



Employers

EMPLOYABILITY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION



AQU CATALUNYA



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Collaborators



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report offers a comprehensive look at the degrees in **Audiovisual Communication**, **Journalism** and **Advertising and Public Relations**. The data analysed includes the perspective of stakeholders – alumni and companies and organisations that recruit graduates – on the employability of graduates: surveys on **satisfaction**, **employment outcomes** and **employers' opinions**. In addition, it includes basic data on the analysed qualifications: supply and demand, and breakdown of enrolments by biological sex.

The main findings of this report are set out below.

Regarding supply and demand:

- > In public universities, the demand for the degrees analysed far exceeds the number of places available. In 2021, demand exceeded supply by 51% in Audiovisual Communication, 47% in Journalism and 89% in Advertising and Public Relations.

With regard to satisfaction with the training received and the employment outcomes of the graduates of the degrees analysed, we see that:

- > Graduates of these degrees tend to express a lower overall satisfaction with their degrees than the average for all degrees in the Catalan university system (SUC). However, Journalism and Audiovisual Communication graduates are more satisfied than compared to the SUC as a whole with the external work placements and the Bachelor's degree final-year project, respectively.
- > In terms of employment outcomes, Advertising and Public Relations graduates have a better employment rate than the SUC as a whole. In Audiovisual Communication, the employment outcomes of graduates in terms of salary and type of contract tends to be worse than that of the SUC as a whole. There are no significant differences between the indicators for Advertising and Public Relations and the SUC as a whole.

In relation to employers who responded to the survey:

- > Regarding recruitment, 4 out of 10 companies have had difficulty in finding the right profile. This issue affects in particular companies that recruit Advertising and Public Relations graduates (53%). A lower percentage of companies recruiting graduates in Audiovisual Communication (31%) and Journalism (26%) report difficulties in recruitment. The main reason for these difficulties is the lack of people with the necessary skills.

Regarding the opinion of employers on university training:

- > Employers positively rate – with a score of around 7 out of 10 – the skills of graduates and work placement students from the field of Communication.
- > They emphasise the need to improve the capacity and ability to devise, plan, design and execute communication projects.

Employability and university education in the field of communication

- > As for companies that recruit Advertising and Public Relations graduates, these report the need to work more on the ability to design persuasive communication campaigns.
- > One third of employers of graduates from all degrees highlight the need to improve the ability to present ideas and arguments in a reasoned way.
- > The skills most worked on during the work placement period are those that employers indicate should be worked on the most, which reinforces the suitability and complementarity of work placements as a key element of university training.
- > The skills that will become more important according to employers are those related to ICT, with special emphasis on the importance of advanced knowledge of social media, web traffic analysis and data analytics. Also emphasised is the current and future importance of persuasive communication techniques.

INTRODUCTION

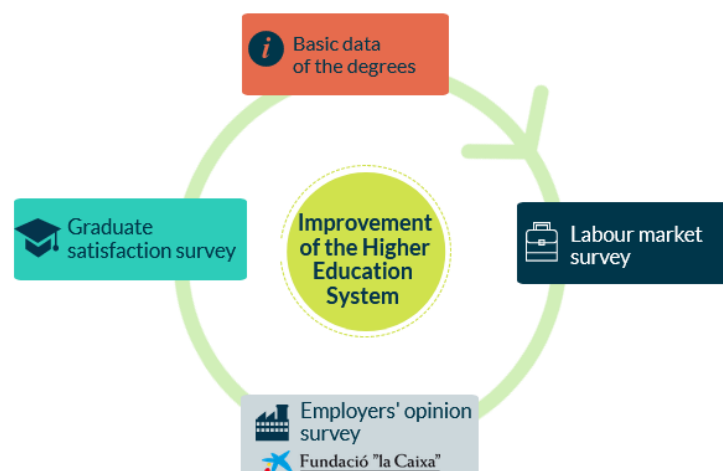
The expansion of university systems in Catalonia and elsewhere has intensified the diversification of the functions performed by universities, which have become institutions that go beyond their historical role associated with teaching and research. Today we usually refer to four missions: teaching, research, innovation and service to society (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2022). The emergence of the so-called "knowledge society", associated with this expansion, has emphasised the role of universities in the **employability of graduates**, understood not only as obtaining work – which may depend more on the economic situation and employment policies – but also as the capacity of universities to design "training with a profile that responds to the skills and qualifications requested in the labour market" (RODRÍGUEZ ESPINAR et al, 2007, 338).

The emphasis on analysing graduate employability profiles also coincides with the emergence of demands for accountability for expansive university systems that require increased public spending. It therefore makes sense for university quality agencies to make available to the university community a set of resources to assess the quality and impact of higher education from an employability perspective (BRENNAN, 2018). In this regard, one of the strategic courses of action of AQU Catalunya that enables this objective to be achieved is that of "facilitating access to quantitative and qualitative data, in an integrated way, to improve the quality of the Catalan university system" (AQU CATALUNYA, 2022).

This report, which is part of a series of reports on the relationship between university and employability, aims to achieve this objective for degrees in the field of Communication (Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations).

The document collates the analysis of key data produced by AQU Catalunya that can be used to understand the functioning of university education from the perspective of employability. The aim is to provide facts that will help those responsible for universities in the political and academic spheres to make decisions aimed at improving university education. Moreover, this knowledge also has the potential to support current and future students in making informed decisions about their career paths. Figure 1 shows the sources of information from AQU Catalunya included in this analysis.

Figure 1. Sources of information produced by AQU Catalunya used to propose improvements for degree programmes



In addition, this report also analyses the results of the new edition of the **employer survey**, which gathers the opinions on university education of companies, organisations and institutions that recruit graduates from the field of Communication. A new feature of this edition is the section on the professional skills that have been worked on the most and require the most improvement by **work placement students**. This report compares the results of this edition with those of the previous edition (AQU CATALUNYA, 2018)¹ with the aim of disclosing significant existing differences, and reflects on the evolution of the sector in relation to the conclusions that were generated at the conference "Challenges in university training in the field of communication" (AQU CATALONIA, 2019), where the aforementioned results were presented.

¹ As this is an employer survey, a type of survey that usually generates relatively small samples, we cannot claim that the similarities or differences with the previous edition are statistically significant. Although we believe that the continuity we observe between the two editions is evidence of the robustness of our results, we recommend readers interpret the results with caution and from a critical perspective.

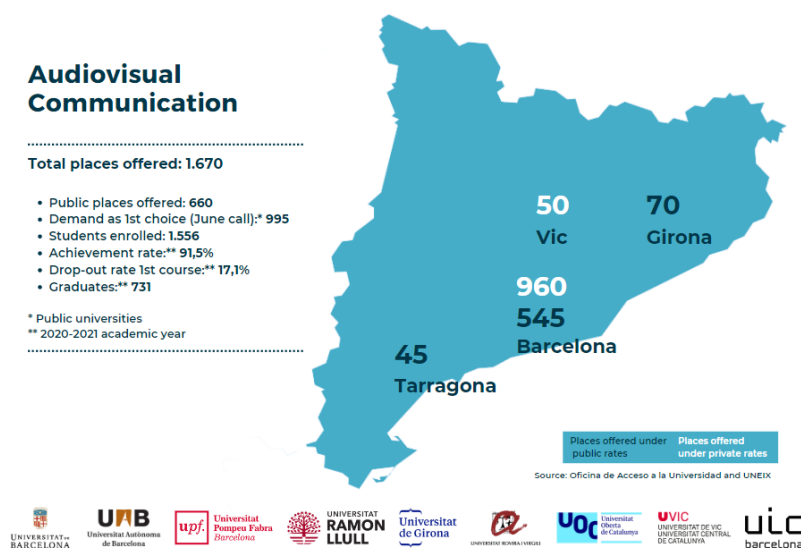
COMMUNICATION DEGREE PROGRAMME INDICATORS

Basic data on the degree programmes

The following maps show the supply and demand data for places on the Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations degree courses taught in Catalonia in the 2021-2022 academic year. In addition, data on three key indicators are shown: the student progress rate,² the drop-out rate in the first year and the number of graduates in the academic year 2020-2021.

In public universities, the demand for the degrees analysed far exceeds the number of places available. In 2021, demand exceeded supply by 51% in Audiovisual Communication, 47% in Journalism and 89% in Advertising and Public Relations.

Figure 2. Supply and demand indicators for Audiovisual Communication degrees (academic year 2021-2022)³



² The student progress rate is calculated by dividing the number of course credits that students attain by the number of credits in which the students enrol. The drop-out rate in the first year measures the percentage of students that do not enrol in a degree programme the following academic year (including a different degree programme). For more information, [see the glossary at the Catalonia's University Studies portal](#).

³ The logos correspond to the universities that offer these degrees.

Figure 3. Supply and demand indicators for Journalism degrees (academic year 2021-2022)

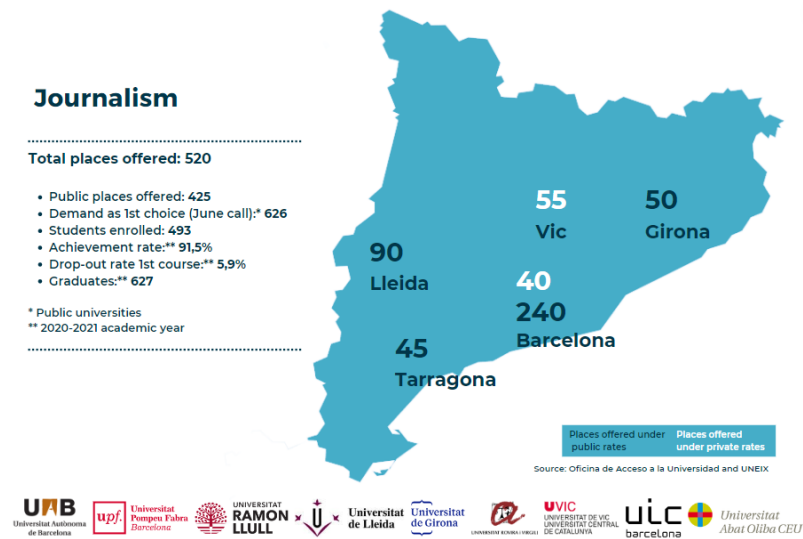
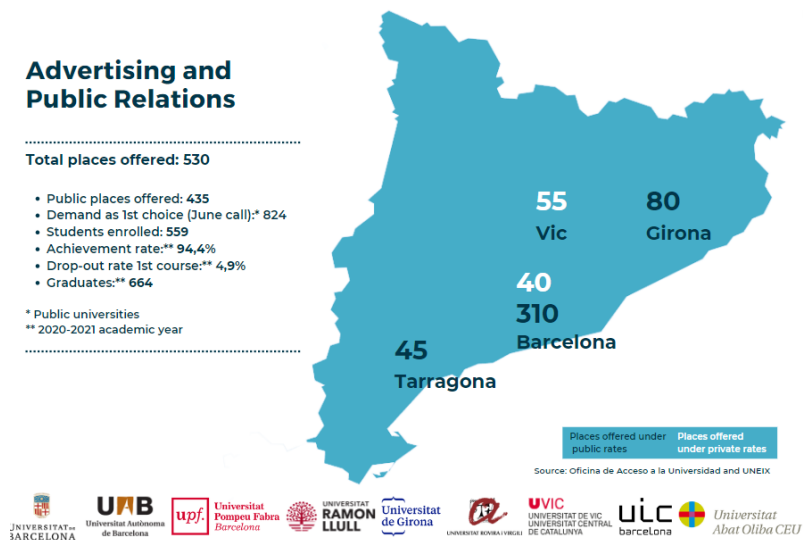


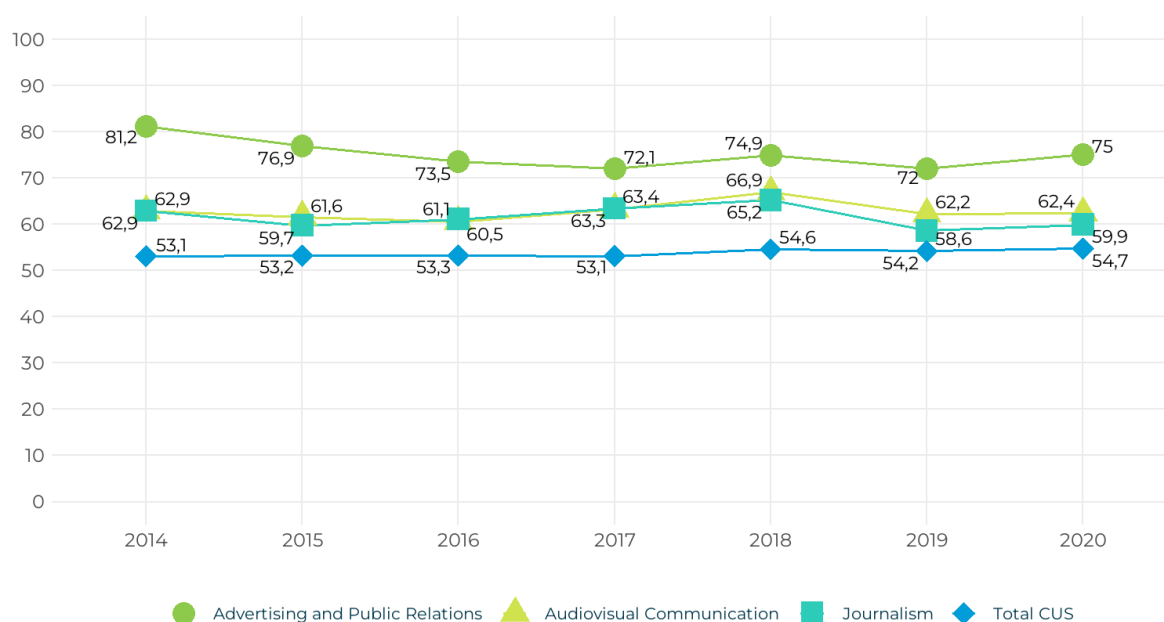
Figure 4. Supply and demand indicators for Advertising and Public Relations degrees (academic year 2021-2022)



Communication degrees are more feminised than the overall level of SUC degrees

- > 3 out of 4 people enrolled in Advertising and Public Relations are women. In the Audiovisual Communication and Journalism degrees, this figure rises to 6 out of 10.

Figure 5. Evolution of the percentage of women enrolled in the degrees in the field of Communication



Satisfaction of graduates with their university education in the field of Communication

The data analysed in this section comes from the [satisfaction survey](#), an annual survey carried out since 2015 by Catalan universities in coordination with AQU Catalunya. This survey asks recent graduates how satisfied they are with different dimensions of their educational experience at SUC. The results shown below correspond to the data for the last three available years (2018, 2019 and 2020) for the **Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations** degree programmes. The overall response rate of the SUC satisfaction survey for these three years is 26.3%.

The table below shows the samples of graduates who responded to the survey, broken down by degree.

Table 1. Population, sample and response rate of the satisfaction survey in the field of Communication (2018-2020)

Discipline (degree)	Population (graduates 2018-2020)	Sample	Response rate	Sampling error
Audiovisual Communication	2,008	554	27.6%	3.5%
Journalism	1,723	349	20.3%	4.7%
Advertising and Public Relations	1,988	456	22.9%	4.0%

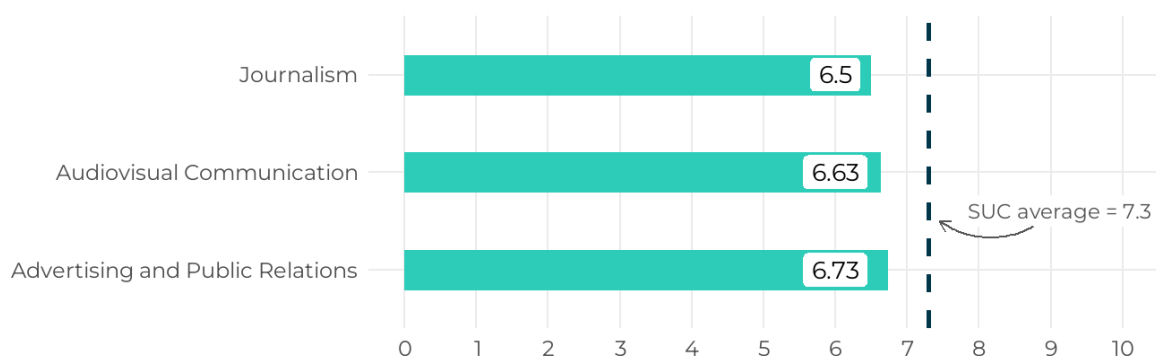
This section analyses the satisfaction data with the aspects of university education that are most relevant regarding the employability of graduates. A summary of the overall satisfaction of Communication degree graduates is also provided.

Overall satisfaction with Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations degree programmes

Overall satisfaction is similar between the different Communication degrees, but lower than the SUC average⁴

- > Although the overall satisfaction of graduates in Audiovisual Communication and Journalism has improved with respect to the previous edition of the satisfaction survey, this is not the case for Advertising and Public Relations, which has dropped 1 point (AQU CATALUNYA, 2018).

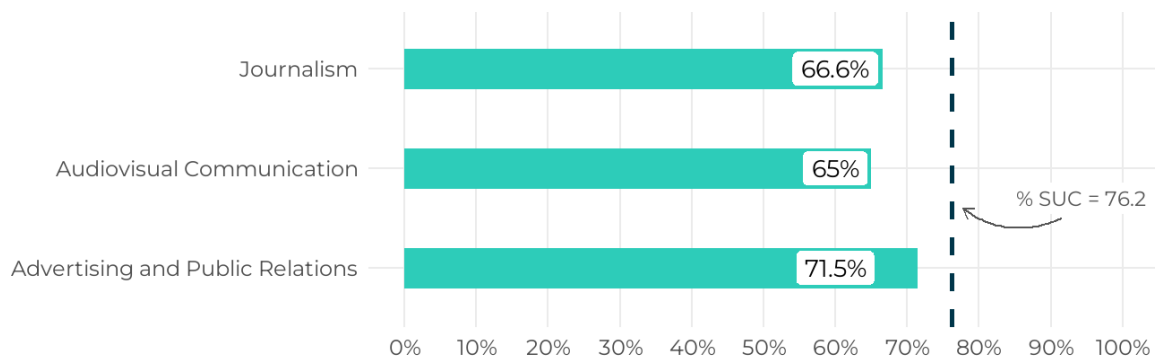
Figure 6. Overall satisfaction with degrees in the field of Communication



⁴ To check whether the differences between the degrees analysed and the SUC as a whole are statistically significant, a tool developed by AQU Catalunya was used to carry out 1,000 simulations using the bootstrap method for simple random sampling with replacement in the scenario of infinite populations (EFRON, TIBSHIRANI, 1993), thus obtaining a distribution of the 1,000 simulated differences between the two groups. This tool then analyses whether the observed difference is within 95% of the simulated differences. In the case of this indicator, it indicates that the overall satisfaction of the graduates of the degrees analysed is significantly lower than that of the SUC as a whole.

Around 7 out of 10 graduates would take the degree again, although graduates in Journalism and Audiovisual Communication would do so to a lesser extent. The values are slightly lower than the overall SUC percentage (76.2%)⁵

Figure 7. Percentage of people who would take the degree in the field of Communication again



Satisfaction with the skills acquired⁶, the external work placements and the Bachelor's degree final-year project

Graduates feel that the training in particular improves their communication skills. They also believe that the external work placements and the Bachelor's degree final-year project have been useful for applying the knowledge acquired during the degree course⁷

- > Graduates in Journalism positively rate the external work placements while Audiovisual Communication graduates value the Bachelor's degree final-year project.

⁵ Idem.

⁶ It analyses whether degree graduates believe that their education has improved their communication skills, personal skills and abilities for professional activity. Personal skills include, among other things, the level of confidence, independent learning, creativity, problem solving, critical analysis and teamwork.

⁷ The differences described in this section between the degrees analysed and the SUC as a whole are statistically significant, according to the bootstrap method described in note 5.

- > Satisfaction with external work placements among Audiovisual Communication graduates is lower than the SUC average.
- > In general, the satisfaction indicators analysed in this section have increased for all degree programmes compared to the previous edition of the satisfaction survey (AQU CATALUNYA, 2018).

Figure 8. Degree to which the training has improved a set of skills, according to Communication graduates

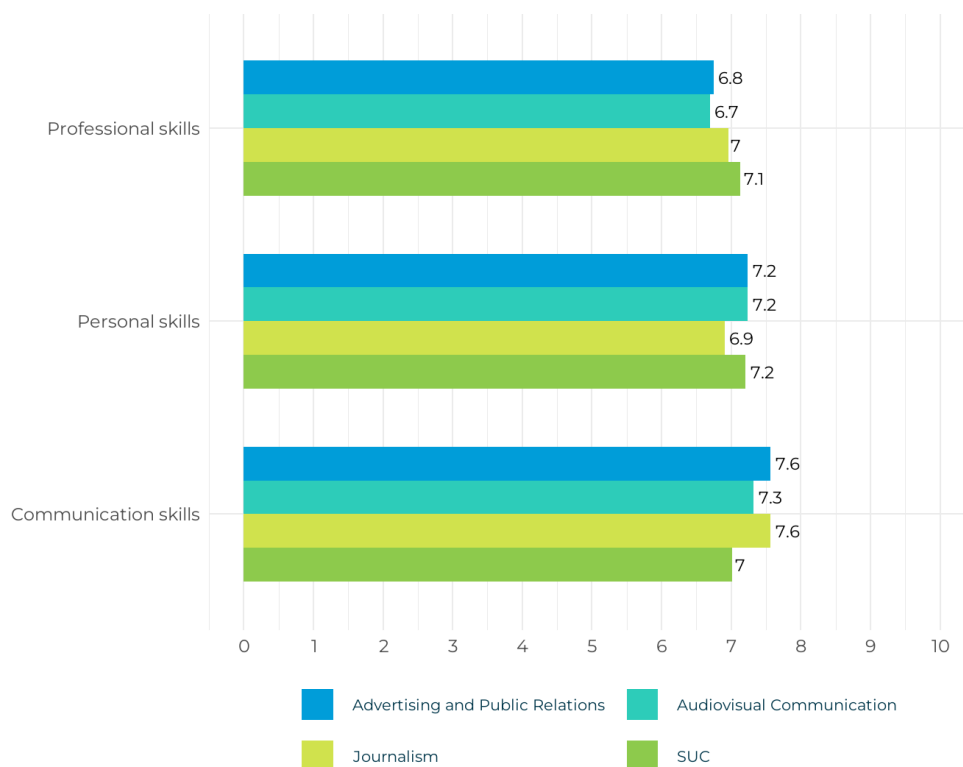
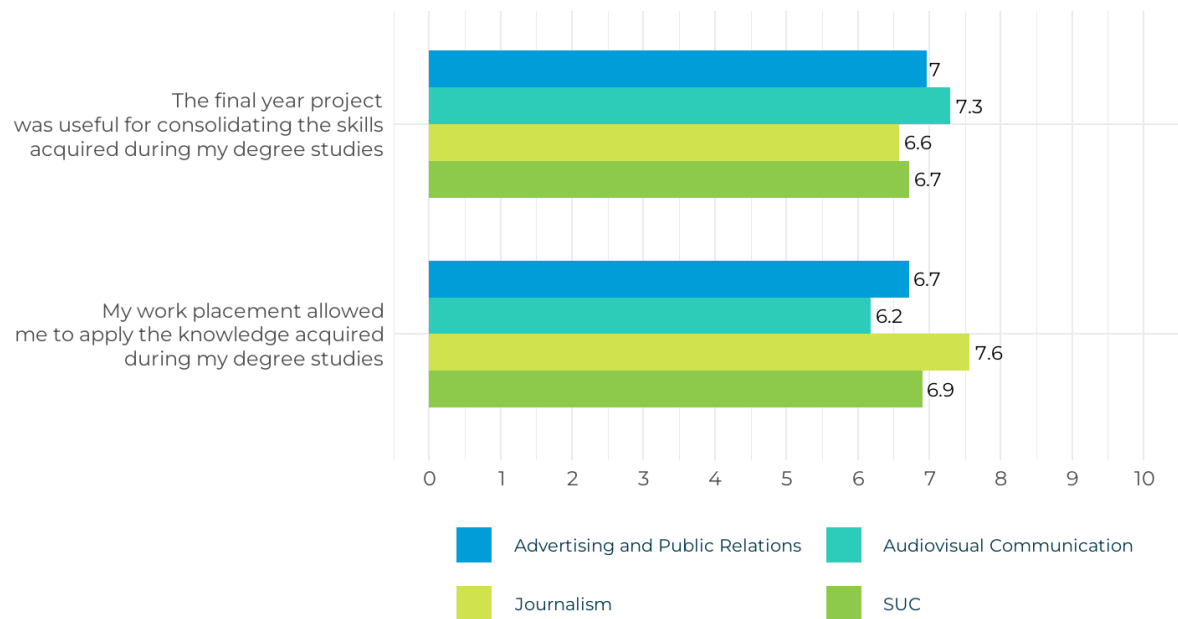


Figure 9. Communication graduates' satisfaction with the external work placements and degree final-year projects



Communication graduates' employment outcomes

The data analysed in this section comes from the **employment outcomes survey**, an annual survey carried out since 2001 by Catalan universities in coordination with AQU Catalunya. This survey asks about factors related to the employment activity of graduates and the quality of that employment activity (job suitability, contractual stability, earnings, etc.). The results shown below correspond to the data for the last edition of the survey, the fieldwork of which was carried out in 2020, surveying 2015-2016 graduates of the **Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations** degree programmes.

The table below shows the samples of graduates who responded to the survey, broken down by degree.

Table 2. Population, sample and response rate of the employment outcomes survey in the field of Communication (2020)

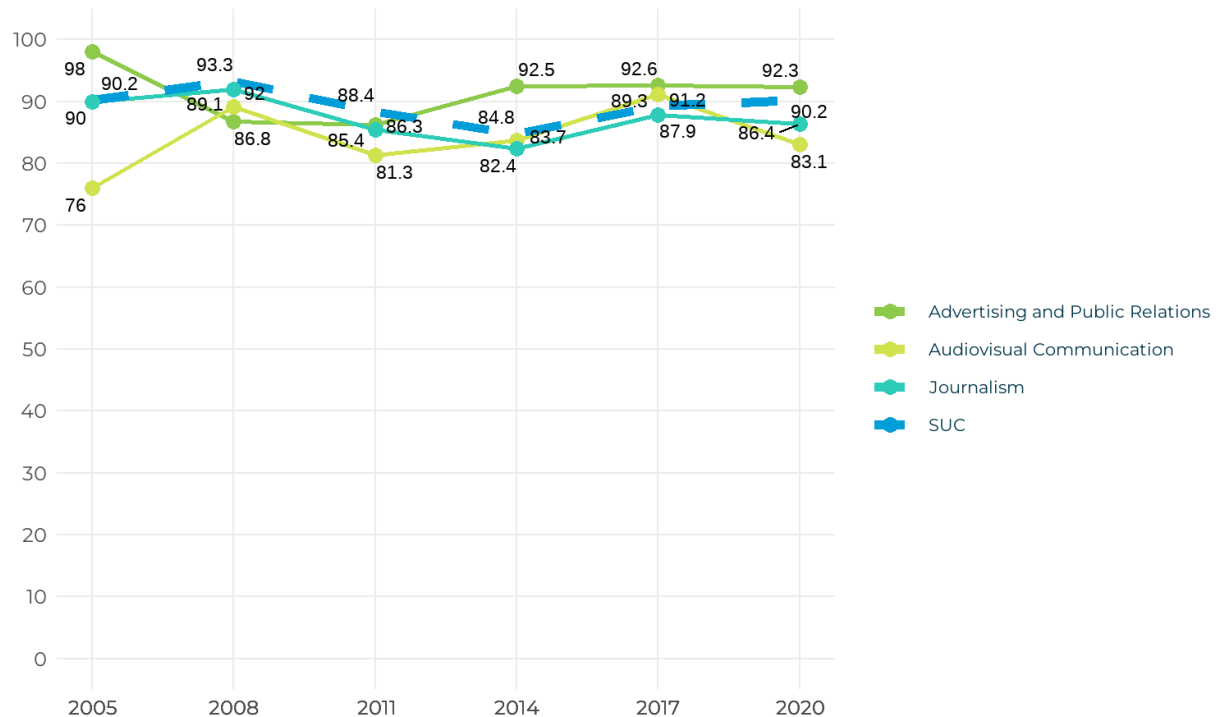
Discipline (degree)	Population (graduates 2015-2016)	Sample	Response rate	Sampling error
Audiovisual Communication	596	311	52.2%	3.8%
Journalism	536	260	48.5%	4.4%
Advertising and Public Relations	578	238	41.2%	4.9%

High levels of employment of Advertising and Public Relations graduates (92%). The employment rates of Audiovisual Communication (82%) and Journalism (86%) graduates are slightly lower than that of the SUC overall (90%), although the difference is not statistically significant⁸

⁸ According to the bootstrap method described in note 5, the difference in employment between Advertising and Public Relations graduates and the SUC as a whole is significant. This is not the case for Audiovisual Communication and Journalism degrees.

Figure 10. Evolution of the employment rate Communication graduates

The year indicates when they responded to the survey, i.e. three years after graduation.



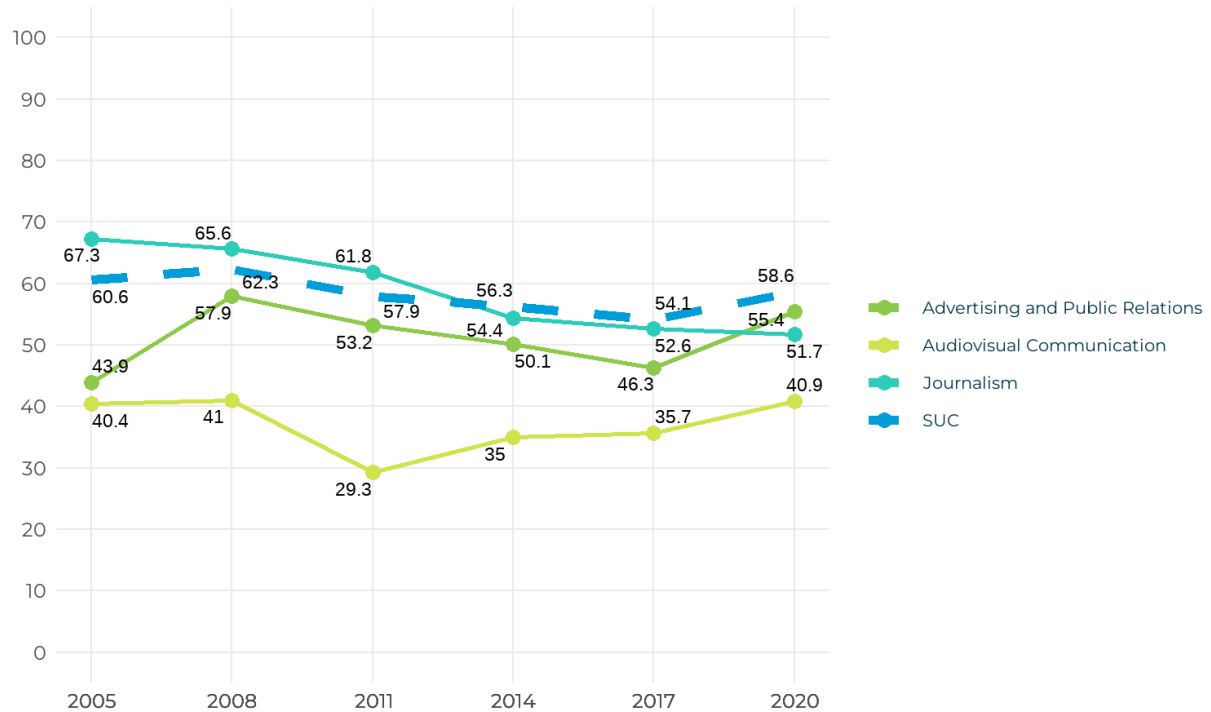
The percentage of Communication graduates who carry out functions specific to their degree is lower than that of the SUC as a whole (60%)

- > The particularly low percentage of Audiovisual Communication (40%) graduates stands out.⁹
- > The percentage of journalism graduates performing specific functions has been decreasing over the years: from a peak of 68% in 2005 to values close to 50% in 2020. However, for 2020, the differences between the values for Journalism and the SUC as a whole are not statistically significant.

⁹ The difference is significant according to the test described in footnote 5.

Figure 11. Percentage of people performing specific functions of the degree in the field of Communication

The year indicates when they responded to the survey, i.e. three years after graduation



Better salaries and more stability for Advertising and Public Relations graduates

- > The median salary of Audiovisual Communication graduates tends to be lower than that of the SUC as a whole, and more of them work on fixed-term contracts.¹⁰

¹⁰ The difference is significant according to the test described in footnote 5.

Figure 12. Gross monthly salary (€) of Communication graduates (2020)

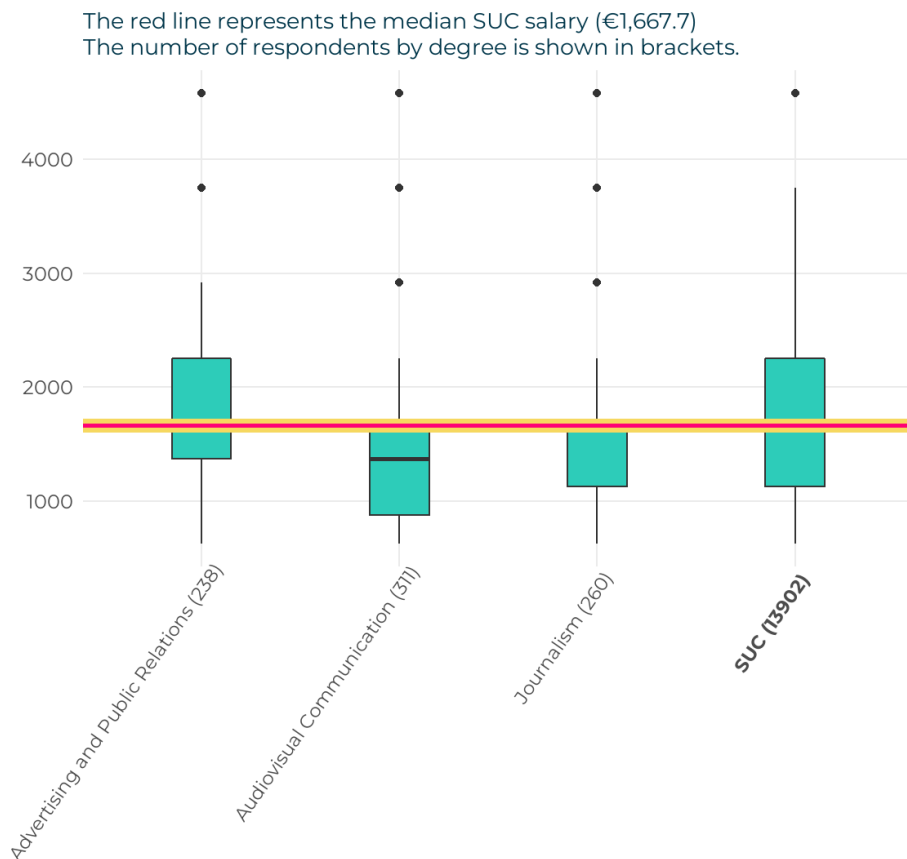
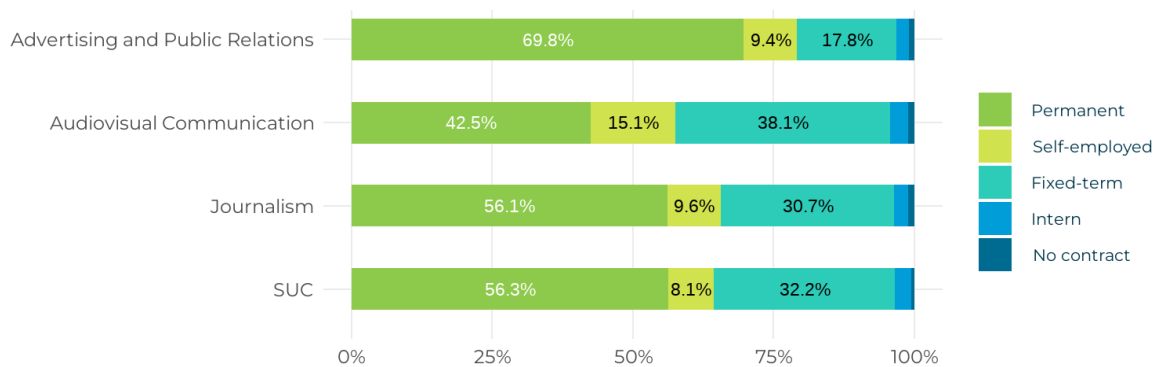
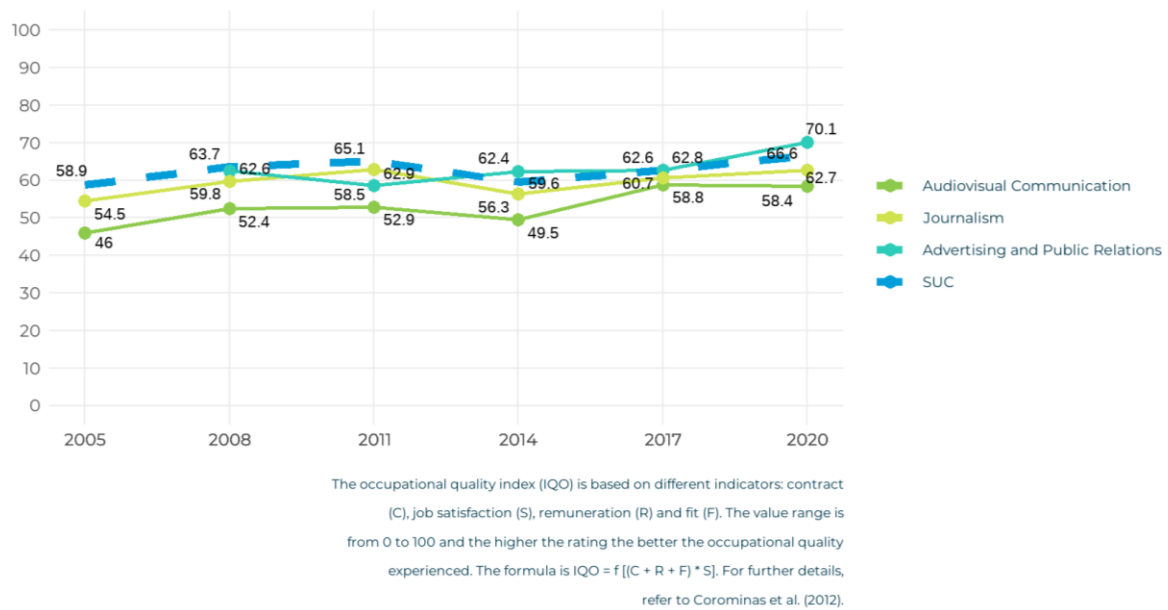


Figure 13. Type of contract of Communication graduates (2020)



An analysis of the Occupational Quality Index (IQO) reinforces the idea that employment outcomes in terms of salary and type of contract tend to be worse for Audiovisual Communication graduates¹¹

Figure 14. Evolution of the occupational quality index (IQO) of Communication graduates



¹¹ The difference is significant according to the test described in footnote 5.

The opinion of employers regarding the education received by Communication graduates

Scope and methodology of the employer survey

This section contains the results of the third edition of the **employer survey**, a three-yearly survey carried out by AQU Catalunya to find out the opinion of companies and organisations based in Catalonia (hereinafter, employers) as to whether university education responds to their needs. The ultimate aim of the study is to provide the university system with information that will enable it to assess whether the training on offer needs to be adapted to the needs of the labour market. New to this edition of the employer survey is a question about the skills of work placement students.

The questions upon which the study is based are as follows:

- > How satisfied are employers with the training of **recent graduates**?¹²
- > How satisfied are employers with the training of **work placement students**?
- > What factors explain the difficulties employers face when recruiting?
- > Which competences should be improved?

The fieldwork was carried out through the sending of mass e-mails between May and July 2021 to employers that have signed an internship agreement with the SUC universities and/or appear in their job banks. We assume that this list of employers ($n = 29,865$) constitutes the universe of the graduate labour market in Catalonia. We also enlisted the help of professional associations and chambers of commerce to disseminate the questionnaire. In the end, a total of **2,423 employers** responded to the survey, of which **1,729** had recruited recent graduates and/or taken on work placement students. Of these companies, 86 responded that they had recruited recent graduates in Communication and 120 that they had taken on work placement students in the subject studies relevant to this report.

At first glance, this sample may seem small. However, there are a number of methodological issues to be taken into account when conducting employer surveys.

First of all, it is difficult to access this population pool. In particular, it is difficult to obtain a well-defined universe of employers with associated contact details. Indeed, it is common to find in the literature that university-owned employer databases are used as a sampling frame of graduate employers (BYRNE, 2022).

Secondly, employer surveys –and online surveys in general– tend to have a low response rate (BYRNE, 2022; MANFREDA et al., 2008).

¹² In the employer survey, we define "recent graduate" as a person who has completed their studies in the two years prior to receiving the survey and who has little or no professional experience. We limit the definition of a recent graduate because we want to ascertain the opinion of the employers on the **skills acquired at university**.

Finally, it is important to note that numerous methodological studies – both quantitative and qualitative – highlight that, although the results of a survey with relatively few responses should be treated with caution, a low response rate does not mean that the sample is unrepresentative (GROVES, 2006; METERKO et al., 2015).

Below are the results of the third edition of the employer survey. Firstly, it describes the factors and difficulties faced by employers when recruiting; secondly, it details the skills of graduates that these companies believe should be improved; thirdly, it reflects on the future of the professions associated with the field of Communication according to these companies; and finally, it talks about the skills that have been worked on most during the work placement period and those that work placement students need to improve on the most.

Table 3. Sample of employers that recruit graduates and take on work placement students from the field of Communication

Degree	No. who hire	% of the total number of responses	No. taking on students	% of the total number of responses
Audiovisual Communication	20	23.3%	51	42.5%
Journalism	32	37.2%	28	23.3%
Advertising and Public Relations	34	39.5%	41	34.2%
Total	86	100%	120	100%

Factors and difficulties when recruiting graduates

75% of employers believe it is important to have a specific degree, while 34% point to the importance of having a master's degree

Approximately 2 out of 3 companies ask for a high or intermediate level of English

Figure 15. Important factors when considering a graduate from the field of Communication as a job candidate

In the selection process for recent graduates, was it important that they had a university degree?

Response	n	Percentage
Yes, a specific bachelor's degree	64	75
Yes, any bachelor's degree	12	14
No	9	11

In the selection process for recent graduates, was it important that they had a master's degree?

Response	n	Percentage
Yes, a specific master's degree	22	27
Yes, any master's degree	6	7
No	55	66

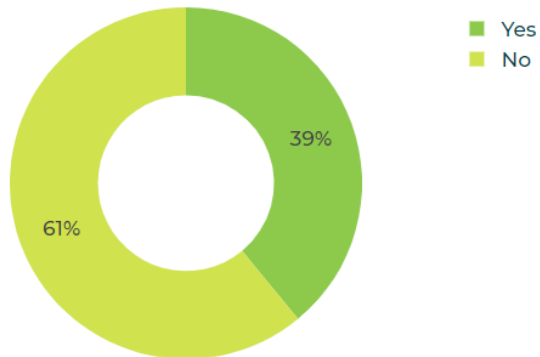
In the selection process for recent graduates, was their level of English important?

Response	n	Percentage
Yes, a high level was required	33	39
Yes, an intermediate level was required	29	34
No	23	27

In the selection process for recent graduates, was their level of foreign languages (excluding English) important?

Response	n	Percentage
Yes, a high level was required	9	11
Yes, an intermediate level was required	16	20
No	57	70

Figure 16. Companies that have had difficulties in recruiting Communication graduates

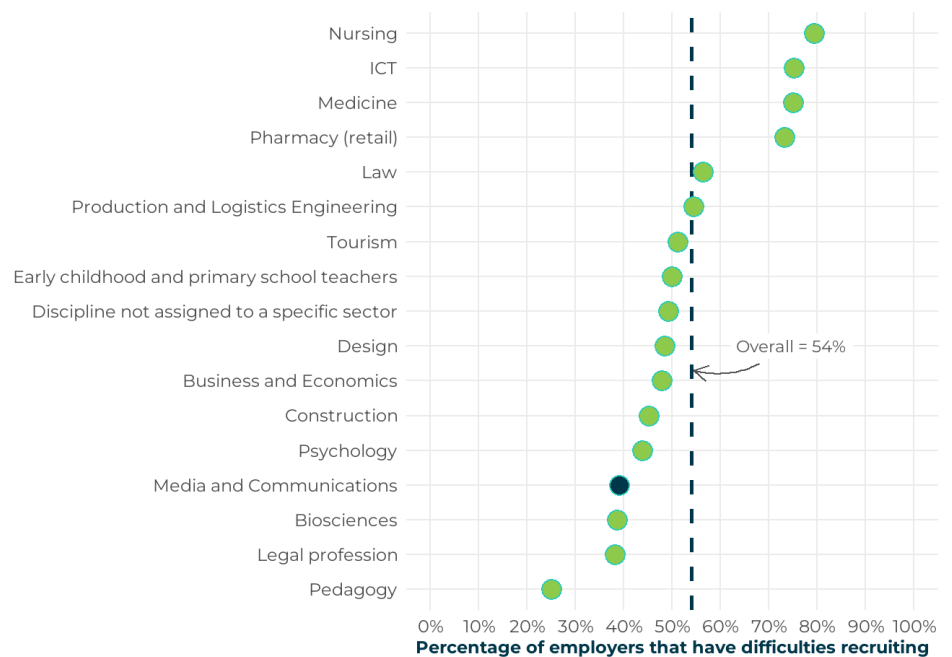


The majority of employers (61%) have had no difficulty in recruiting Communication graduates

- > The percentage of companies with difficulties has decreased by almost 6 points compared to the 2018 employer survey (AQU CATALUNYA, 2018)

Communication is one of the sectors with the least difficulties in recruiting among those included in the employer survey

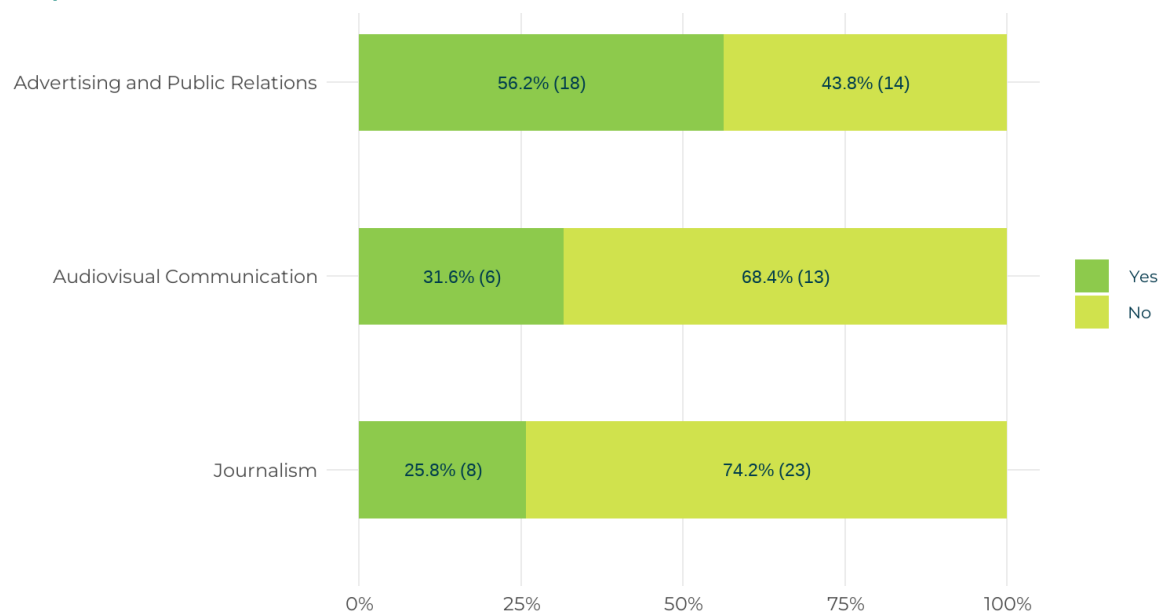
Figure 17. Comparison of companies who face difficulties when recruiting, by sector included in the employer survey



Employers find it more difficult to recruit Advertising and Public Relations profiles

- > Employers recruiting Journalism graduates have the least difficulty (25%).
- > In the case of Audiovisual Communication and Journalism, the percentage of companies who face difficulties when recruiting has decreased by 8% and 15%, respectively, compared to the 2018 study.

Figure 18. Companies that have had difficulties in recruiting Communication graduates, by degree (percentage of companies and, in brackets, number of companies)



The main difficulty when recruiting is the lack of graduates with the necessary skills for the job

- > The skills most lacking in the eyes of employers are **data analysis, ICT, creativity** and **written communication**¹³

¹³ Data based on the responses of employers to the open-ended question “You have indicated that you have had difficulties in recruiting staff due to a lack of qualified people with the necessary skills for the job. Can you specify which skills?”.

Figure 19. Difficulties in recruiting the right profiles from the field of Communication

Response	n	Percentage
Lack of qualified people with the necessary skills for the job	24	71
Lack of graduates in this field	8	24
They do not accept the salary	6	18
Other (specify)	6	18
Limited resources prevent vacancies being properly advertised	5	15
Unwillingness to be geographically mobile	2	6
They do not accept the work schedule	1	3

Skills that recent Communication graduates should improve¹⁴

The skill that recent graduates of all degrees in the field of Communication should improve the most is the capacity and ability to devise, plan, design and execute communication projects

- > In Audiovisual Communication (52.6%) and in Advertising and Public Relations (46.9%), the **ability to read and analyse texts, data, statistics and specialised documents** appears as one of the main skills that needs to be improved.
- > In the case of Advertising and Public Relations graduates, half of the employers think that graduates should reinforce their **ability to devise, plan and execute persuasive communication campaigns**.
- > In all three degrees, more than 30% of employers think that graduates should improve their **capacity and ability to present ideas and arguments in a reasoned way**.
- > More than 30% of employers of graduates in Audiovisual Communication and in Advertising and Public Relations and 29% in the case of Journalism think that graduates should improve their **ability to communicate effectively, taking into account the political, economic and social context**.

¹⁴ In the employer survey questions on skills, employers are asked to choose between 1 and 5 skills that they think recent graduates should improve. Therefore, the percentages shown represent the percentage of employers that have selected a given skill.

Figure 20. Skills that Communication graduates should improve

Skill	Audiovisual Communication (%)	Advertising and Public Relations (%)	Journalism (%)
Ability and skill to devise, plan, design and execute communication projects (from technical and content to formal and aesthetic aspects).	68.4	65.6	74.2
Ability to read and analyse texts, data, statistics and specialised documents on any relevant topic.	52.6	46.9	35.5
Capacity and ability to present ideas and arguments in a reasoned manner (rhetorical skills and mastery of argumentation techniques).	47.4	40.6	32.3
Ability to devise, plan and execute persuasive communication campaigns.	31.6	53.1	25.8
Ability to communicate effectively, taking into account the political, economic and social context.	31.6	37.5	29.0
Ability to design, plan and manage communication companies.	36.8	25.0	22.6
Ability to use and create journalistic communication structures, contents and styles.	26.3	12.5	25.8
Knowledge of research techniques relevant to the field of communication, at both the professional and academic levels.	10.5	15.6	19.4
Knowledge of professional ethics and deontology.	10.5	15.6	12.9

Employers' satisfaction with the skills of recent Communication graduates

The average employers' satisfaction with the skills of recent Communication graduates is high

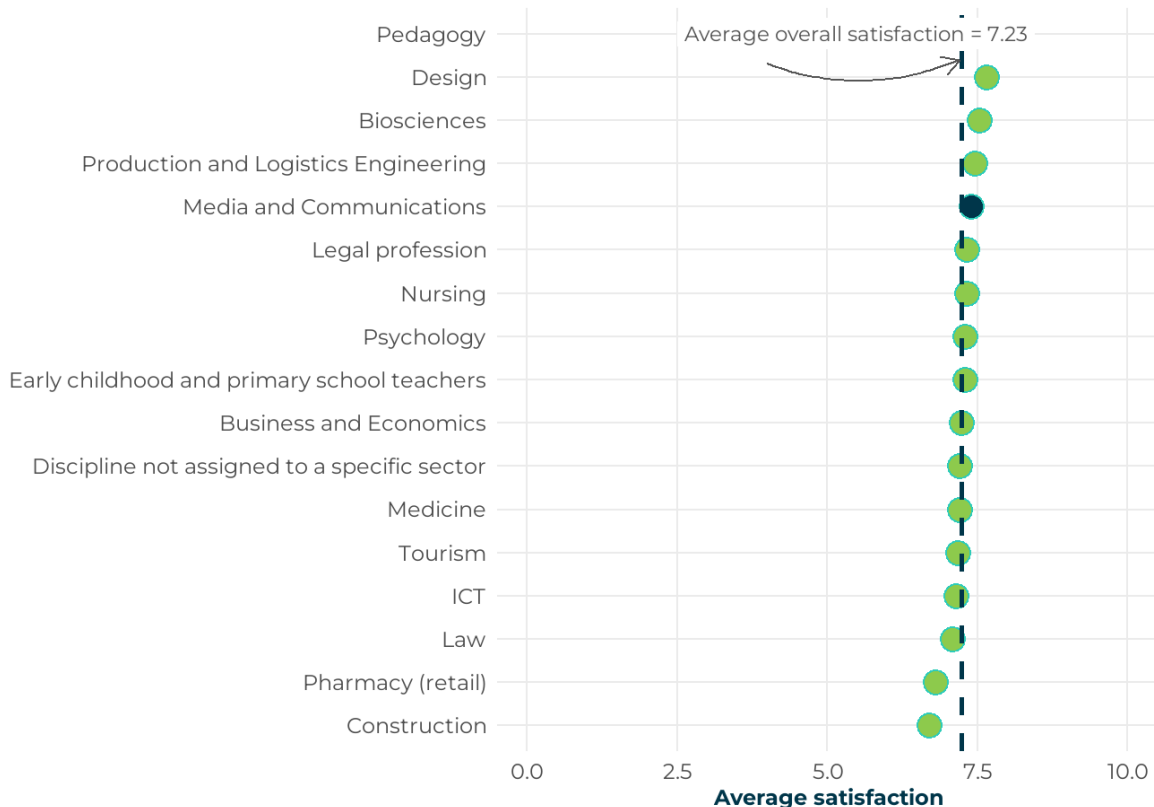
- > Average satisfaction does not vary substantially from the overall average or from the averages of other employer sectors, which range from 6.7 to 7.7.¹⁵
- > The overall satisfaction with the skills of the graduates of the degrees analysed, which remains between 7 and 7.4, has not varied substantially with respect to the previous edition, which was between 6.9 (Journalism) and 7.3 (Audiovisual Communication).

Table 4. Employers' average satisfaction with the skills of recent Communication graduates (from 0 of 10)

Degree	Average satisfaction
Audiovisual Communication	7
Journalism	7.4
Advertising and Public Relations	7.4
Communication total	7.3
Overall satisfaction SUC	7.2

¹⁵ Considering the relatively small size of the samples and the distribution of the variable measuring overall satisfaction, it cannot be claimed that these differences are statistically significant.

Figure 21. Comparison of the average satisfaction with the skills of recent graduates, by sectors included in the employer survey (from 0 to 10)



Outlook

The most sought-after skills are related to ICT, persuasive communication and data analysis

- > In terms of **ICT**, employers refer, for example, to "knowledge of digital tools to create content quickly" or "adaptation to the digital world". There are also more general descriptions such as "computer science" or "digital language". **SEO** (*Search Engine Optimisation*), that is, all those techniques that allow a better positioning of a website in a search engine, stands out as a distinct category. Other related skills, such as web traffic analysis or Google Analytics, Google's analysis tool, also appear.
- > It is worth noting that the skill of **data analysis** is highlighted above all by employers of graduates in Advertising and Public Relations and Journalism.
- > **Digital marketing** is a skill highlighted exclusively by Advertising and Public Relations employers.

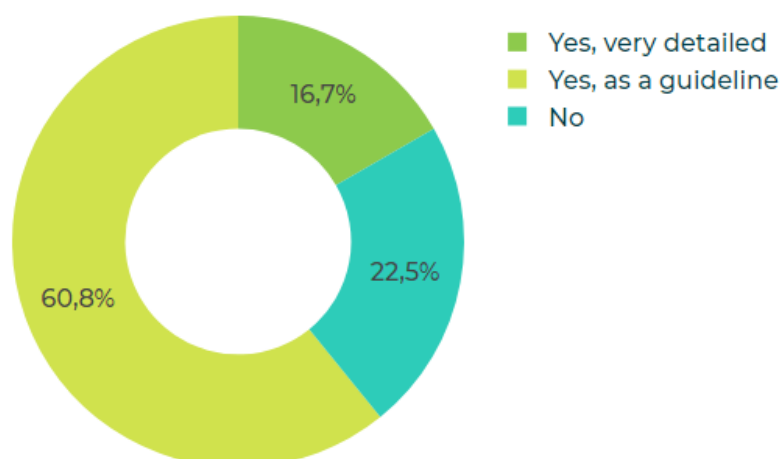
Figure 22. Skills that will become more important in the communication sector (most frequent keywords)



The opinion of employers regarding Communication work placement students

Of the 120 employers who have taken on work placement students, 78% in total had either a very detailed (60.8%) or indicative (16.7%) training plan

Figure 23. Definition of the training plan of employers that have taken on work placement students from the field of Communication



Skills that have been worked on the most during the work placement period

In Audiovisual Communication (70.7%) and in Advertising and Public Relations (62.7%) the skills that has been most put into practice is the ability to devise, plan, design and execute communication projects. In Journalism (75%) this has been the ability to read and analyse texts, data, statistics and specialised documents

- > In general, Journalism employers place more emphasis on on-the-job training on issues related to written expression and communication skills.
- > In the case of Advertising and Public Relations, more emphasis (49%) was placed on the ability to devise, plan and execute persuasive communication campaigns.

Figure 24. Skills in the field of Communication that have been worked on the most during the work placement period

Skill	Advertising and Public Relations (%)	Journalism (%)	Audiovisual Communication (%)
Ability and skill to devise, plan, design and execute communication projects (from technical and content to formal and aesthetic aspects).	62.7	64.3	70.7
Ability to read and analyse texts, data, statistics and specialised documents on any relevant topic.	39.2	75.0	31.7
Ability to communicate effectively, taking into account the political, economic and social context.	31.4	53.6	39.0
Ability to devise, plan and execute persuasive communication campaigns.	49.0	21.4	26.8
Capacity and ability to present ideas and arguments in a reasoned manner (rhetorical skills and mastery of argumentation techniques).	33.3	50.0	24.4
Ability to use and create journalistic communication structures, contents and styles.	25.5	35.7	31.7
Ability to design, plan and manage communication companies.	17.6	7.1	24.4
Knowledge of professional ethics and deontology.	21.6	14.3	12.2
Knowledge of research techniques relevant to the field of communication, at both the professional and academic levels.	15.7	7.1	22.0
Others	11.8	3.6	7.3

Skills of Communication work placement students that should be worked on more at university

The skills of Communication work placement students which, according to employers, should be worked on most at university are those which have been worked on most during the work placement period

- > This is also evident if one compares the skills most worked on during the work placement period and those that **recent graduates** most need to improve, as shown in Figure 25.

Figure 25. Skills of Communication work placement students that should be worked on more during university education

Skill	Advertising and Public Relations (%)	Journalism (%)	Audiovisual Communication (%)
Ability and skill to devise, plan, design and execute communication projects (from technical and content to formal and aesthetic aspects).	47.1	53.6	51.2
Ability to read and analyse texts, data, statistics and specialised documents on any relevant topic.	49.0	42.9	36.6
Capacity and ability to present ideas and arguments in a reasoned manner (rhetorical skills and mastery of argumentation techniques).	37.3	50.0	34.1
Ability to communicate effectively, taking into account the political, economic and social context.	27.5	42.9	34.1
Ability to devise, plan and execute persuasive communication campaigns.	35.3	32.1	17.1
Ability to use and create journalistic communication structures, contents and styles.	23.5	25.0	22.0
Knowledge of professional ethics and deontology.	23.5	14.3	26.8
Knowledge of research techniques relevant to the field of communication, at both the professional and academic levels.	13.7	17.9	31.7
Ability to design, plan and manage communication companies.	19.6	25.0	12.2

Figure 26. Comparison between the percentage of employers that select a skill that graduate should improve and the skills they have worked on during the work placement period

The ranking shows the position of each selected skill.

Skill	Percentage (graduates)	Percentage (interns)	Ranking (graduates)	Ranking (interns)
Ability and skill to devise, plan, design and execute communication projects (from technical and content to formal and aesthetic aspects).	69.5	65.8	1	1
Ability to read and analyse texts, data, statistics and specialised documents on any relevant topic.	43.9	45.0	2	2
Capacity and ability to present ideas and arguments in a reasoned manner (rhetorical skills and mastery of argumentation techniques).	39.0	34.2	3	5
Ability to devise, plan and execute persuasive communication campaigns.	37.8	35.0	4	4
Ability to communicate effectively, taking into account the political, economic and social context.	32.9	39.2	5	3
Ability to design, plan and manage communication companies.	26.8	17.5	6	7
Ability to use and create journalistic communication structures, contents and styles.	20.7	30.0	7	6
Knowledge of research techniques relevant to the field of communication, at both the professional and academic levels.	15.9	15.8	8	9
Knowledge of professional ethics and deontology.	13.4	16.7	9	8

Satisfaction with the skills of Communication work placement students

The average employers' satisfaction with the skills of Audiovisual Communication and Journalism work placement students is high

- > It does not vary substantially from the overall average or from the averages of other employer sectors, which range from 6.7 to 7.7,¹⁶ as shown in figure 27.

Table 6. Employers' average satisfaction with the skills of Communication work placement students (from 0 to 10)

Degree	Average satisfaction
Audiovisual Communication	7.5
Journalism	7.3
Advertising and Public Relations	6.8
Communication total	7.1
Overall satisfaction SUC	7.3

Catalan universities achieve a high score in their external work placement services, according to employers in the field of Communication

¹⁶ Considering the relatively small size of the samples and the distribution of the variable measuring overall satisfaction, it cannot be claimed that these differences are statistically significant.

Figure 27. Comparison of the average satisfaction with the skills of work placement students, by sectors included in the employer survey (from 0 to 10)

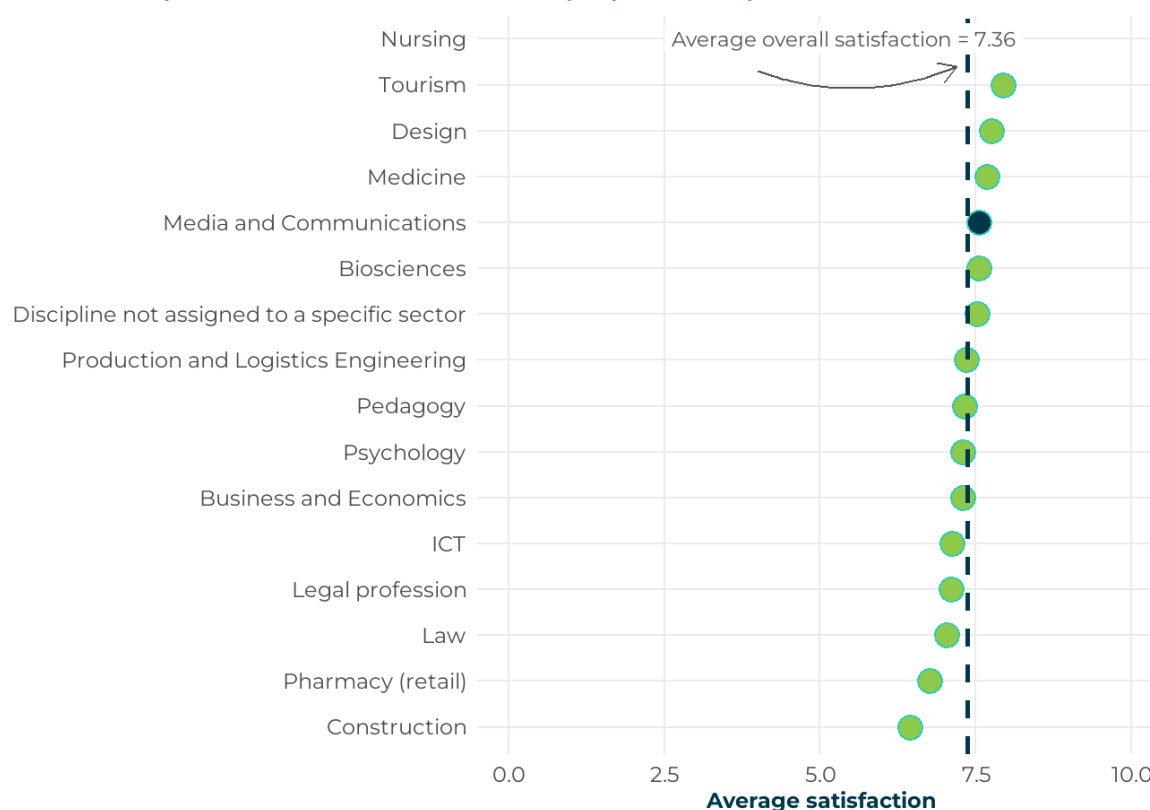


Table 7. Employers' average satisfaction with the work placement services of universities in the field of Communication (from 0 of 10)

Degree	Average satisfaction
Audiovisual Communication	7.5
Journalism	7.5
Advertising and Public Relations	6.8
Communication total	7.4
Overall satisfaction SUC	7.4

CONCLUSIONS

- > The demand for places in bachelor's degrees in the field of Communication (Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations) substantially exceeds the supply, which may explain the high cut-off grades found in some bachelor's degrees offered in Catalonia.¹⁷ Even so, with the exception of Advertising and Public Relations, graduates of these degrees tend to occupy lower quality jobs than those of the SUC as a whole. This fact, when analysed together with the data from the employer survey showing that companies tend to have less difficulty in recruiting graduates in this field, suggests an oversupply of graduates that is difficult for the labour market to absorb.

It is likely that these admission grades influence the satisfaction of graduates in these degrees, especially with regard to the question of whether they would repeat the degree. In this regard, there is a higher percentage of people who would not repeat it compared to the SUC as a whole, especially in Journalism and Audiovisual Communication degrees. However, the average satisfaction with the acquisition of communication skills of graduates in these degrees is slightly above the overall SUC average.

- > The skills that recent Communication graduates should improve the most are broadly the same as in the previous edition of the survey:
 - Ability to present ideas and arguments in a reasoned manner.
 - Ability to devise, plan, design and execute communication projects.
 - Ability to communicate effectively (particularly for employers of journalism graduates).

In addition, 2 out of 3 employers say that having a high or medium level of English is important when recruiting the right profile. These same companies responded that the skills that will become more important in the future are those linked to ICT (digitalisation, social networks, web traffic analysis) and data analytics. These findings are in line with the conclusions of the seminar "Challenges in university training in the field of communication" (AQU CATALUNYA, 2019), in which the results of the employer survey of the previous edition were presented and discussed:

- Training must be digital for the creation, construction and contribution of content.
- Skills in artificial intelligence, statistics and big data analysis need to be reinforced.

¹⁷ According to [Canal Universitats data on university pre-enrolment](#), the cut-off grades for Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations are, in some cases, higher than 11 out of 14.

- The resources and opportunities for graduates would improve if 50% of subjects were taught in English.

> **The results of the employer survey suggest that external work placements are approached in the right way:** it can be seen that the skills most worked on during the work placement period are those with the greatest room for improvement among recent graduates, according to the employers surveyed. This may have two complementary interpretations: on the one hand, it could indicate the direction that proposals for improving university education should take; and, on the other hand, it points out the role played by the business and institutional fabric in the training of professionals in the field of Communication. In this regard, there is a set of skills that could be effectively acquired on the job, complementing the training provided at universities.

Moreover, Journalism graduates are particularly satisfied with the role of external work placements as a means of applying the knowledge acquired during the degree, reinforcing the fundamental role that external work placements play, together with classroom teaching, in university education.

A possible proposal to reinforce the quality of practical training in the field of Communication would be along the lines of what was suggested in the conclusions of the aforementioned seminar, in which the "concept of 'pre-work' was discussed. Promotion of practical cases based on real cases from companies, such as the business school model (adopting real roles in educational processes)" (AQU CATALUNYA, 2019, 2).

DATA SHEET

Employer survey

Technical information of the 3rd edition of the employer survey (2021-2022)

Population	Organisations that have hired in the last three years recent graduates from universities located in Catalonia
Sampling frame	Companies, organisations and institutions that have signed a work placement agreement and/or are listed in Catalan universities' job banks.
Survey type	Online. Software used SurveyMonkey
Average time taken	6' 45"

Summary of the responses to the 3rd edition of the Employer Survey (2021-2022)

Sampling frame (all sectors)	29,865
Population of employers in the field of Communication	Unknown
Responses (all sectors)	2,423
Response rate (all sectors)	8.11%
Responses from employers in the field of Communication	149

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