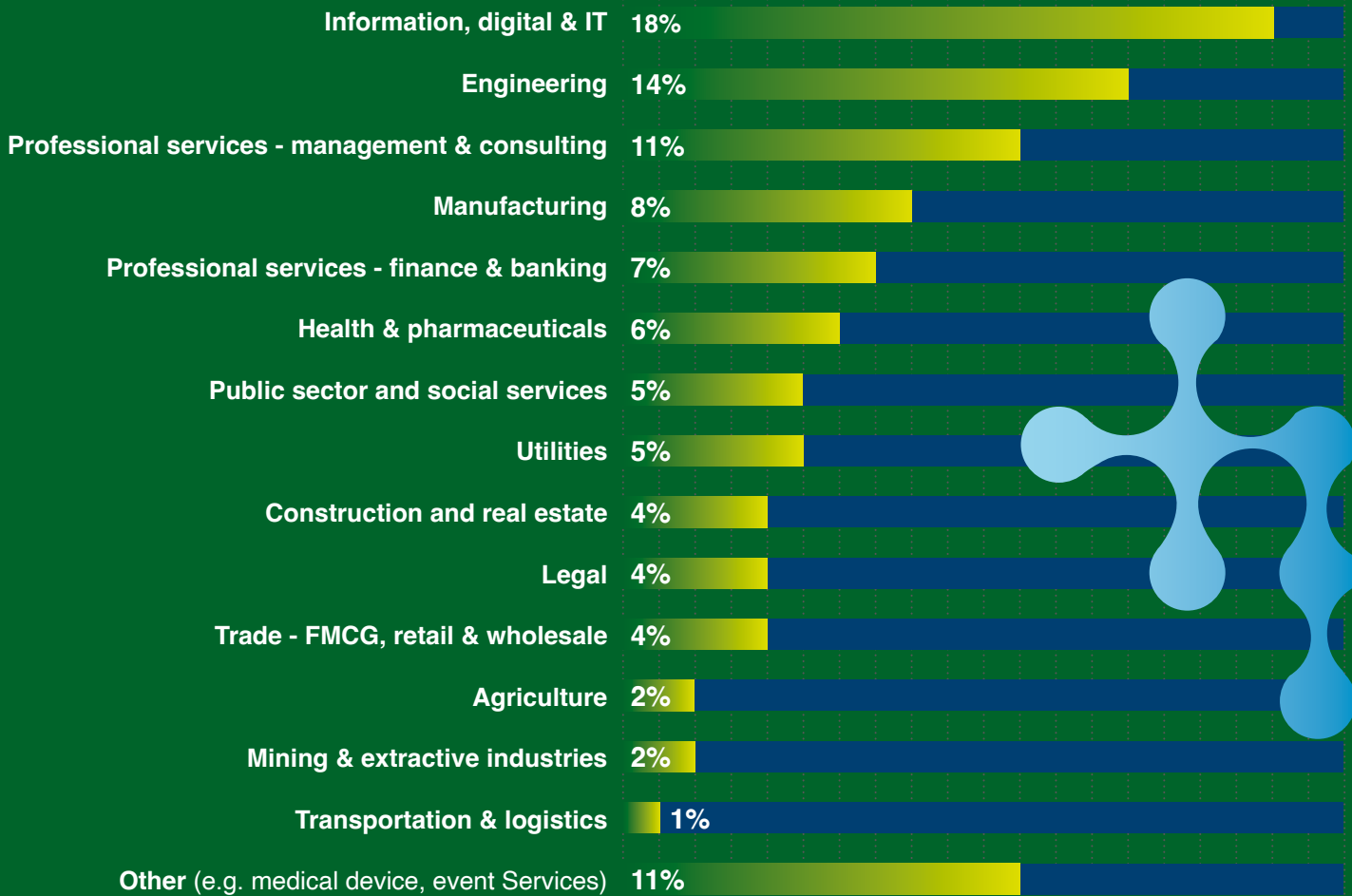
### About the study

The *Taking early careers global: Global employers' insights survey* was conducted from 20th December 2023 to 29th January 2024 and received 85 responses from global employers across a wide range of sectors (Figure 1.1). *Information, Digital & IT* constituted the largest proportion (18% of the total), followed by the *Engineering* sector (14%), and professional services and manufacturing sectors. Employers from the agriculture and transportation/logistics sectors were least represented.



Figure 1.1

### Proportion of survey responses by sector (85 respondents)



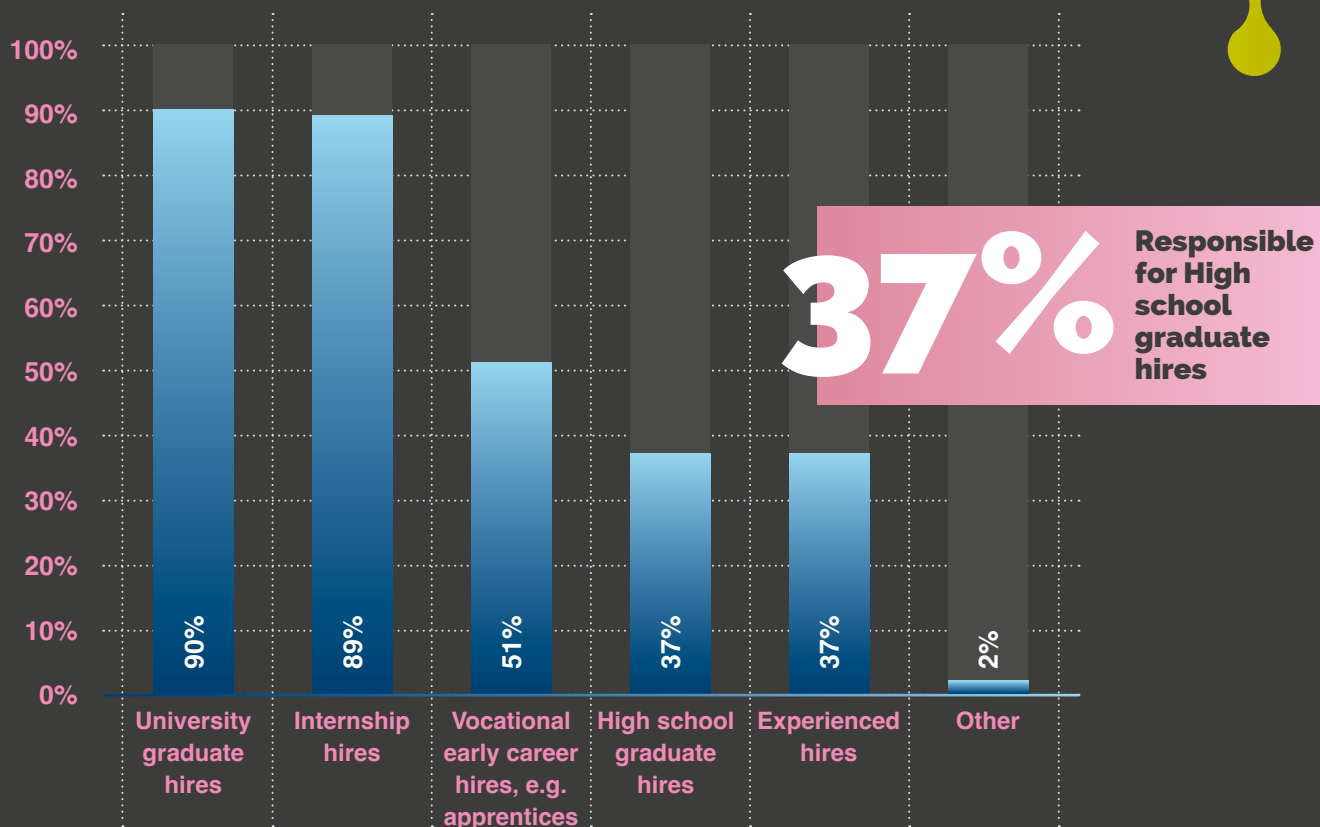
2

# The scope of global teams

Most respondents reported they are responsible for recruiting university graduates (90%) and interns (89%) (Figure 2.1). Other types of hires, such as those who have been through a vocational education route or come direct from high school, are less likely to be the concern of global EC teams.

**Figure 2.1**

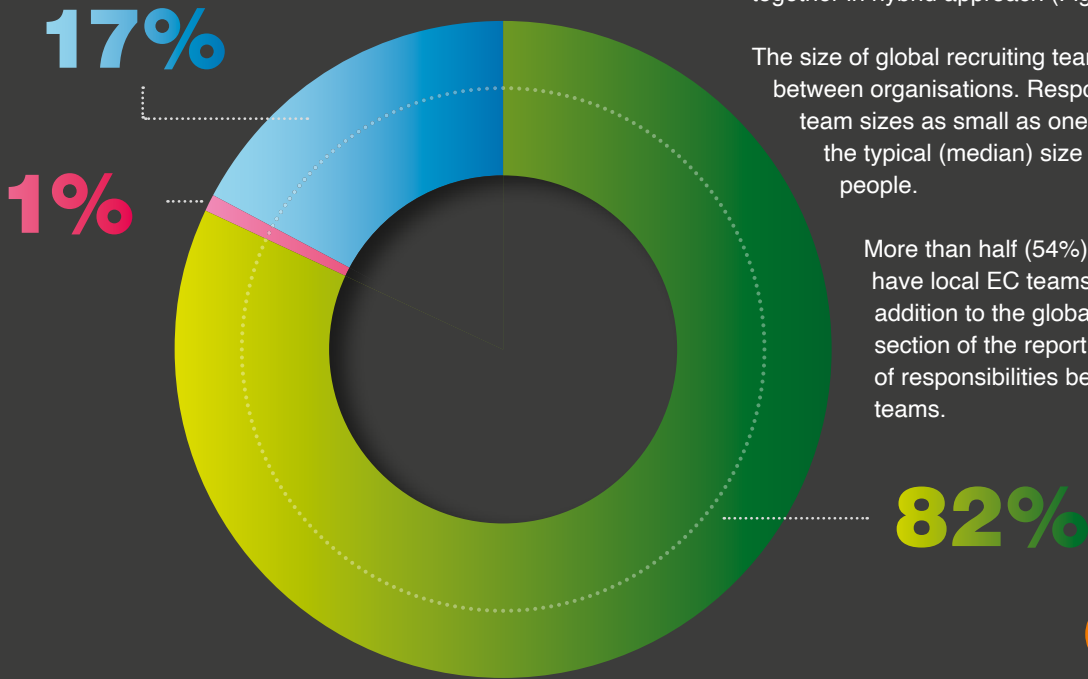
**Recruitment responsibilities of respondents by hire type**  
(84 respondents)



**Figure 2.2**

**Responsibility for early career versus experienced hires (84 respondents)**

- Mainly early career hires
- Both early career and experienced hires
- Mainly experienced hires



Most (82%) respondents are mainly responsible for early hires rather than managing a mixed portfolio of early career hires and experienced hires (Figure 2.2). This insight suggests that there is a segment of globally focused recruiters who specialise in the early career market.

The majority of respondents (81%) indicated that their teams operate across multiple locations with a minority (19%) basing their global recruitment teams in a single country. More than two-thirds (69%) of respondents reported that the global recruiting team generally work together in hybrid approach (Figure 2.3).

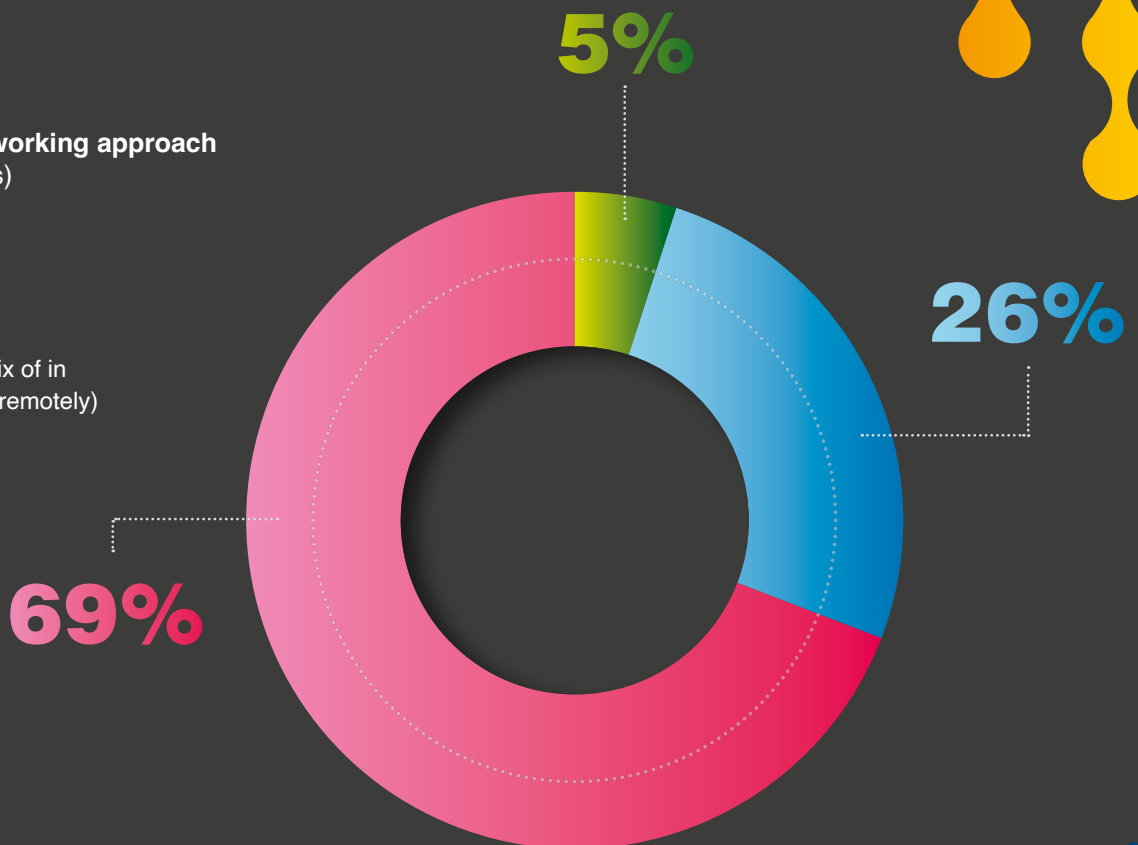
The size of global recruiting teams varies considerably between organisations. Respondents reported global team sizes as small as one member of staff, but the typical (median) size of a global team is 15 people.

More than half (54%) of employers also have local EC teams (decentralised) in addition to the global team. The next section of the report explores the balance of responsibilities between local and global teams.

**Figure 2.3**

**Proportion of working approach (85 respondents)**

- In person
- Remotely
- Hybrid (A mix of in person and remotely)



3

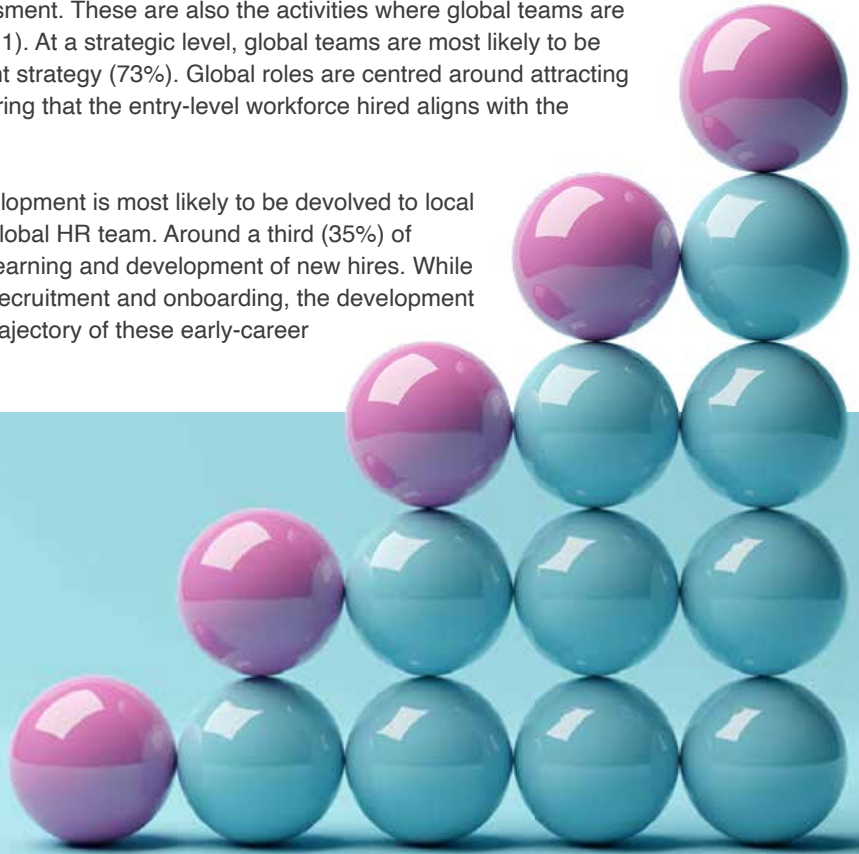
# Global strategic responsibilities



## Level of responsibility






Global teams are primarily concerned with the initial stages of talent acquisition and development: attraction, recruitment, selection and assessment. These are also the activities where global teams are most likely to manage delivery (see Table 3.1). At a strategic level, global teams are most likely to be involved in setting selection and assessment strategy (73%). Global roles are centred around attracting and identifying the right EC talent and ensuring that the entry-level workforce hired aligns with the organisation's needs and culture.

Our findings suggest that learning and development is most likely to be devolved to local teams or possibly delivered by a separate global HR team. Around a third (35%) of respondents have no responsibility for the learning and development of new hires. While early talent management often focuses on recruitment and onboarding, the development phase is also crucial in shaping the future trajectory of these early-career individuals within the organisation.



**Table 3.1**

**Respondents' level of responsibility in various area (85 respondents)<sup>5</sup>**

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|   | Setting strategy  | Managing delivery   | Influencing regions  | Monitoring regions  | No responsibility   |
| Employer brand  | 40%   | <b>54%</b>  | 44%  | 28%   | 20%   |
| Setting recruitment targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) | <b>60%</b>  | <b>62%</b>  | 41%  | 38%   | 11%   |
| Recruitment marketing   | 48%   | <b>59%</b>  | 49%  | 34%   | 13%   |
| Selection and assessment  | <b>73%</b>  | <b>65%</b>  | 48%  | 36%   | 11%   |
| Onboarding  | 44%   | <b>54%</b>  | 35%  | 25%   | 19%   |
| Learning and development for new hires                            | <b>34%</b>  | <b>41%</b>  | <b>41%</b>   | 26%   | <b>35%</b>  |
| Equality, diversity and inclusion                                 | 48%   | <b>65%</b>  | 52%  | 36%   | 5%  |






The size of a global team correlates to their responsibilities. Respondents in larger teams (10 or more people) tend to have more responsibility for setting strategy and managing delivery of employer brand, setting recruitment targets key performance indicators, and equality, diversity and inclusion than in smaller teams (less than 10 people). Smaller teams tend to have more responsibility for the onboarding and learning and development of new hires.

<sup>5</sup> Light blue colour indicates the most common responses in each area of respondents' level of responsibility.

**Table 3.2**

**Type of data which respondents used (85 respondents)<sup>6</sup>**



|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
|   | Responsible for analysis   | Support analysis   | Use for strategy  | Use for operations   | Not available to me  |
| Recruitment data                          | 55%  | 45%  | <b>81%</b>  | 58%  | 2%   |
| Performance data for early career hires   | 36%  | 31%  | <b>56%</b>  | 34%  | 24%  |
| Retention data                            | 25%  | 33%  | <b>54%</b>  | 33%  | 19%  |
| Equality, diversity and inclusion data    | 39%  | 35%  | <b>64%</b>  | 39%  | 14%  |
| Performance data for the global team      | 19%  | 29%  | 35%   | 25%  | <b>48%</b>   |
| Performance data for local/regional teams | 28%  | 33%  | <b>40%</b>  | 27%  | 34%  |

### Use of data

Data plays a crucial role in shaping organisational EC hiring strategies and has a comprehensive application in both the planning and execution of recruitment initiatives. The overwhelming majority (81%) of respondents use recruitment data for strategy purposes, making it the most widely used data type for strategic planning. A majority also use this data for operational purposes (58%).




There is also a notable focus on EDI data, with 64% of respondents using it for strategy. This reflects the growing importance of EDI in organisational policies and strategic decision-making.

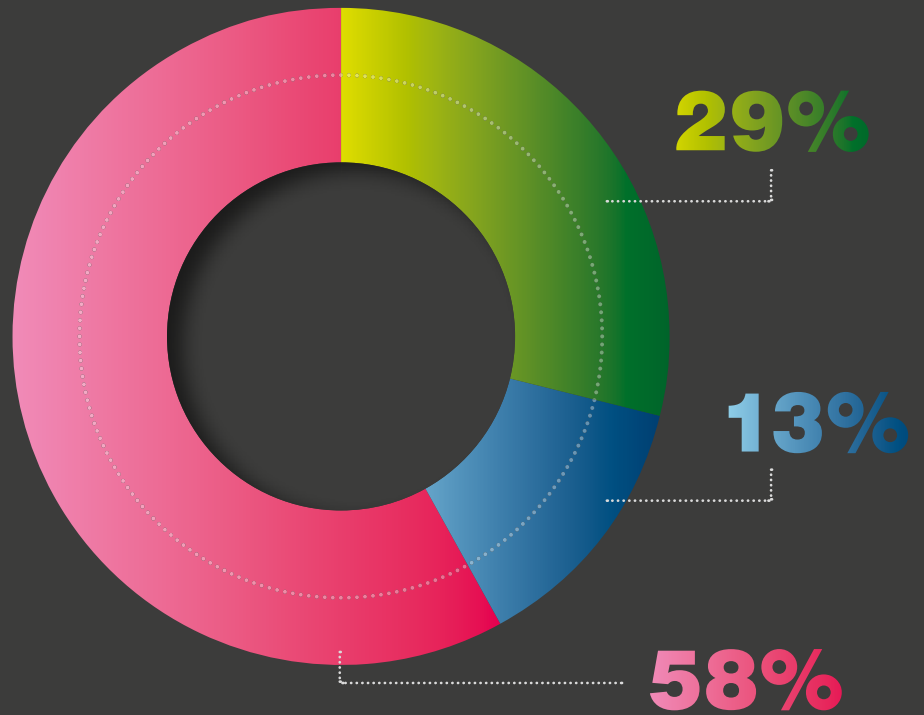
The survey results also highlight a striking difference in how performance data is used for strategy development in global versus local/regional teams. Only 19% of respondents reported using performance data for global teams, compared to 28% for local or regional teams. This suggests either a disparity in the availability of performance data at different organisational levels, or a lower use for this data at a global level. 48% of respondents indicated that performance data for global teams is not accessible to them, while only 34% reported the same for local/regional teams (Table 3.2).

<sup>6</sup> Light blue colour indicates the most common responses in each type of data which respondents used.

**Figure 3.2**

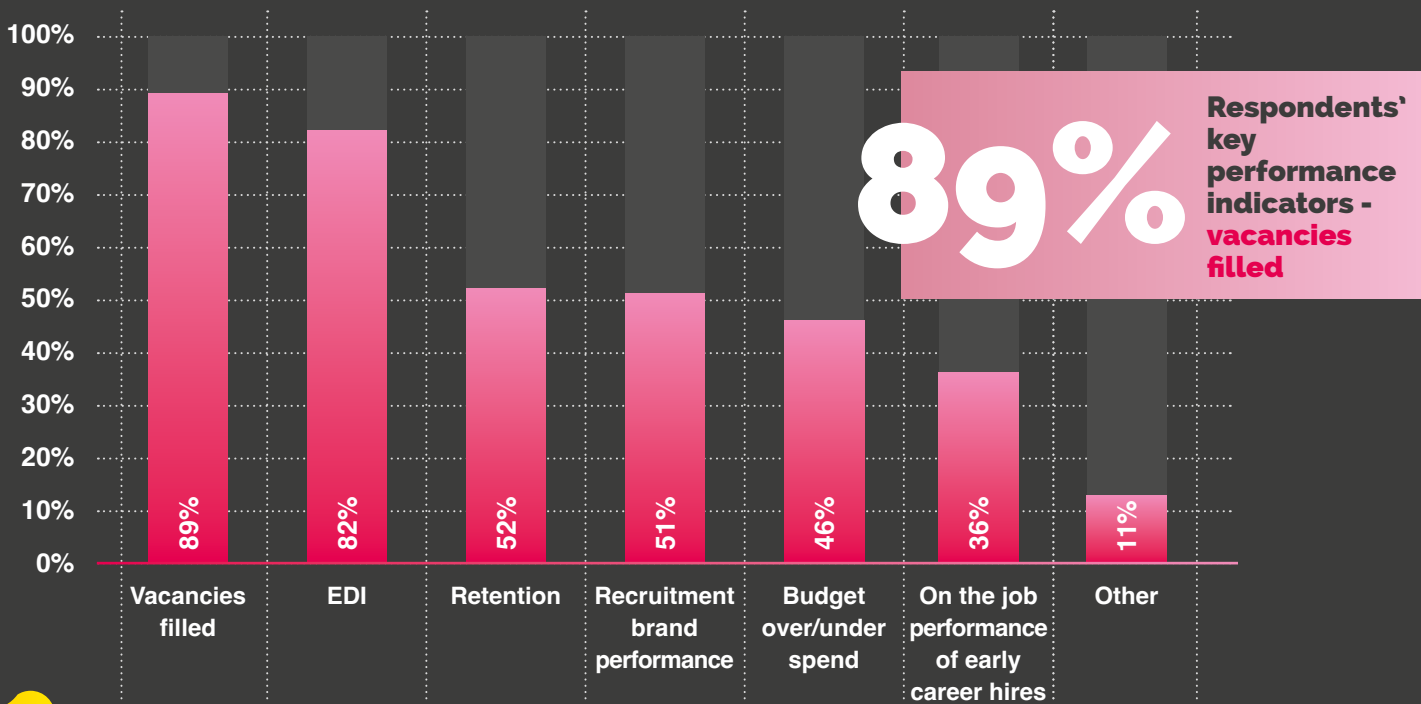
**Respondents' budget responsibility**  
(84 respondents)

-  There is not a global budget beyond the global team headcount
-  We monitor early career budgets across the organisation
-  We directly manage and are accountable for all early career spend



**Figure 3.3**

**Respondents' key performance indicators**  
(84 respondents)



Most (58%) respondents reported that they directly manage and are accountable for all early careers spend (Figure 3.2). This is interesting given that relatively few respondents have overall line management responsibilities, suggesting that budgetary control is one of the main preoccupations of global EC teams.

**Key performance indicators (KPIs)**

Respondents make use of a wide range of KPIs. The most common are vacancies filled (89%) and EDI measures (82%) (Figure 3.3). The low involvement in learning development by EC teams is reflected in the low use of on-the-job performance KPIs (36%).

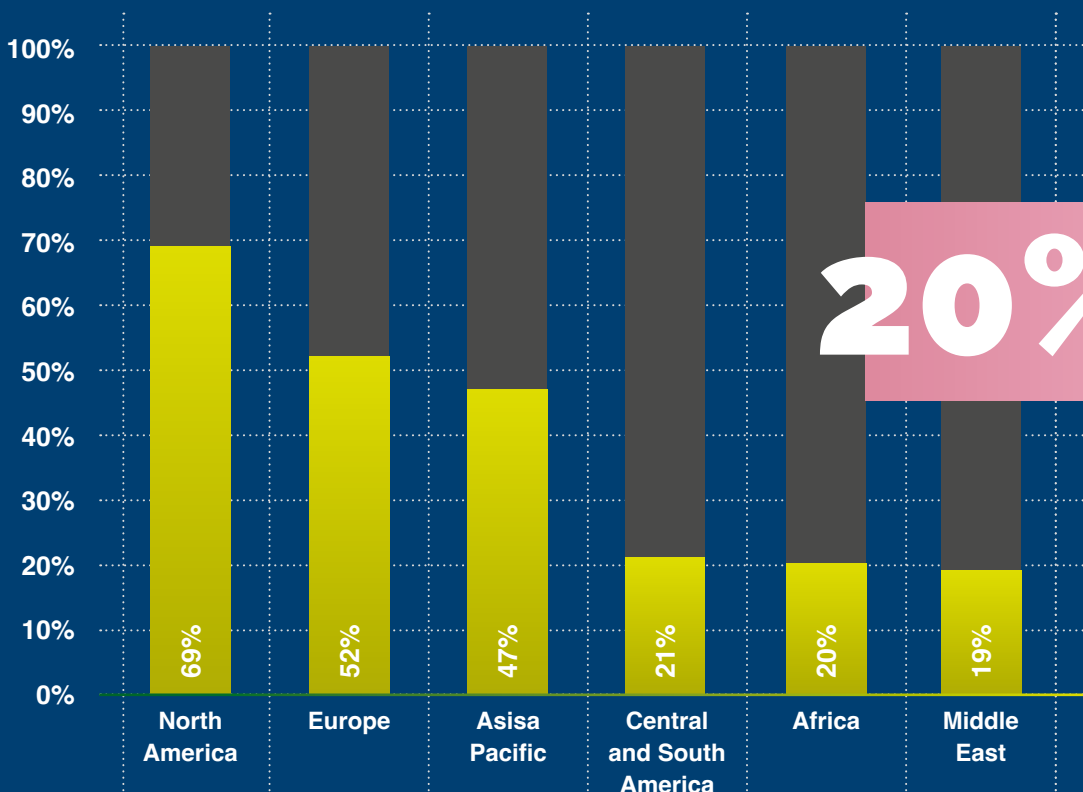
Local legalities impact an employer's ability to use data to set strategy and manage performance. Data and equality legislation in particular varies from one jurisdiction to another and can limit what data an employer can both capture and share from a local to a global level.

4

# Global EC hiring patterns

Figure 4.1

Geographical responsibilities of respondents (85 respondents)



**20%** Geographical responsibilities of respondents from Africa

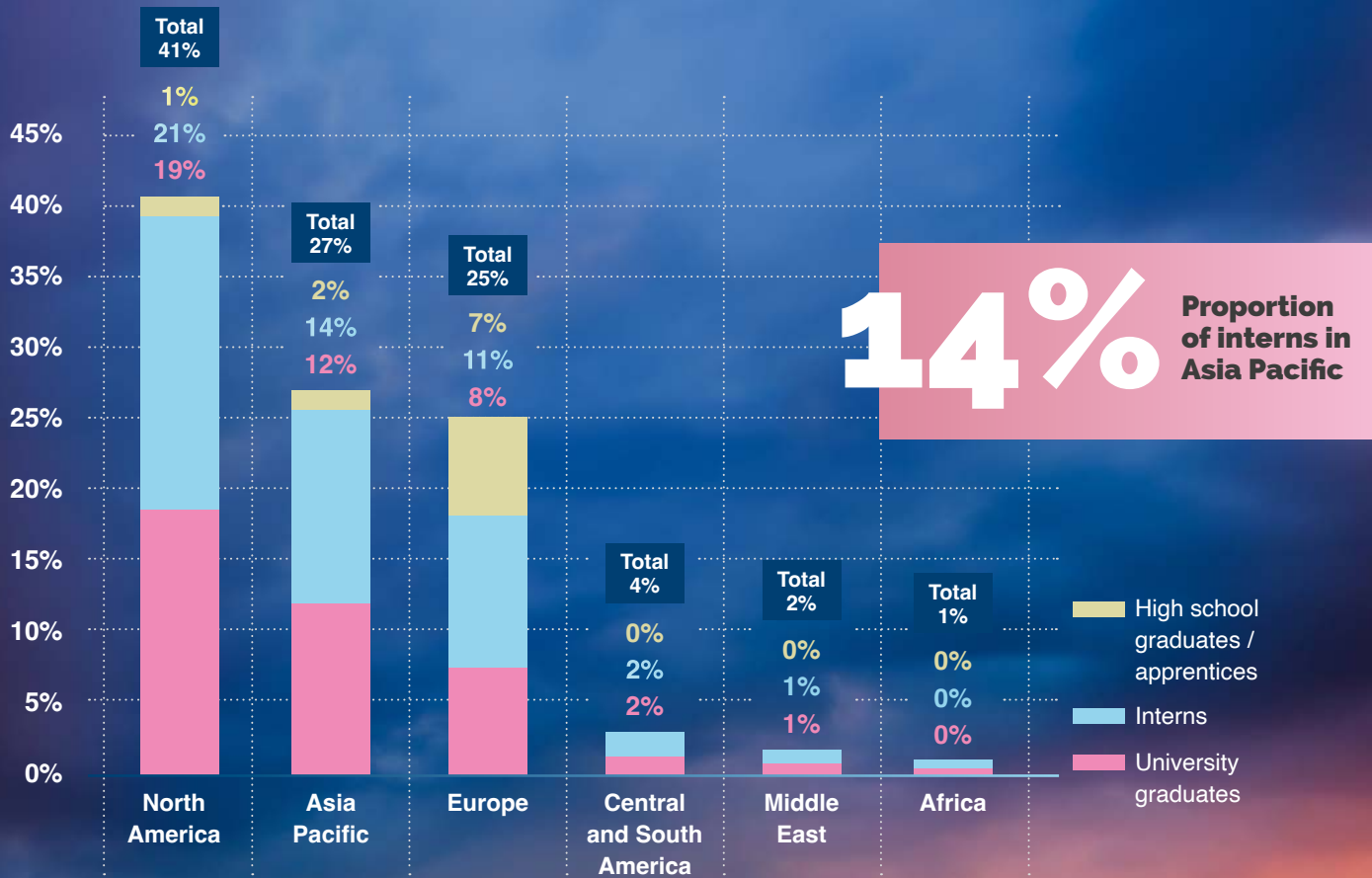
<sup>7</sup> Due to the limited sample size and convenience sampling method, readers should interpret these figures with some caution. It may be that increased sampling in Africa, South American and the Middle East would reveal more teams with an interest in these areas. However, it is also likely to be the case that most global teams are located in Europe, North America or Asia/Pacific.

The respondents hold responsibilities for various regions globally – global team responsibilities reflect the territories in which their organisations operate or the extent to which global strategies can be applied. The region most overseen by global teams is North America (69%), followed by Europe, where 52% of the respondents have responsibilities, and the Asia Pacific region where 47% have responsibilities (Figure 4.1).<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 4.2**

**Proportion of student hires by region**  
(35 respondents)



Despite the international focus of teams, more than half (59%) of respondents reported that they are responsible for only one region. Five percent of respondents are responsible for two regions and 36% of respondents are responsible for three or more regions.

EC teams have historically focused on graduates, but our research shows that this is not exclusively the case. Most respondents do recruit university graduates (84%) and interns (84%), while more than half (54%) of respondents also recruit high school graduates or apprentices.

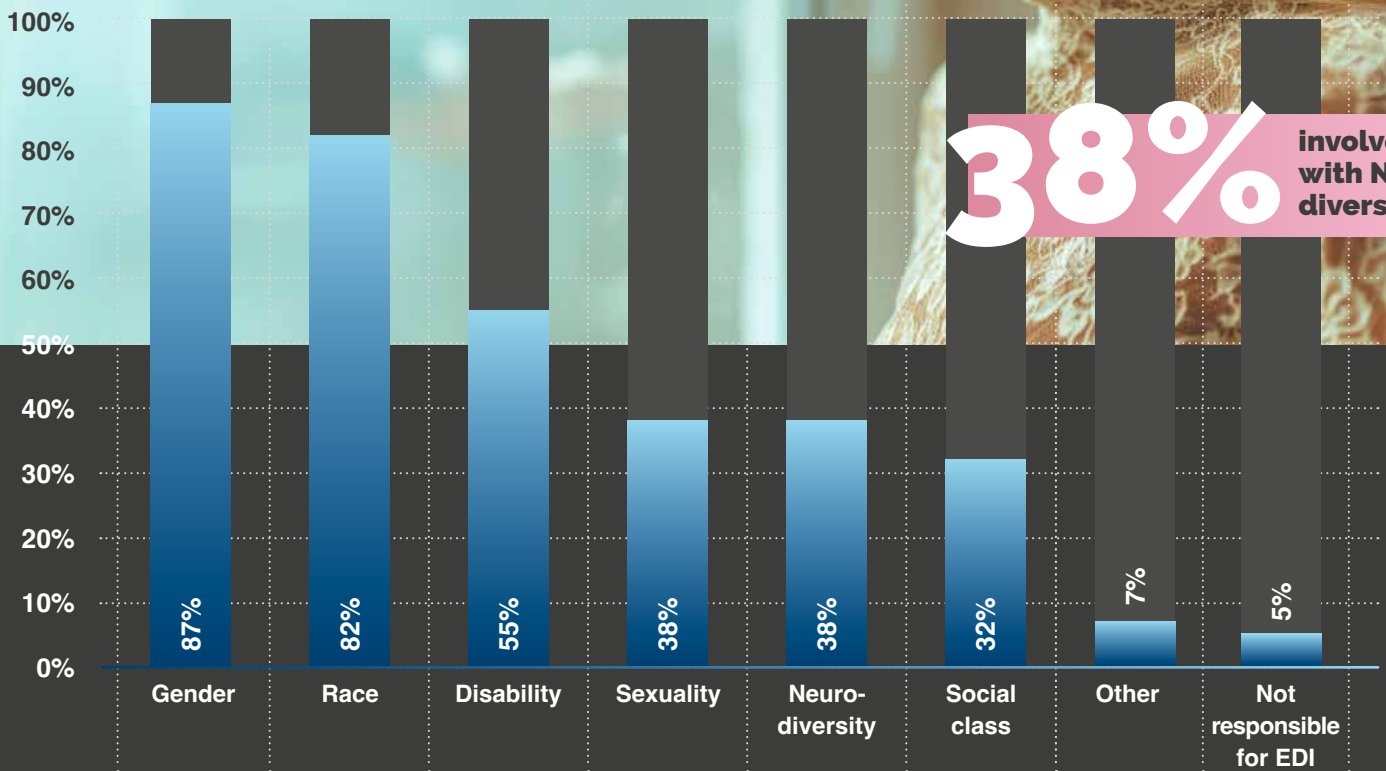
More than half (55%) of respondents reported they can break the total number of students hires they recruit down by region. The region which reported the highest student hires were North America (41%), while the least student hires were in Africa (1%) (Figure 4.2). Comparisons between different regions show there was a higher proportion of high school graduates or apprentices hiring in Europe, which aligns strongly with the long history of vocational education and apprentice training in European countries.

5

# Global EDI priorities

Figure 5.1

Influence of respondents on EDI Initiatives (85 respondents)



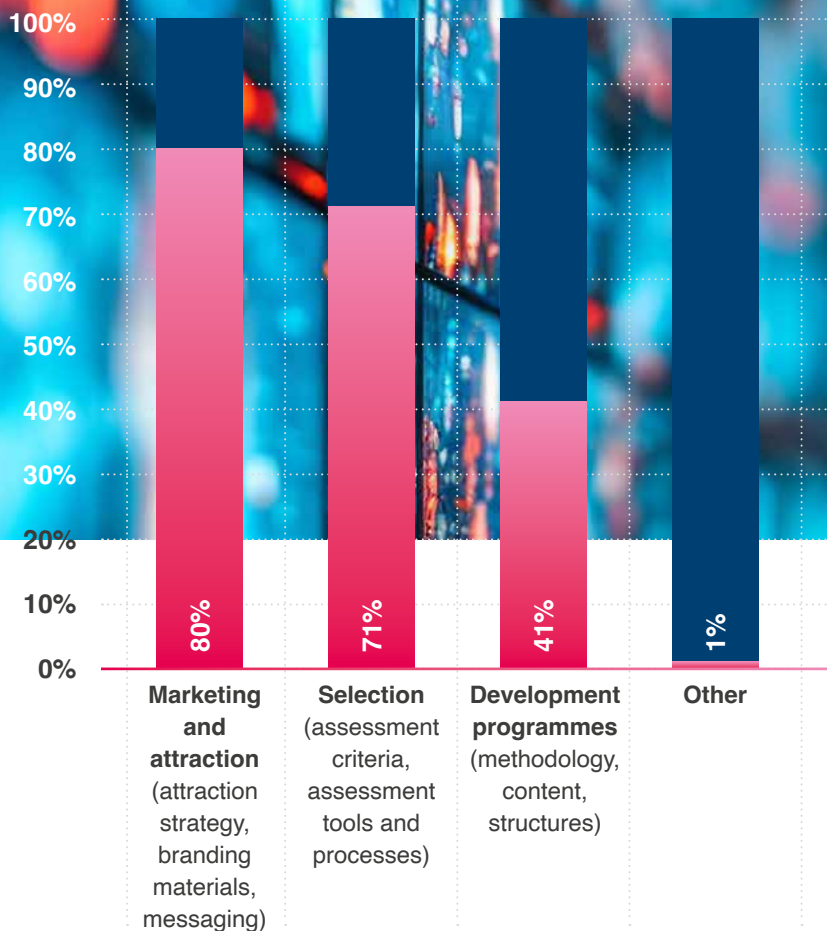
The data illustrates that the majority of respondents are involved in EDI strategies and initiatives within their organisations, but the focus varies. Gender (87%) and race (82%) are the most commonly addressed categories, sexuality and neurodiversity are addressed by 38% of respondents each, and social class is a focus for only 32% of respondents.

A small fraction of respondents (7%) mentioned other diversity dimensions, while 5% said that they are not directly responsible for EDI initiatives (Figure 5.1).

The data indicates that respondents predominantly influence EDI through marketing and attraction strategies, branding materials, and messaging (80%). This suggests that global teams seek to influence EDI outcomes within the early stages of the recruitment process. A significant proportion of respondents (71%) are also involved in shaping selection criteria, assessment tools, and processes to ensure inclusivity during candidate selection and evaluation procedures (Figure 5.2). This data correlates to the broader remit of global EC teams highlighted earlier in this report.

**Figure 5.2**

**Areas of involvement in EDI**  
(79 respondents)



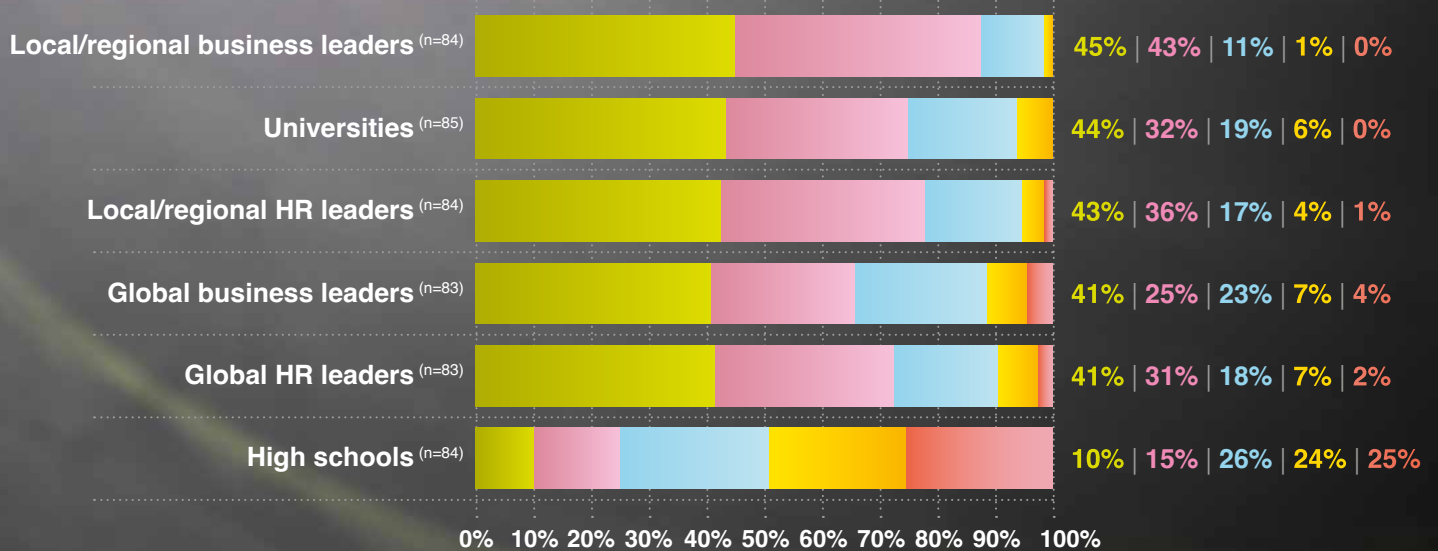
**71%** of respondents are involved with Selection (assessment criteria, assessment tools and processes)

6



# Influencing global and regional stakeholders

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important



Global teams, by their nature are likely to have a broad range of internal and external stakeholders to influence. Our findings highlight a clear distinction in stakeholder importance among respondents (see Figure 6.1), with local or regional business leaders emerging as the most important stakeholders.

That high schools are the least important stakeholders reflects the lower level of engagement in non-graduate EC recruitment reported earlier in this study. It may also reflect difficulties in developing non-graduate EC global strategies: school systems vary considerably from territory to territory and vocational routes such as apprenticeships can be highly regulated and industry specific. Nonetheless, as the definition of EC broadens and the importance of vocation routes increases in many countries, this may be an area that organisations may want to develop further at global level.



7



# Global challenges




## Challenges

We asked employers what challenges they face when taking a global approach to EC hiring. Respondents encounter three primary challenges.

Firstly, they must navigate a delicate balance between adhering to a global or central framework for talent management whilst accommodating and responding to local or regional nuances. While some respondents adopt a global approach to recruiting talent across various regions, each locale possesses its own unique characteristics and business priorities. Consequently, ensuring a coherent and consistent hiring process while addressing these diverse business needs remains an ongoing challenge.

**'Managing a globally consistent approach while hiring in so many countries [is a challenge]. Our organisation is made up of 3 regional teams, each with their own nuances and business priorities . Achieving these priorities while trying to deliver a consistent hiring process and internal service is a constant challenge.'**

*A respondent from the Information, Digital & IT sector*




Secondly, resource allocation poses a significant problem for respondents. As part of a global team, respondents have several responsibilities that range from strategising to attracting and selecting early-career talent on a global scale. These tasks can demand substantial budget and workforce allocations for effective execution.

**'We need more resources and team members dedicated to early careers in the local regions as it's difficult having solid knowledge of various local market nuances, building relationships across different time zones, having the time and ability to recruit globally (i.e. attending local events), and influencing stakeholders in different countries due to lack of connection.'**

*Emerging Talent Recruitment Manager*

**'There is a strong appetite and desire for Early Career programs and hiring in the business but when it actually comes down to workforce planning and budget, Early Career roles are the first to get cut. There is not a solid process for forecasting/planning so we are not able to secure top talent as early as we would like given the recruiting season takes place 9-12 months before start dates.'**

*Global Talent Acquisition Manager*



The third challenge relates to recruitment issues, including both the scarcity of early-career talent and the difficulty in attracting specific demographic groups to available positions. For example, one specific recruitment issue mentioned by several respondents is 'attracting female candidates into technology-based and engineering roles'. Others mentioned the strong 'competition for specific skills such as digital and data'.

In addition to these overarching challenges, cultivating brand awareness and reputation presents a critical concern in North America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region. Brand perception varies across different geographical areas, with some respondents noting a preference for local competitors among individuals - establishing a strong brand presence and recognition within these markets becomes a significant challenge.

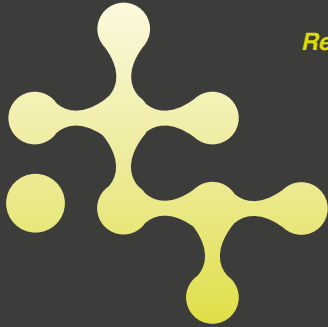


### Support

Twenty-three respondents provided feedback on how the INEUCS network can support their roles. Twelve participants suggested that INEUCS can provide benchmarking data, news, and trends across regions.

**'[We need] More data on market conditions and benchmarking in countries. Our main markets are UK, Germany, Singapore and the US but we also have graduates in Netherlands, Czechia, France, Denmark, Japan and Australia. Benchmarking data and connections in these countries would be beneficial.'**

*Respondent from Utilities sector*



Ten respondents expressed a desire for more insights, peer experiences, and best practices from other global organisations to 'reduce overspend on marketing' and 8 of them expressed a need for more networking or connections with other global organisations.





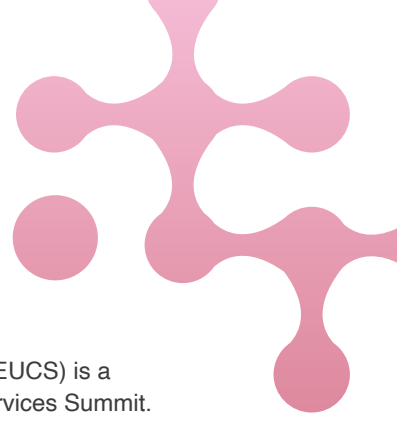
# Final thoughts

This survey provides insight into how employers approach global EC recruitment and development. We looked at global EC teams' strategic objectives, geographical dynamics and the nuances between how global and local teams interact.

Although graduates and interns are the main recruiting focus for global EC teams, global teams are also responsible for recruiting high school graduates and apprentices, especially in Europe. The challenge of securing the right levels of EC talent means global teams are likely to increase their focus on labour market trends and the use of benchmarking data across different regions.

In conclusion, while the survey has provided valuable insights into the current state of EC recruitment and development, it also highlights the need for a more integrated and data-informed approach. There is an opportunity for EC employer teams and sector associations to address the gaps we have identified in knowledge, data, and practice to enhance the effectiveness of global EC hiring and development strategies.





### About INEUCS

The International Network of Employers and University Careers Services (INEUCS) is a collaborative, not-for-profit venture brought together by the Global Career Services Summit. Participants include the world's leading employer and careers advisory associations from Australia, Ireland, South East Asia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. It's the largest, most prestigious graduate recruitment and advisory network in the world.

<https://ineucs.org/>

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# Cappfinity

### About Cappfinity

Wide scale business transformation can be hard, but it also provides us with an opportunity to become stronger, together, no matter what the future may hold.

Since 2005, Cappfinity has helped organizations like Accenture, Latham & Watkins, Ernst & Young, Expedia, and the United Nations place candidates and employees in positions where they can use their skills and strengths to deliver value and meet business objectives. This is achieved with online assessments, virtual job simulations, robust candidate reports, fast and fair talent matching, hiring, upskilling, leadership development, and succession planning product, solutions, and services

<https://cappfinity.com/>

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# GRADCORE

### About Gradcore

We function with the social purpose to ensure that every graduate, no matter their background, has the opportunity to find their calling and make the most of their talent.

We do it with a range of services – from running graduate schemes and university employability health checks, to full consultancy services. All supported by our team of higher education and talent experts. A pool of professionals that allows us to pick the perfect team for every project.

<https://gradcore.co.uk/>

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Institute of  
Student  
Employers

ise.

### About ISE

Our role is to empower organisations to maximise the success of their business by recruiting and developing students transitioning through a range of education pathways.

We achieve this by bringing together employers, the education sector and supplier partners. We provide leadership and support across all entry level programmes that support new entrants, career changers, reskilling and upskilling.

<https://ise.org.uk>



