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# WP2: Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education and Skills Development

D 2.1 Report on status quo on entrepreneurship education, labour  
market requirements and knowledge/skills mismatches

Khorog State University named M. Nazarshoev, Tajikistan





Triggering innovative approaches and entrepreneurial skills for students through creating conditions for  
graduate's employability in Central Asia

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## 1. Introduction

The present report provides an overview of the status quo of entrepreneurship education at Khorog State University after name M. Nazarshoev in Tajikistan and aims to identify related labour market requirements and possible knowledge/skills mismatches of university graduates. The report was developed as part of Work Package 2 on “Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education and Skills Development” (WP2) of the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education Project “Triggering innovative approaches and entrepreneurial skills for students through creating conditions for graduate’s employability in Central Asia” (TRIGGER).

The report first provides an overview of the current offer in entrepreneurship education at the university. Second, relevant results of an HEI self-assessment are provided which was conducted based on the HEInnovate<sup>1</sup> tool in WP1.<sup>2</sup> For the requirements of WP2 the present report specifically looks at the self-assessment findings of the university for the HEInnovate dimensions “Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning” and “Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs”.<sup>3</sup> Third, results of a survey among employers and graduates are provided to identify labour market qualification requirements and possible skills mismatches for graduates in the field of entrepreneurial skills. The survey was implemented by the university in spring 2021 as part of WP2. Fourth, a summarizing discussion of the identified gaps and skills mismatches is provided. In sum, the mentioned aspects allow for comprehensive audit of the state of entrepreneurship education at the university. Finally, conclusions for the further development of entrepreneurship education at the university are derived. Below are the information about the faculties, number of students and the entrepreneurship education offered at different levels.

Khorog State University named after M. Nazarshoev was founded in 1992. This university is the only state university in our region. The university has 8 faculties: economic, physics and mathematics, biological, natural science, history, pedagogical, Tajik philology, the faculty of foreign languages. In total, more than 4000 thousand students are currently studying at the university. One of the leading faculty at Khorog State University is the faculty of Economics.

The Faculty of Economics currently has 420 students with different specialisations such as management, social management, customs and custom regulation, world economics, accounting and auditing, banking and marketing.

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<sup>1</sup> For further details see: <https://heinnovate.eu/en>

<sup>2</sup> For further detail see Deliverable 1.1 on “The Methodology for the Analyses of HEI preparedness for future challenges” of Work Package 1.

<sup>3</sup> For further results of the self-assessment along all 8 HEInnovate dimensions see Deliverable 1.2 “The Report on HEI preparedness for future challenges in CA countries” of Work Package 1.

It should be noted that the specialty in entrepreneurship does not exist separately at the faculty, but however, subjects on entrepreneurship are included in the curriculum. Such as business planning, marketing, labor market, taxes and taxation, international business.

Before digging deeper into the status of entrepreneurship education at the university, this section closes with a summary on the notion of entrepreneurship education as adopted in the TRIGGER project:

- **Entrepreneurship Education (EE)** seeks to provide students with knowledge, skills and motivation to create ideas in entrepreneurial action in different environments, both as self-employed entrepreneur and as employee in established organisations (EC 2015, Lackéus et al. 2020).
- **Entrepreneurship** is a key competence for all learners, supporting personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability (see European Commission et al. 2016: 21).
- **Organizational change** of HEIs is needed, since „the capacity to implement the entrepreneurship and innovation agenda depends on the governance arrangements, organisational capacity and the institutional culture of HEIs as well as characteristics of the surrounding economy“ (OECD 2019: 12).

## 2. Overview of current offer in entrepreneurship education at the HEI

This section provides an overview of the status quo of entrepreneurship education at the university, looking at BA, MA, and PhD levels.

### 2.1. Existing entrepreneurship education offer at BA level

In our opinion, we need to develop students' entrepreneurial skills by introducing new subjects into the curriculum. Our region is very small (200 thousand population) and therefore it is very difficult for university graduates to find a job. Based on this, it is necessary to choose such courses that would teach our students about employment through Internet sites. For example, the discipline is electronic business, digital marketing.

There is no separate specialty in entrepreneurship at Khorog State University. But, however, within the curriculum there are disciplines that relate to entrepreneurship. For example, the Faculty of Economics has 7 specialties: world economics, accounting, analysis and audit, finance and credit, banking, management, marketing, social management and customs, which have over 700 students. It should be noted that the curriculum includes disciplines related to entrepreneurship. For example, business planning, marketing, taxes and business taxation, international business, money circulation and credit, enterprise finance.

**Table 1. Course content BA level at the university**

No	Course name	Amount of credits	Speciality	Status	Semester
1.	Business planning	4	Management, Accounting, Analysis and Audit, World Economy, Banking, Finance and credit	The main subject. Elective course	3,5,6 semester
2.	Marketing	4	Management, Accounting, World Economy, Banking, Finance and credit	The main subject. Elective course	4,5,6,7 semester
3.	Business taxes and taxation	4	Management, Accounting, Analysis and Audit, World Economy, Banking, Finance and credit	The main subject. Elective course	4,5,6 semester
4.	International Business	4	Management, Accounting, Analysis and Audit, World Economy, Banking, Finance and credit	The main subject. Elective course	3, 4,5 semester

Source: Curricula of specialties Management, Marketing, Accounting, Analysis and Audit, World Economy, Banking, Finance and credit

1. Business planning.

The Business Planning course allows you to develop the professional competencies and skills necessary to develop business plans. The course examines the basic methods of business planning, the criteria for their selection and implementation, starting with the formulation of a business idea and business model, the choice of the organizational and legal form of a new company and the tax system. Particular attention is paid to market analysis as a prerequisite for the successful implementation of a business idea. The course examines in detail the content of all sections of the business plan in relation to different industries and different types of business plans.

2. Marketing.

The choice of marketing for entrepreneurship development is necessary because our research on entrepreneurship in the region revealed that entrepreneurs do not have knowledge about marketing. And as a result, they cannot sell a product or service, because they don't have knowledge about competitors, market conditions, and the analysis of supply and demand in the market. Due to the lack of marketing knowledge they cannot properly lead their business. A special place in the program is occupied by the formation of students' skills in practical analytical work in the development and adoption of marketing



decisions, research of the characteristics of product markets and management of the company's marketing strategy.

3. Business taxes and taxation.

The purpose of the discipline is to teach students the principles, theoretical and practical skills of applying the mechanisms of taxation of small businesses.

Discipline objectives:

- to increase the knowledge of students on theoretical issues of taxation;
- analysis of types of taxes and the procedure for its calculation;
- mastering by students of the full range of issues of taxation of small businesses;
- formation of a vision of problems in taxation of small business and directions for its further improvement.

4. international Business.

The aim of the program is to prepare competent bachelors for effective professional activity in the field of international business activity, as well as to develop students' personal qualities necessary for organizing and developing their own business or for performing managerial functions in international companies. The program is aimed at training an entrepreneur implementing an international business project.

It should be noted that marketing is also included in entrepreneurship training courses for students. The main reason for including the marketing course in this list is that we conducted a study of the small and medium-sized business sector in GBAO in 2019 and 2020. And one of the barriers to small and medium-sized businesses, we identified the lack of knowledge of marketing. Entrepreneurs manufactured their products and ultimately could not sell them on the market. And we found out that in the production of products from the side of entrepreneurs, such indicators as market demand, supply in the market, consumer tastes, product quality, competitors, etc. were not taken into account. This is just a small part of the marketing knowledge that local entrepreneurs lacked. And we came to the conclusion that it is necessary to include a course on marketing in elective courses.

## 2.2. Existing entrepreneurship education offer at MA level

We have added only two disciplines to the master's curriculum, because more than half of the curriculum is devoted to the study of the subtleties of management, since the specialty is "Management". We can only add in disciplines of choice. These courses are listed below.

**Table 2. Course content MA level at the university**

№\n/n	Course name	Amount of credits	Speciality	Status	Semester



1.	Business planning	4	Management	The main subject	2, 3 semester
2.	Marketing	4	Management	Elective course	1 semester

Source: Curricula of Management speciality.

### 2.3 Existing entrepreneurship education offer at PhD level

There are students at Khorog State University who study at the PhD level at the university with a degree in Economics. But, however, according to the curriculum, there is no discipline related to entrepreneurship in this curriculum.

According to the curriculum of doctoral students, compulsory disciplines are taught only in the first year. Their number is limited. In the second and third courses, doctoral students undergo research practice, i.e. working on their dissertations. Therefore, it is impossible to include courses on entrepreneurship. But only if the doctoral student has a topic related to entrepreneurship, then in this case he can analyze the issues of entrepreneurship.

There are students at Khorog State University who study at the PhD level at the university with a degree in Economics. But, however, according to the curriculum, there is no discipline related to entrepreneurship in this curriculum. But we can add an Elective course. These courses are shown in the table below.

**Table 3. Course content PhD level at the university**

№/№	Course name	Amount of credits	Speciality	Status	Semester
1.	Labor market	4	Economics	Elective course	1 semester
2.	E-buisness	4	Management	Elective course	2 semester

Source: Curricula of specialtiesum Management

Labor market:

This course allows doctoral students to teach the basics of the labor market, the process of reproduction of the labor force, the development of labor relations in the market, employment, unemployment, the effective use of labor potential, labor market research, labor market segmentation, state regulation of the labor market, labor market research

E-buisness:

A special place in the program is occupied by the formation of students' skills in practical analytical work in the development and adoption of marketing decisions, research of the characteristics of product markets and management of the company's marketing strategy.

## 2.4 Other activities in entrepreneurship education

In Khorog State University, there are no research centers, incubators, production departments related to entrepreneurship training.

## 2.5 National/institutional regulations to implement changes at the course level and to initiate new extra-curricular activities

According to the legislation on education, universities have the right to change curricula within their cycle. The curriculum consists of three cycles. 1. Fundamental disciplines. 2. Disciplines of exact sciences and 3. Specialized subjects. The structure of the curriculum is structured in such a way that universities can change the name of the courses at the choice of the students. For example, a student's elective courses may change based on the state of the labor market and changes in the economy as a whole. 30% of the courses in the curriculum are courses of the student's choice. And accordingly, universities have the right to change the name of these courses. When changing any part of the curriculum, the consent of the Academic Council of the University is required, and then the consent of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan is required. The mechanism is as follows: at the level of specialized departments, teachers propose changes to the curriculum with justification. Then these proposals are submitted for consideration by the Academic Council of the Faculty, then they are proposed for consideration by the Academic Council of the University. When approved at the university level, this curriculum is submitted for consideration to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. Once the Ministry has approved these changes to the curriculum, the university can implement this curriculum in the teaching process. At Khorog State University named after M. Nazarshoev, in addition to the Faculty of Economics, as already noted, there are 7 faculties. In these faculties, only one subject covers the field of entrepreneurship. This subject is called "Business Planning"

### 3. Results of the HEInnovate self-assessment for the dimension “Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning” and “Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs”

As part of WP1 a HEI self-assessment was conducted based on the HEInnovate tool. For the requirements of WP2 this section specifically looks at the self-assessment results of the university for the HEInnovate dimensions “Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning” and “Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs”.<sup>4</sup>

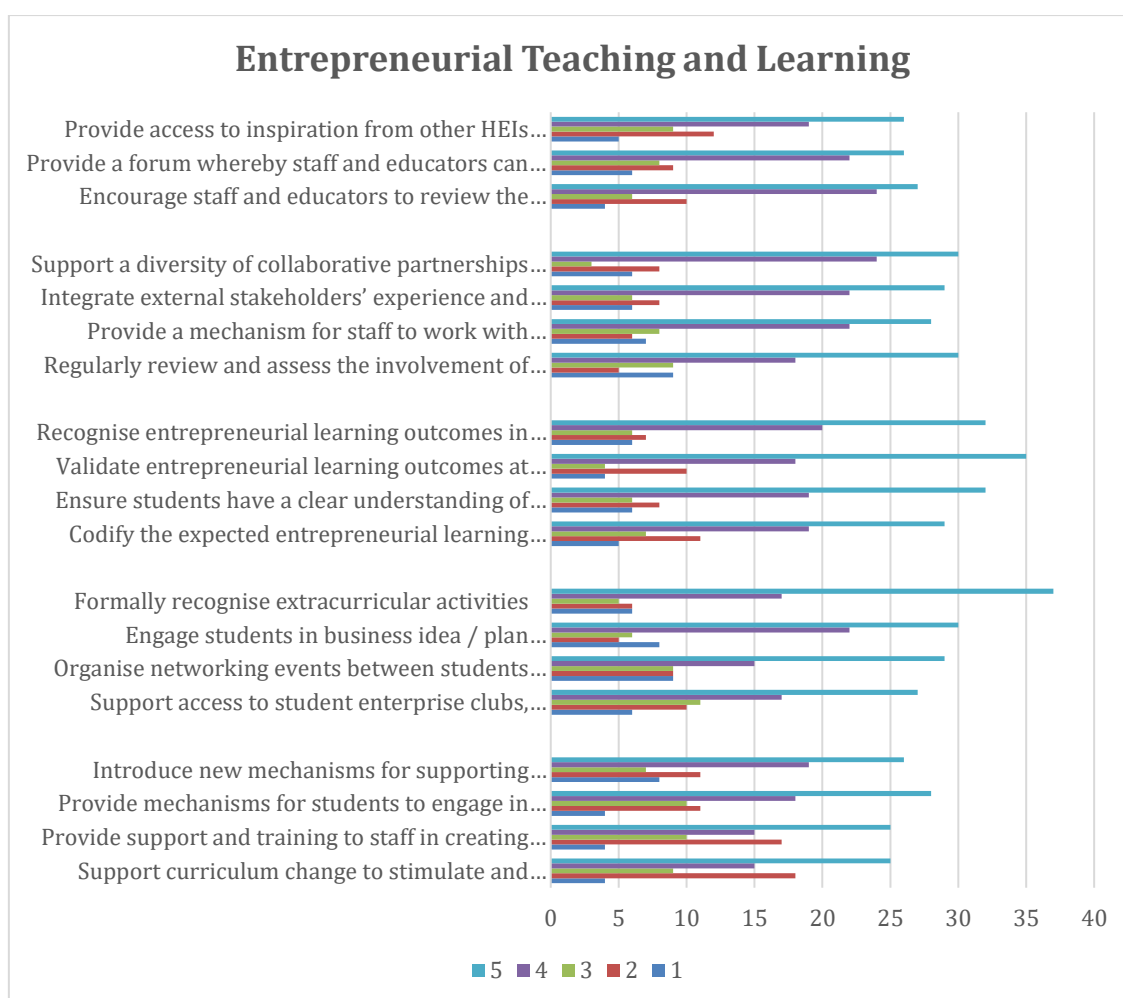
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<sup>4</sup> For further results of the self-assessment along all 8 HEInnovate dimensions see Deliverable 1.2 “The Report on HEI preparedness for future challenges in CA countries” of Work Package 1.

### 3.1. Dimension “Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning”

Interest in entrepreneurship education is growing over the world. However, we know rather little about the outcomes of entrepreneurship education, in particular with respect to which type of course content produces the best results (i.e. most high performing entrepreneurs) and how this affects different types of students.

There is a great variety of different views in the field of research concerning the content and structure of entrepreneurship courses, but no comprehensive study has yet been done in which these competing views are clearly articulated as rivals and tested against each other. There is also a lack of program evaluations. Therefore, the assessment of KSU staff regarding evaluation of Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning processes is highly marked. Despite the fact that this process get high scores from the respondents, actually entrepreneurial education is taught not in whole university.

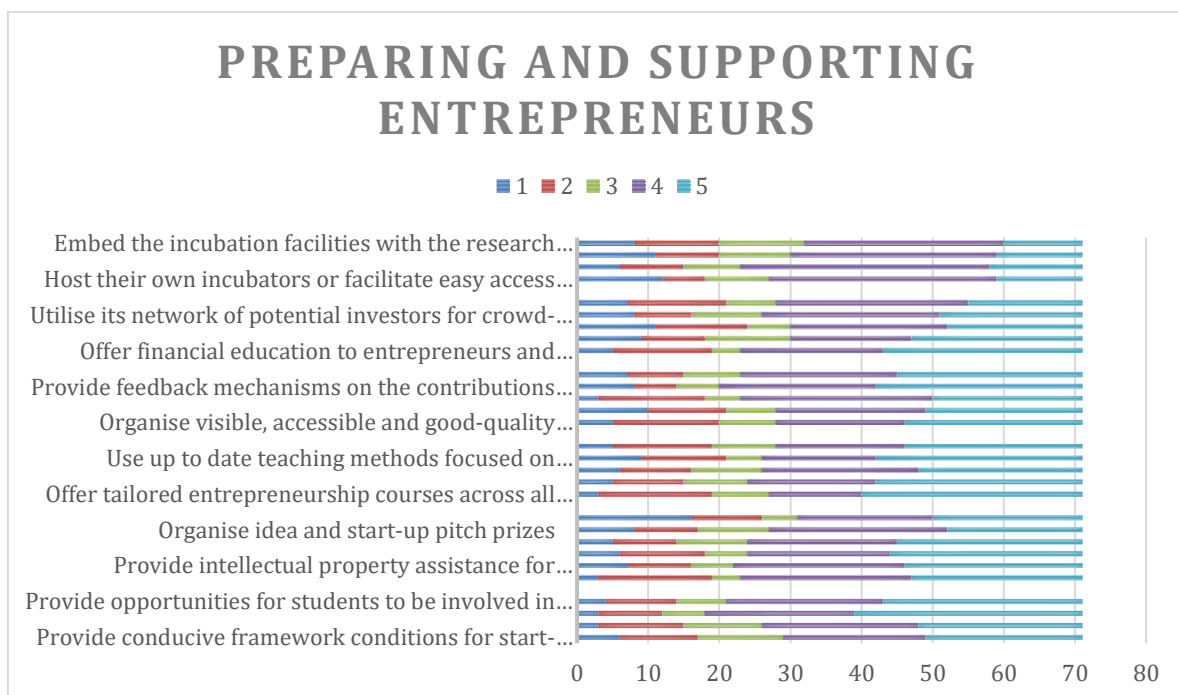


Please indicate at least 5 measures to be taken by your HEI.

- Support curriculum change to stimulate and develop entrepreneurial mindsets and skills through new pedagogies, student-centred, cross-disciplinary and practice-based learning (e.g. living labs, the use of case studies, games and simulation)
- Provide support and training to staff in creating new curriculum related to entrepreneurship
- Introduce new mechanisms for supporting students, including experiencing starting new ventures within the students' formal education or delivering entrepreneurship education with practising entrepreneurs
- Support access to student enterprise clubs, awards and societies
- Organise networking events between students and entrepreneurs / businesses

### 3.2. Dimension “Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs”

Here will be discussed the performance of the higher education system in the HEInnovate dimension “preparing and supporting entrepreneurs”. Students and faculty that engage with entrepreneurship could receive more recognition in the higher education system. At the level of HEIs there is lack of initiatives that could be put in place. However, the diagram shows another picture, the Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs marked highly. University is able to promote the incubator widely, provide opportunities for monitoring, implement the mechanisms to increase rates and to provide conditions for that activity.



Please indicate at least 5 measures to be taken by your HEI.

- Offer funds to support market feasibility studies
- Closely link access to financing activities with training, mentoring and incubation
- Host their own incubators or facilitate easy access to external incubators
- Promote the incubator widely across campus and host events that engage potential entrepreneurs
- Embed the incubation facilities with the research and education infrastructure of the HEI to enhance synergies

#### 4. In-depth survey (employers, alumni)

As part of WP2 the university conducted a survey among employers and graduates to identify labour market qualification requirements and possible skills mismatches for graduates in the field of entrepreneurial skills. In this chapter, results from the online survey of employers and alumni are presented. The rationale of the survey was to identify the skills gaps in terms of skills needed and the actual skills state of university graduates as perceived by companies and alumni.

The survey was conducted in May and June 2021. Each TRIGGER partner in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan distributed the same questionnaire independently in order to gain comparable data. The

questionnaire was developed based on the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework<sup>5</sup> and other studies on entrepreneurship.<sup>6</sup>

In total, the questionnaire comprised 130 items on three EntreComp dimensions „Ideas“, „Resources“ and „Actions“ and in four dimensions on „Digital Skills“, „Financial Skills“, „Marketing Skills“ and „Skills in Innovation Management“, plus 8 questions on demographic variables, such as position of the survey participant in the company, company size, and sector of company/professional activity. All items were presented with a five-point Likert scale anchored with 1 = not at all important to 5 = very important.

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- <sup>5</sup> Bacigalupo M., Kampylis P., Punie Y. and Van Den Brande L. (2016) EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework. Luxembourg (Luxembourg): Publications Office of the European Union; Online: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC101581> (accessed 2021-02-02).
- <sup>6</sup> The dimension on „Digital Skills“ was developed from Carretero, S. / Vuorikari, R. / Punie, Y. (2017). DigComp 2.1: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with eight proficiency levels and examples of use, doi:10.2760/38842; the further dimensions were built on Loué, C. & Baronet, J. (2012) Toward a new entrepreneurial skills and competencies framework: a qualitative and quantitative study. In: International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 455-477.



## 4.1. Dimension "Ideas"

Table 4: Dimension "Ideas"

1	Items	Employer						Alumni						
		Importance		Graduate		I ± GL	Importance		Graduate		I ± GL			
		N	Mean	SD	Mean		SD	N	Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
2														
3														
4	Items													
5	Identifying, creating and seizing opportunities.	24	4,0	0,8	3,1	0,8	-0,9	30	4,4	0,8	3,3	0,9	-1,1	
6	Uncovering the needs of customers and other stakeholders.	24	4,1	0,8	3,3	0,9	-0,8	30	4,3	0,9	3,2	1,1	-1,1	
7	Analysing the contexts where value can be created.	24	3,8	0,9	3,2	0,9	-0,6	30	4,2	0,8	3,3	1,3	-0,9	
8	Developing ideas and opportunities to create value.	24	4,0	0,7	3,2	0,9	-0,8	30	4,4	0,9	3,3	1,3	-1,1	
9	Developing better solutions to existing and new challenges.	24	4,3	0,7	3,1	0,9	-1,2	30	4,5	0,7	3,3	1,2	-1,2	
10	Exploring and experiment with innovative approaches.	24	4,2	0,6	3,4	1,0	-0,8	30	4,5	0,9	3,3	1,2	-1,2	
11	Developing a vision to turn ideas into action.	24	4,3	0,7	3,1	1,0	-1,2	30	4,5	0,8	3,1	1,1	-1,4	
12	Judging what value is in social, cultural and economic terms.	24	4,2	0,7	3,3	1,0	-0,9	30	4,3	0,9	3,3	1,3	-1,0	
13	Recognising the potential an idea has for creating value.	24	4,2	0,9	3,3	0,9	-0,9	30	4,2	0,9	3,2	1,1	-1,0	
14	Identifying suitable ways of making the most out new ideas.	24	4,1	0,8	3,2	0,9	-0,9	30	4,4	0,9	3,2	1,2	-1,2	
15	Assessing the consequences of ideas that bring value on the target	24	4,1	0,7	3,3	1,0	-0,8	30	4,5	0,7	3,0	1,2	-1,5	
16	Reflecting on how sustainable long-term social, cultural and econo	24	4,2	0,7	3,2	1,0	-1,0	30	4,3	0,9	3,1	1,2	-1,2	
17	Acting responsible.	24	4,4	0,8	3,6	1,0	-0,8	30	4,7	0,7	3,1	1,1	-1,6	

Source: Own research

The employers rate such indicators as utilization of opportunities out of 4.0. possible is estimated at 3.1, which is a good indicator. In addition, such competence as identifying the needs of customers and other stakeholders was also rated at a high level (4.1 in relation to 3.3). This mainly refers to the marketing system, which is important for university graduates. Further, Table 1 shows that the knowledge of our graduates on such issues as the development of new ideas and opportunities for creating value is rated out of 4.0 possible to 3.2. And such a skill as the choice of the main ways of implementing new ideas was rated from 4.1 to 3.2. However, we see small deviations in such indicators as the innovativeness of a new idea (4.2 / 3.4), the role of the developed idea for the implementation of values (4.2 / 3.3) and the assessment of the consequences of ideas (4.1 / 3.3).

Thus, despite some deviations, employers evaluate our graduates at a good level. This shows that the competencies that our graduates received in this direction satisfied, if not completely, then partially satisfied them.

Now consider the assessment of the graduates themselves. The answers of graduates differ from those of employers and there are more deviations. For example, it was found that the creation and use of opportunities was assessed satisfactorily (4.4 / 3.3) and there is a slight deviation. However, skills such as analyzing the contexts in which value can be created, developing ideas and the ability to create new values, understanding of value has a deviation, which is 1.3. In our opinion, this is not a critical deviation, but nevertheless it is worth paying attention to them, since these deviations may increase in the future.

If we compare the responses of employers and the graduates themselves, then only one skill they agree on is the creation and use of opportunities. But, however, if we generalize, we can come to the conclusion that

- employers are satisfied with the skills of our graduates, which cannot be said about the opinions of graduates;
- deviations, although small in both cases, must be responded to and corrected;
- if more deviations were found in the answers of graduates, this means that they want to receive more new knowledge. This means they have the potential for this and they are ready for new changes.

## 4.2. Dimension "Resources"

The next parameter that we have considered is resources. (Self-awareness / self-efficacy, Motivation & perseverance, Mobilizing resources, Financial and economic literacy, Mobilizing others)

**Table 5: Dimension "Resources"**

1	2	Employer						Alumni					
		Importance			Graduate			Importance			Graduate		
		N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	I ± GL	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	I ± GL
4	<b>Items</b>												
5	Reflecting on your needs, aspirations and wants in the short, r	24	3,8	0,6	3,1	0,9	-0,7	30	4,3	1,0	3,3	0,9	-1,0
6	Identifying and assess one's own individual and group strengt	24	3,8	0,9	3,1	1,1	-0,7	30	4,4	0,9	3,2	1,1	-1,2
7	Believing in one's own ability to influence the course of event	24	3,8	0,8	3,2	1,1	-0,6	30	4,4	0,6	3,3	1,3	-1,1
8	Being determined to turn ideas into action and satisfy one's o	24	3,9	0,7	3,3	1,0	-0,6	30	4,5	0,7	3,3	1,3	-1,2
9	Being prepared to be patient and keep trying to achieve long-t	24	4,0	0,8	3,4	1,0	-0,6	30	4,5	0,7	3,3	1,2	-1,2
10	Being resilient under pressure, adversity, and temporary failur	24	4,1	0,8	3,3	1,0	-0,8	30	4,3	0,8	3,3	1,2	-1,0
11	Getting and managing the material, non-material and digital r	24	4,1	0,9	3,3	1,0	-0,8	30	4,4	0,8	3,1	1,1	-1,3
12	Making the most of limited resources.	24	4,3	0,8	3,3	1,0	-1,0	30	4,4	0,8	3,3	1,3	-1,1
13	Getting and managing the competences needed at any stage,	24	4,1	0,8	3,3	1,0	-0,8	30	4,3	0,8	3,2	1,1	-1,1
14	Estimating the cost of turning an idea into a value-creating ac	24	4,1	0,8	3,2	0,9	-0,9	30	4,4	0,9	3,2	1,2	-1,2
15	Planning, putting in place and evaluating financial decisions o	24	4,1	0,8	3,1	0,9	-1,0	30	4,2	0,8	3,0	1,2	-1,2
16	Managing financing to make sure my value-creating activity c	24	4,0	0,9	3,0	0,8	-1,0	30	4,3	0,9	3,1	1,2	-1,2
17	Inspiring and enthusing relevant stakeholders.	24	4,0	0,8	3,2	0,8	-0,8	30	4,4	0,9	3,1	1,1	-1,3
18	Getting the support needed to achieve valuable outcomes.	24	4,1	0,7	3,2	0,8	-0,9	30	4,5	0,8	3,0	1,3	-1,5
19	Demonstrating effective communication, persuasion and negotiation.	24	4,3	0,7	3,3	1,0	-1,0	30	4,5	0,7	3,2	1,2	-1,3
20	Demonstrating effective leadership.	24	4,6	0,6	3,5	0,9	-1,1	30	4,6	0,7	3,2	1,2	-1,4

Source: Own research

Table 2 is devoted to such a skill as self-organization and independent decision-making in specific issues. Let's start by analyzing the results of employers. Compared to the first table, here we see more deviations. It should be noted that a small deviation (0.8) received such skills as financial management, support and incentives for stakeholders, obtaining the necessary support to achieve results. These skills indicate that

our graduates have good knowledge of accounting and reporting of financial results, which is a very important skill for graduates. In addition, graduates are able to support at the necessary moments, which can affect the results of their activities and the activities of the company as a whole. The employers appreciated the graduates as part of the team and they can help the team at any moment. In second place are skills such as assessing one's own needs, planning, implementing and evaluating financial decisions as appropriate, and demonstrating effective management (the deviation is 0.9). What do these answers give us?

- firstly, graduates are able to assess their potential based on their abilities, aspirations and desires;
- secondly, they know how to turn an idea into reality, which is a very necessary skill for graduates;
- thirdly, based on their potential, graduates have the necessary skills in financial management, planning, implementation and can assess how effective the investment was;

However, the answers of the graduates themselves differ from those of the employers. They are more demanding of themselves. For the skills, which are reflected in table 2, are very important, but however, they are not very satisfied with the knowledge they received at the university. According to Table 2, graduates have more deviations. They rated the importance of the indicators from 4.2 to 4.6, but none of the skills were close to these indicators. For example, such a skill as demonstrating effective leadership among graduates is considered the most important, but however, we see the greatest deviation in this indicator. This means that graduates are not confident that they have sufficient leadership skills. In addition, in skills such as

- belief in one's own ability to influence the course of events, despite uncertainty, obstacles and temporary setbacks,

- the determination to bring ideas to life and satisfy their own needs to achieve

we see the greatest discrepancy between how important they are to graduates and how much they possess such skills.

Thus, from all of the above, it follows that in the Dimension “Resources” category, university graduates do not fully meet the declared criteria of employers.

### 4.3. Dimension “Actions”

Next is the “Actions” dimension. The result of this parameter is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Dimension “Actions”**

1	2	Employer						Alumni					
		Importanc			Graduate			Importance			Graduate		
		N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	I ± GL	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	I ± GL
3													
4	<b>Items</b>												
5	Initiating processes that create value	24	4,0	0,7	3,4	1,0	-0,6	30	4,5	0,6	3,3	1,0	-1,2
6	Taking up challenges	24	4,2	0,7	3,2	0,9	-1,0	30	4,3	0,8	3,2	1,0	-1,1
7	Acting and working independently to achieve goals, stick to intentions and carry out planned tasks	24	3,9	0,7	3,2	0,8	-0,7	30	4,5	0,7	3,3	1,1	-1,2
8	Setting long-, medium- and short-term goals	24	4,0	0,8	3,1	0,7	-0,9	30	4,5	0,6	3,2	1,2	-1,3
9	Defining priorities and action plans	24	4,2	0,7	3,2	0,9	-1,0	30	4,6	0,7	3,2	1,2	-1,4
10	Adapting to unforeseen changes	24	4,1	0,8	3,1	0,9	-1,0	30	4,5	0,7	3,2	1,3	-1,2
11	Making decisions when the result of that decision is uncertain, when the information available is partial or a	24	3,8	0,9	3,1	1,0	-0,7	30	4,4	0,9	3,3	1,1	-1,1
12	Testing ideas and prototypes from the early stages to reduce risks of failing	24	4,0	0,8	3,2	0,8	-0,8	30	4,3	0,8	3,2	1,1	-1,2
13	Handling fast-moving situations promptly and flexibly.	24	4,1	0,8	3,2	0,9	-0,9	30	4,4	0,8	3,2	1,0	-1,2
14	Working together and cooperate with others to develop ideas and turn them into action	24	4,3	0,8	3,3	0,9	-1,0	30	4,4	0,8	3,2	1,1	-1,2
15	Networking with others to organise skills and expertise needed for goal attainment	24	4,2	0,9	3,4	0,8	-0,8	30	4,6	0,7	3,2	1,1	-1,4
16	Solving conflicts and facing up to competition positively when necessary	24	4,2	0,8	3,3	1,0	-0,9	30	4,4	0,8	3,0	1,1	-1,4
17	Using any initiative for value creation as a learning opportunity	24	4,0	0,9	3,4	0,9	-0,6	30	4,5	0,8	3,5	1,2	-1,0
18	Learning with others, including peers and mentors	24	4,3	0,7	3,5	0,9	-0,8	30	4,4	0,8	3,3	1,3	-1,1
19	Reflecting and learning from both success and failure (your own and other people's)	24	4,1	0,8	3,5	1,0	-0,6	30	4,5	0,7	3,1	1,1	-1,4

Source: Own research

Table 3 shows to what extent graduates are ready to make decisions in the face of uncertainty. In addition, how ready they are for constructive conflict resolution. First, I would like to highlight some of the differences between important skills for employers and the skills acquired by graduates. The greatest deviations were found in such skills as accepting challenges, setting priorities and action plans (4.2 / 3.2), adapting to emergencies (4.1 / 3.1) and positive conflict resolution (4.2 / 3.3). However, for other skills, the discrepancy is not very large.

Thus, it can be stated that the proximity of graduates' skills to those important for employers is insignificant. But there are also indicators that are closer to the requirements of employers. These include: initiative and the use of any initiative (4.0./3.4.), Learning from our own and others' mistakes (4.1./3.5.).

The answers of the graduates are somewhat different and have some discrepancies with the estimates of the employers. Graduates primarily consider indicators such as setting priorities and action plans and interaction with other people to generate skills as important (4,6). Further, it is considered important

- initiative, independence of decision-making,
- setting pre-term and short-term goals,
- learning from their own and others' mistakes (4.5.).

Now let's compare them with the acquired skills of graduates. Regarding two main indicators that are very important for them (4.6), unfortunately, graduates are not satisfied with these studies and received the greatest deviation in these indicators. Also in terms of importance in second place were indicators that received an assessment of 4.5. However, the opinions of the graduates also differ on these indicators. This indicates that in the course of their work, their employers paid more attention to precisely these skills.

And thus, if we compare the responses of employers and graduates, we can come to the following conclusions:

1. Graduates are more demanding of themselves than employers.
2. For both employers and graduates in this section, indicators such as setting priorities and action plans and interacting with others to generate skills are important. That's a coincidence.
3. In terms of importance, the greatest discrepancy between employers and graduates is on such an indicator as decision-making is ambitious and is made under conditions of uncertainty and risk.

#### 4.4. Dimension “Digital Skills”

One of the important parameters for defining entrepreneurial thinking is “Digital Skills”. Within this parameter, we considered such indicators as assessing ideas, digital marketing, digital innovation, customer needs, management of collaboration.

**Table 7. Dimension “Digital Skills”**

1	2	Employer						Alumni					
		Importanc		Graduate		I ±	Importanc		Graduate		I ±		
3		N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
4	<b>Items</b>												
5	Using data and information from digital environments to assess the potential of ideas	24	4,0	0,7	3,3	1,0	-0,7	30	4,2	0,9	3,2	1,4	-1,0
6	Deploying digital media, apps or web-based tools for marketing	24	4,2	0,9	3,3	1,0	-1,0	30	4,2	0,9	3,2	1,3	-1,0
7	Using knowledge on automation and artificial intelligence for improving products, processes and	24	4,1	0,9	3,2	1,0	-0,9	30	4,1	0,9	3,1	1,5	-1,0
8	Understanding and using information from the web and other digital sources to identify custome	24	4,3	0,9	3,3	1,0	-1,0	30	4,2	1,0	3,2	1,4	-1,0
9	Using software apps and digital tools for managing collaboration with teams and partners	24	4,3	0,8	3,3	1,0	-1,0	30	4,4	0,8	3,3	1,3	-1,1

Source: Own research

In the modern world, not only IT companies are part of the digital economy. Innovative technologies are being introduced and applied in organizations from various industries. And the effective use of digital tools in business operations and digital transformation processes are impossible without improving the digital skills of employees.

Table 4 is devoted to digital skills of graduates. It should be noted that digital skills for students play an important role, especially nowadays where it is impossible to work effectively without digitalization. According to Table 4, again, there is no exact coincidence of the knowledge gained by graduates and the requirements of employers. However, there are some deviations. The lowest-rated skill was the use of knowledge about automation and artificial intelligence to improve products, processes and services. The most important skill for employers was that graduates must understand and be able to use the information



they receive and the level of use of software applications and digital tools. But nevertheless, graduates showed a low result precisely in these skills.

According to the survey of alumni, it becomes important that the most important skill they consider is the use of software applications and digital tools. From this table 4 it becomes clear that the graduates themselves are not satisfied with their knowledge of this indicator.

When comparing important skills of an employer to graduates, the most important metric for both is the use of software applications and digital tools. For both the employer and the graduate, this indicator has the greatest deviation.

From the above, it follows that graduates of Khorog State University have insufficient digital skills. In our opinion, there are several reasons for this:

1. The interviewed respondents were graduates of different years of graduation. And then Khorog State University did not have sufficient equipment for computer classrooms.
2. In the field of digital skills, the university did not have sufficient qualified personnel.
3. The location of the university did not allow graduates to study and improve their digital skills to the extent necessary.

#### 4.5. Dimensoins “Finansial Skills”

One of the small importance for entrepreneurial skill is the dimension “Financial Skills”. To determine the “Financial Skills” parameter, we focused our attention on such indicators as understanding financial results, drawing conclusions, managing cash, identifying financial needs, calculating costs.

**Table 8. Dimensoins “Finansial Skills”**

1	2	Employer						Alumni					
		Importance			Graduate level			Importance			Graduate level		
		N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	I ± GL	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	I ± GL
4	Items												
5	Knowing how to read and analyse a balance sheet	24	4,2	0,9	2,8	1,2	-1,4	30	3,6	1,6	3,4	0,9	-0,2
6	Drawing conclusions and deriving potential courses of action from balance sheets.	24	4,2	0,7	2,9	1,2	-1,3	30	3,6	1,5	3,3	1,0	-0,3
7	Managing cash flow.	24	4,3	0,8	2,7	1,3	-1,6	30	3,7	1,6	3,4	1,0	-0,3
8	Identifying and meeting the organization’s financial needs in the short and long term	24	4,2	0,9	2,6	1,3	-1,6	30	3,7	1,6	3,5	1,0	-0,2
9	Calculating costs, cost prices, and margins.	24	4,3	1,0	2,8	1,3	-1,5	30	3,6	1,6	3,5	1,0	-0,1

Source: Own research

Financial skills include interaction with banks and credit institutions, the use of effective monetary instruments, and a sober assessment of the economic situation of the company.

It should be noted that for the introduction of entrepreneurial activity, the analysis of financial resources, such as balance sheet analysis, reporting, cash flow management and the calculation of costs, costs and margins, is of no small importance. The most important indicators for employers are

- cash flow management,
- calculation of costs, costs and margins.

The financial skills of graduates of Khorog State University do not satisfy employers, the deviations are large. So, cash flow management 4,3 / 2,7, calculation of costs, cost and margin 4,3. / 2,8, identification and satisfaction of the financial needs of the organization 4,2. / 2,6.

Now let's compare these indicators with the answers of the graduates. Compared to employers, financial skills are not very important for them in comparison with other indicators that we discussed above. And the result is fundamentally different from the responses of employers. This can be seen from the table. For example, if the importance of these indicators for employers goes from 4.3, then for graduates it is 3.7. The reason is that the majority of our respondents graduated from the specialty management. And according to the curriculum, not very many courses are devoted to finance, accounting and cash flow management.

The results of the survey concerning the issue of financial skills are rated very well by the graduates. For almost all indicators, the deviations are not very large. This can also be explained by the fact that at present their work is not related to finance or they are employed in social spheres.

#### 4.6. Dimension “Marketing”.

Marketing determines the place of an enterprise in the market in relation to competitors, its competitive advantages, as well as the choice of promising market segments by the enterprise that it plans to serve. Marketing is a belief system or a specific worldview associated with making a profit by satisfying the needs of people. Marketing activities include the development of a marketing concept, as well as pricing, product promotion and sales. Within the “Marketing” dimension, we considered such indicators as building a sales argument, negotiating, selling, creating customer loyalty, managing firm image, building relationships.

**Table 9. Dimention “Marketing”**

1	Employer						Alumni						
	2	Importance		Graduate		I ± GL	3	Importanc		Graduate		I ± GL	
N		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			N	Mean	SD	Mean		SD
4	<b>Items</b>												
5	Deploying sales arguments with a view to persuading clients to buy.	24	3,8	0,9	3,4	0,7	-0,4	30	4,1	1,1	3,2	1,0	-0,9
6	Negotiating while using specific techniques	24	3,9	0,8	3,1	0,7	-0,8	30	4,0	1,0	3,2	1,0	-0,8
7	Developing commercial strategies and means whereby to attract new clients	24	4,0	1,0	3,3	0,9	-0,7	30	4,4	0,9	3,3	1,2	-1,1
8	Using specific techniques to encourage client loyalty.	24	3,7	0,9	3,4	0,8	-0,3	30	4,0	1,0	3,2	1,1	-0,8
9	Creating a positive image of the firm, promoting an ethical image of the firm.	24	4,3	0,7	3,3	0,8	-1,0	30	4,4	0,9	3,4	1,1	-1,0
10	Building relationships of trust with clients and partners.	24	4,4	0,7	3,5	0,8	-0,9	30	4,4	0,9	3,4	1,0	-1,0

Source: Own research



Marketing determines the place of the enterprise in the market in relation to competitors, its competitive advantages, as well as the choice by the enterprise of promising market segments that it plans to serve. Marketing is a belief system or a specific worldview associated with making a profit by satisfying people's needs. Marketing activities cover the development of a marketing concept, as well as pricing, promotion of products on the market and its sale.

Table 6 covers questions related to marketing and marketing strategy. The most important marketing skills for employers are building trust with customers (4.4), creating a positive image (4.3.), And developing business strategies and ways to attract customers. According to the study, the level of knowledge of employers among graduates was built as follows (skills are shown ascending):

- using certain methods to encourage customer loyalty (deviation 0.3);
- using selling arguments to convince customers to make a purchase (deviation 0.4);
- development of commercial strategies and ways to attract customers (deviation 0.7);
- negotiating using certain methods (deviation 0.8);
- building trusting relationships with clients and partners (deviation 0.9);
- creating a positive image of the company, promoting a positive image of the company (deviation 1.0);

For graduates, the most important skills are

- development of commercial strategies and ways to attract customers,
- creating a positive image of the company, promoting a positive image of the company,
- building trusting relationships with clients and partners, to whom they awarded a score of 4.4.

According to Table 6, graduates have the lowest level of knowledge in these skills.

#### 4.7. Dimension “Innovation management”

Innovation management is a system for managing innovations, the innovation process and economic relations arising in the course of this management. Innovation management is based on the following fundamental points: purposeful search for an idea that serves as the foundation for this innovation; organization of the innovation process to create this innovation; this involves carrying out an organizational and technical complex of works to transform an idea into an innovation; the process of promoting and implementing an innovation in the market, which requires a creative approach and active actions of sellers.

**Table 10. Dimension “Innovation management”**

1	Employer						Alumni					
	Importance		Graduate		I ± GL	Importance		Graduate		I ± GL		
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
2	Items											
3												
4	Items											
5	24	4,0	0,8	3,0	0,8	-1,0	30	4,4	1,1	3,0	1,2	-1,4
6	24	4,1	0,6	3,2	0,9	-0,9	30	4,4	0,9	3,1	1,1	-1,3
7	24	4,0	0,8	3,2	0,9	-0,8	30	4,5	1,0	3,1	1,4	-1,4
8	24	4,0	0,7	3,3	0,8	-0,7	30	4,5	0,7	3,0	1,2	-1,5
9	24	4,0	0,9	3,3	0,9	-0,7	30	4,2	1,2	3,1	1,2	-1,1

Source: Own research

The following table (7) covers skills related to innovation management. Innovation management is a system for managing innovation, the innovation process and economic relations that arise in the course of this management. Innovation management is based on the following fundamental points: a targeted search for an idea that serves as the foundation for this innovation; organization of the innovation process to create this innovation; this involves carrying out an organizational and technical complex of works to turn an idea into an innovation; the process of promoting and implementing innovation in the market, which requires a creative approach and active actions of sellers. Employers consider the analysis of the market potential of ideas and concepts of new products to be the most important skill for graduates (4.1), and other skills such as - development of innovative strategies, - planning, implementation and control of innovative processes, - application of methods of exchange of ideas and knowledge - management of cooperation between clients and suppliers is estimated at 4.0 of the indicator. Again, one hundred percent satisfaction with the knowledge of graduates is missing. There are deviations in all indicators. The biggest deviation can be seen in the fact that the knowledge of graduates on the development of innovative strategies is not very satisfying for employers. As for university graduates, they rated the importance of skills at higher scores from 4.2 to 4.5. The process of planning, implementing and controlling innovation processes, as well as managing cooperation between customers and suppliers are the most important skills for graduates, which distinguishes them from employers. The level of knowledge of graduates in terms of - using methods for knowledge sharing, - development of new strategies, - planning, implementation and control of innovative processes leaves much to be desired. Employers consider the analysis of the market potential of ideas and concepts for new products to be the most important skill for graduates (4,1), and other skills such as

- development of innovative strategies,
- planning, implementation and control of innovation processes,
- application of methods of exchange of ideas and knowledge
- management of cooperation between customers and suppliers is estimated at 4.0 indicators.

Again, one hundred percent satisfaction with the knowledge of graduates. There are deviations in all indicators. The biggest deviation can be seen in the fact that the knowledge of graduates in the development of innovative strategies is not very satisfying to employers.

For university graduates, they rated the importance of skills at higher grades, ranging from 4.2 to 4.5. The process of planning, implementing and controlling innovation processes, as well as managing cooperation between customers and suppliers, are the most important skills for graduates that distinguish them from employers. The level of knowledge of graduates on the part

- using methods for sharing knowledge,
- development of new strategies,
- planning, implementation and control of innovative processes is poor.

## 5. Identified gaps and skills mismatches

Summarize the results of Chapter 4 and describe which skill levels employers and graduates rate significantly lower than the importance of the relevant skills?

- Are there certain patterns that can be identified, eg same/same employer and alumni ratings, certain combinations of skills, etc.?
- Make a table (see template below) with all the skills o that employers and graduates rate as lack of skills o or which either graduates rated as skill gaps
- If possible, explain if these patterns are related to company size and economic activity.
- If possible, explain whether self-employed graduates and working graduates/ Table 11: Gaps in skills as assessed by employers and alumni.

**Table 11: Skills gaps as rated by employers and alumni**

Main dimensions of competencies	rated as skills gap by employer and alumni	rated skills gap by employers	rated skills gap by alumni
1.Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing better solutions to existing and new challenges.</li> <li>• Developing a vision to turn ideas into action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecting on how sustainable long-term social, cultural and economic goals are.</li> <li>• Judging what value is in social, cultural and economic terms.</li> <li>• Identifying suitable ways of making the most out new ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing the consequences of ideas that bring value on the target community, the market, society and the environment.</li> <li>• Acting responsible.</li> </ul>

2.Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrating effective leadership.</li> <li>• Demonstrating effective communication, persuasion and negotiation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing financing to make sure my value-creating activity can last over the long term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting the support needed to achieve valuable outcomes.</li> <li>• Getting and managing the material, non-material and digital resources needed to turn ideas into action.</li> </ul>
3. Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining priorities and action plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking up challenges</li> <li>• Adapting to unforeseen changes</li> <li>• Working together and cooperate with others to develop ideas and turn them into action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking with others to organise skills and expertise needed for goal attainment</li> <li>• Solving conflicts and facing up to competition positively when necessary</li> <li>• Reflecting and learning from both success and failure (your own and other people's)</li> </ul>
4.Digital skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deploying digital media, apps or web-based tools for marketing.</li> <li>• Understanding and using information from the web and other digital sources to identify customer needs.</li> <li>• Using software apps and digital tools for managing collaboration with teams and partners</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using data and information from digital environments to assess the potential of ideas</li> </ul>
5. Financial skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing cash flow.</li> <li>• Identifying and meeting the organization's financial needs in the short and long term</li> <li>• Calculating costs, cost prices, and margins.</li> <li>• Knowing how to read and analyse a balance sheet</li> </ul>	

6. Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiating while using specific techniques</li> <li>Creating a positive image of the firm, promoting an ethical image of the firm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building relationships of trust with clients and partners.</li> <li>Developing commercial strategies and means whereby to attract new clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deploying sales arguments with a view to persuading clients to buy.</li> <li>Using specific techniques to encourage client loyalty.</li> </ul>
7. Innovation Management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing innovation strategies.</li> <li>Analysing the market potentials of ideas and concepts for new products, processes and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning, implementing and controlling innovation processes with project management methods.</li> <li>Selecting and applying methods for exchange of ideas and knowledge in the innovation process.</li> </ul>

It should be noted that 46% of all surveyed graduates are self-employed.

## 6. Conclusions: Steps to further develop entrepreneurship education at the university

An analysis of the results of a survey of employers and graduates showed that graduates of our university do not receive proper knowledge of the skills that would be necessary. And therefore, in our opinion, the main gap lies, firstly, in the shortcomings of the curricula, secondly, in the ineffectiveness of conducting industrial practices, and thirdly, in the weak management of the university.

And in order to fill these gaps, we propose:

1. It is necessary to open such specialties as "Entrepreneurship", "Business". According to the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Education", if necessary, universities have the right to open new specialties. First, the university submits an application for opening a new specialty, provided that this specialty is included in the classifier of specialties approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. Further, he develops a curriculum, which is also approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tatarstan, and after that the announcement of the recruitment of students is given.
2. Develop a strategic plan for conducting industrial practices in conjunction with employers. As you know, theoretical knowledge gained by students in the classroom is then reinforced by practical training. According to regulatory documents, students are sent to enterprises and institutions for

industrial practices based on their specialties (for example, management, marketing, accounting and audit, etc.). On the part of the faculty, the head of the practice is determined, who develops programs for conducting industrial practices. But, however, during production practices on the part of managers from the enterprise, they do not fulfill their functions. The main reason is that companies are not paid for this service. And therefore, we are encouraged to take into account all these gaps when developing a strategic plan.

3. It is necessary at the faculty level to monitor the quality of courses and practical training. There is a center for monitoring the quality of education at the university, but they do not conduct any monitoring. In this regard, I propose to consider the activities of this center. First, conduct a survey among students to identify problems in the educational process. Second, talk to teachers. Third, based on the identified problems, develop a plan to eliminate them.
4. For the leadership of both universities and the faculty, it is necessary to organize refresher courses in management. Why management? because making this or that decision can be decisive in the educational process. For example, to open a new specialty, you must first conduct research on the labor market, and then make a decision. A spontaneous decision ultimately leads to the fact that graduates will not be able to find a job in the labor market and their specialty is not in demand.
5. In the curriculum for optional disciplines, include such courses as: entrepreneurship, business planning, international business, e-business, international marketing, world economy, labor market, leadership, marketing research, computer programming.

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