



# First-year law students' perceptions on joining university: skills, employment, and socio-economic realities in a new higher education landscape

**Maribel Canto-Lopez**  
University of Leicester, UK

## ***Abstract***

In recent years, the landscape of higher education has changed due to factors like the massification and marketisation of the sector. This has led to growing pressures on graduate employability and attainment of requisite skills whilst at university. Obtaining law students' perspectives on these issues has become relevant due to an increasingly diverse student population. This paper explores first-year law (FYL) students' perspectives on why they joined university, their value of certain employability skills, and the wider socio-economic impacts they face at university. The study was conducted in a research-intensive university in the UK. This work analysed quantitative data from questionnaires (n=113) and qualitative data from six focus groups (n=35).

Results indicate, firstly, that law students join university to improve their career prospects. Secondly, our students' views on the importance of specific employability skills from HE and employer perspectives were found to be misaligned. Finally, the study shows the need to acknowledge voices of the growing diverse body of FYL students. This paper suggests improving communication among HE, employers, and student representatives to understand better the importance of certain skills, and to support FYL students from non-traditional backgrounds and acknowledge the barriers they face. At an institutional level, open communications with students enable them to be heard, and inclusive employability activities will help FYL students from non-traditional backgrounds. This could improve the confidence, well-being, and employability of our diverse student body, enabling them to become the employees and citizens they aspired to be when they joined university.

**Keywords:** diversity and inclusion; employability; skills; confidence.

## **Introduction**

In recent decades, higher education (HE) in the UK and internationally has undergone unprecedented changes, including the massification and marketisation of the sector (Prokou, 2008; Clarke, 2018; Donald, Baruch and Ashleigh, 2019). Since the commercialisation of HE (Giroux, 2002; Deem and Brehony, 2005), there has been heightened pressure on graduate employability (Frankham, 2017; Jackson and Cook, 2024) and with it more involvement from employers and government in HE. There is thus an expectation for HE to deliver graduates with more than just knowledge, but with a range of transferable skills that will make them more easily employable (Tomlinson, 2012; Healy, 2023). Hence, relatively new HE common sector indicators (e.g., the Office for Students (OfS), the Graduate Outcome Survey, and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)), reinforce the idea of student employability as a measure of success for universities (Tymon, 2013; Frankham, 2017; Clark, 2018; Bradley and Quigley, 2023). This pressure on employability is also noticeable in the arts and humanities (Comunian et al., 2023), as well as in individual disciplines such as Law, which has a clear vocational strand (Turner, Bone and Ashton, 2018; Morrison and Guth, 2021; Alexander, 2023). Regarding massification, the increase in the number of students in the UK (Boliver, 2011; Bradley and Quigley, 2023) has given way to a diversified student body from non-traditional ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds (Trow, 2005). Law graduates in the UK seem to be aware of potential employability challenges based on their non-traditional background, particularly in the competitive legal profession market (Guth and Dutton, 2018; Chatterjee, 2023).

In this changing HE landscape, where the themes of employability and widening participation are gaining importance, it is timely to determine FYL students' perspectives on those themes. This paper aims to find out why FYL students chose to pursue HE, their views on the importance of some pre-determined employability skills they would acquire at university, and finally, their perceptions on employability barriers based on non-traditional background. The answers to these research questions were drawn from 113 FYL student questionnaires and six focus groups (n=35) in a research-intensive UK law school. Previous studies have mainly focussed on a quantitative analytical approach to understand students' reasons for attending university (Balloo, Pauli and Worrell, 2017), students' perception of 'developing notions of employability in HE' (Brooman and Stirk, 2020), and

students' perceptions of employability and the importance of skills (Donald, Baruch and Ashleigh, 2019). Our work aims to address the gaps in these studies by exploring these themes using a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, to gain qualitative insight into these themes from the students' perspectives. This study firstly discusses the results from the pre-determined questions in the quantitative research on the reasons why FYL students joined university, how they valued some employability skills they can develop at university, and how they believed HE and employers would rate those same skills. Secondly, this study reflects on the qualitative findings from the focus groups. These findings consider whether FYL students have felt at a disadvantage on their current university journey and also whether it could have an impact on their future prospects and employment, compared with their peers, based on their socio-economic circumstances and cultural background. Finally, this work concludes by making suggestions in relation to the fact that more communication is needed amongst HE institutions, employers, and student representatives to iron out the misalignment between what law students think about the value of skills, and the real expectations from HE institutions and employers. In addition, it is recommended that HE law institutions and law teachers could reassure students from non-traditional backgrounds that they are valued by HE and employers, for both their skills and their unique socio-economic and cultural background. Further, more inclusive employability activities need to be introduced. It is hoped that these suggestions and recommendations may improve law students' self-confidence and enhance their employability and well-being, making their experiences at university and future prospects more satisfactory.

## ***Methodology***

This work adopted a mixed-method approach via a questionnaire (Appendix 1) and focus groups. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected from FYL students studying a law core subject (Tort law), during the 2019/2020 academic year. The project was briefly explained during a first semester lecture. Students were informed that participation in this study was optional and anonymous, and this was reiterated on the consent forms which had to be completed prior to completing the questionnaire and before participating in the focus groups. Additionally, all focus group participants were required to sign individual agreements to confirm that they were aware of their rights as participants in the project before the discussions started. Ethical approval was sought for the research activities and

cleared by the University institutional Ethics Committee with application reference: 22509-micl1-ss/ll:law.

The data were gathered across two different semesters. During the first semester, a quantitative questionnaire was distributed in the last week of October 2019 by some of the tutors on Tort law. The tutors handed out paper questionnaires and consent forms at the beginning of their tutorials and collected them at the end. Usually, this type of questionnaire generates higher response rates compared with online ones (Nulty, 2008). The sample size obtained amounted to 26% of FYL students in that year (n=113). Of the 113 FYL students participating in the quantitative research, 54% (n=61) were British and 46% (n=52) were international students; 64% (n=72) were female and 36% (n=41) were male.

The quantitative part of the study explored two main pre-determined research questions (see Appendix 1).

Why do our FYL students join university? The reasons to select from were:

- To benefit their future careers
- To benefit society
- Established family tradition
- Something that should be done.

What pre-determined employability skills they thought were more important for them to develop during their time at university, and which ones they thought the employer and HE value more. (The skills were divided into three groups:

- Knowledge and expertise
- Imagination and critical thinking
- Empathy, and social and cultural knowledge).

The skills in the questionnaire were divided into three groups, identified through literature review and work experience of the author: (1) Knowledge and Expertise, a traditional idea of learning the content of the course, and practical skills more related to an economic contribution to society (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011); (2) Imagination and Critical thinking, as skills which go further than their subject learning, and

for many the most important skills graduates should acquire (Papastephanou and Angeli, 2007; Guth, 2020); and (3) Empathy, and Social and Cultural knowledge, which are more related to cultivating humanity (Evans et al., 2021; Dauber and Spencer-Oatey, 2023). During the second semester, a post on Blackboard (an online teaching and learning portal) invited FYL students to participate in focus groups (these took place during the last week of January and the first week of February 2020). This took place three months after the quantitative data collection in order to give participants time to reflect and consider the questions given to them previously in the questionnaire, known as a 'cooling period' (Bourner, Hughes and Bourner, 2001). The purpose of organising the focus groups was to get a deeper level of understanding of FYL students' perception on the issues explored in this work, because often students will discuss issues not considered in the questionnaire (Denscombe, 2021). The focus groups were organised in the author's office, a familiar place for many of the participants who had attended tutorials and office hours in that space. Arguably, it is usual practice for researchers to moderate their focus groups (Denscombe, 2021), although it should be acknowledged that this could have influenced the way FYL students responded in the focus groups. Interviews were carried out with 35 FYL students in six focus groups (see Table 1). The focus group participants consisted of 37% (n=13) male and 63% (n=22) female students; and 29% (n=10) international and 71% (n=25) British students. For the purposes of this study, British students are permanent residents in the UK (born abroad or in the UK), while international students include those with visas granting permission to complete their qualifications in the UK.

**Table 1. Focus group data.**

Focus group	Student number	Duration (minutes)	Nationality	Gender
1	S1	50	International	Female
	S2	50	International	Male
	S3	50	International	Female
	S4	50	International	Male
	S5	50	International	Male
2	S6	50	British	Female
	S7	50	British	Female
	S8	50	British	Female
	S9	50	British	Male
	S10	50	British	Male
	S11	50	British	Female
3	S12	45	British	Female

	S13	45	British	Male
	S14	45	British	Male
	S15	45	International	Female
	S16	45	International	Male
<b>4</b>	S17	30	British	Female
	S18	30	British	Female
	S19	30	British	Female
<b>5</b>	S20	50	British	Female
	S21	50	British	Male
	S22	50	British	Male
	S23	50	British	Female
	S24	50	British	Female
	S25	50	International	Female
	S26	50	International	Female
	S27	50	International	Female
<b>6</b>	S28	50	British	Male
	S29	50	British	Female
	S30	50	British	Female
	S31	50	British	Female
	S32	50	British	Male
	S33	50	British	Female
	S34	50	British	Male
	S35	50	British	Female

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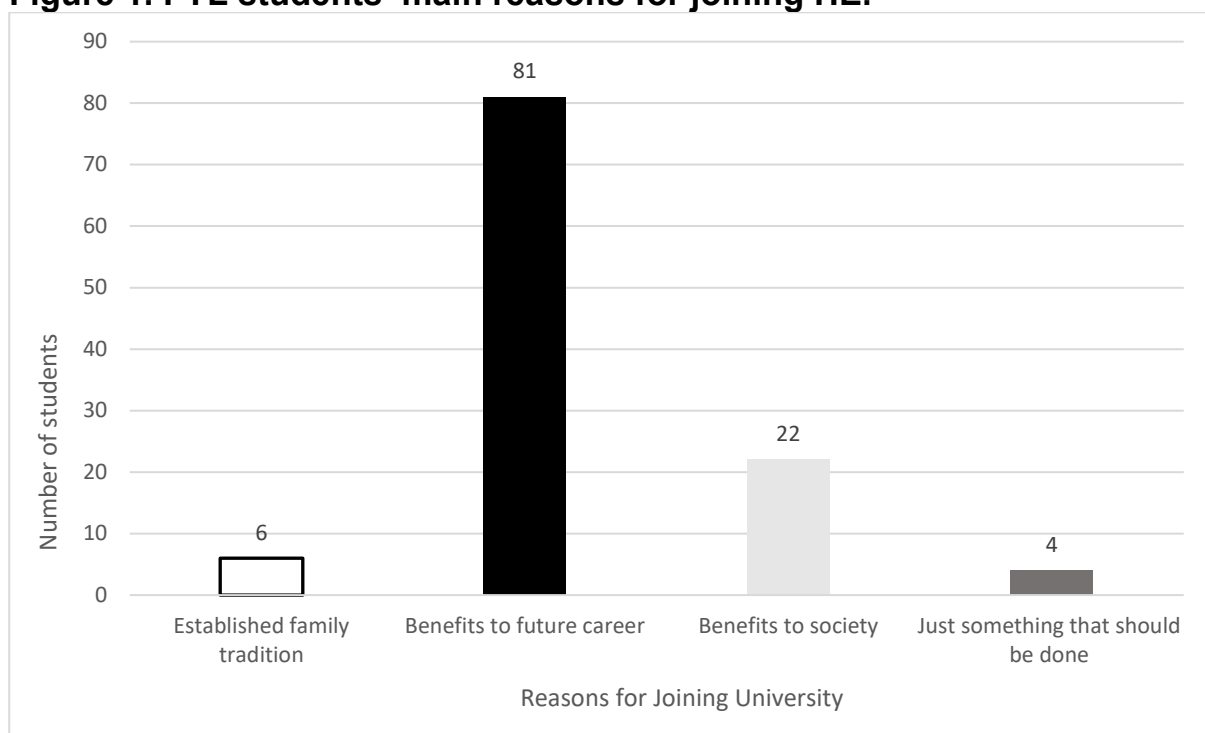
The FYL students who took part in the focus group study were members of the same tutorial group and were known to each other, which helped to facilitate peer group conversations (Morgan, 1988). The author ensured that all the students' participating in this exercise felt comfortable and informed, before giving out the consent forms (Sim and Waterfield, 2019). It was important to maintain a relaxed atmosphere in these sessions so all FYL students could voice their views and no dominant opinions took over the discussion. This approach was taken even in the smallest focus group (three participants) (Denscome, 2021). The sessions were recorded and the FYL students were reminded that the recordings of the conversations could be paused at any moment, even after they had given permission to be recorded. The transcripts of the recordings were analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The process of analysis entailed the author transcribing the interviews by hand, which helped with recall and familiarisation of the data. Transcripts were examined, and common responses were identified and colour coded based on the research questions and other emerging themes related to the socio-economic and cultural background of the FYL students. Following this, connections were

made and it was possible to identify three overarching themes (see discussion sections of this paper): (1) university as a medium for a better future despite massification, (2) skills for the future, the discrepancies between FYL students' perceptions and HE and employers' aspirations, and (3) the elephant in the classroom, socio-economic and cultural barriers for FYL students from a non-traditional background.

## **Results from the quantitative data**

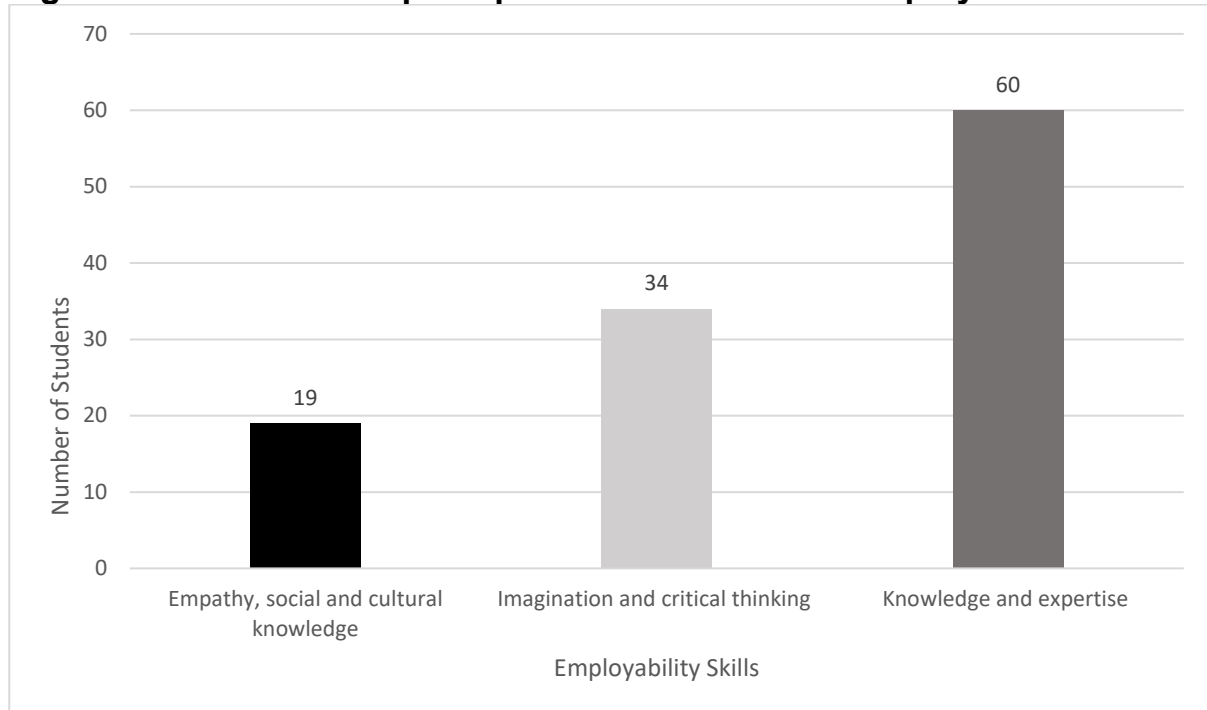
The initial findings from the quantitative data are represented in the graphs below and briefly described in this section. The questions were pre-determined and no space was given to students to expand on their reasons to join university or to develop their views regarding the importance of employability skills.

**Figure 1. FYL students' main reasons for joining HE.**



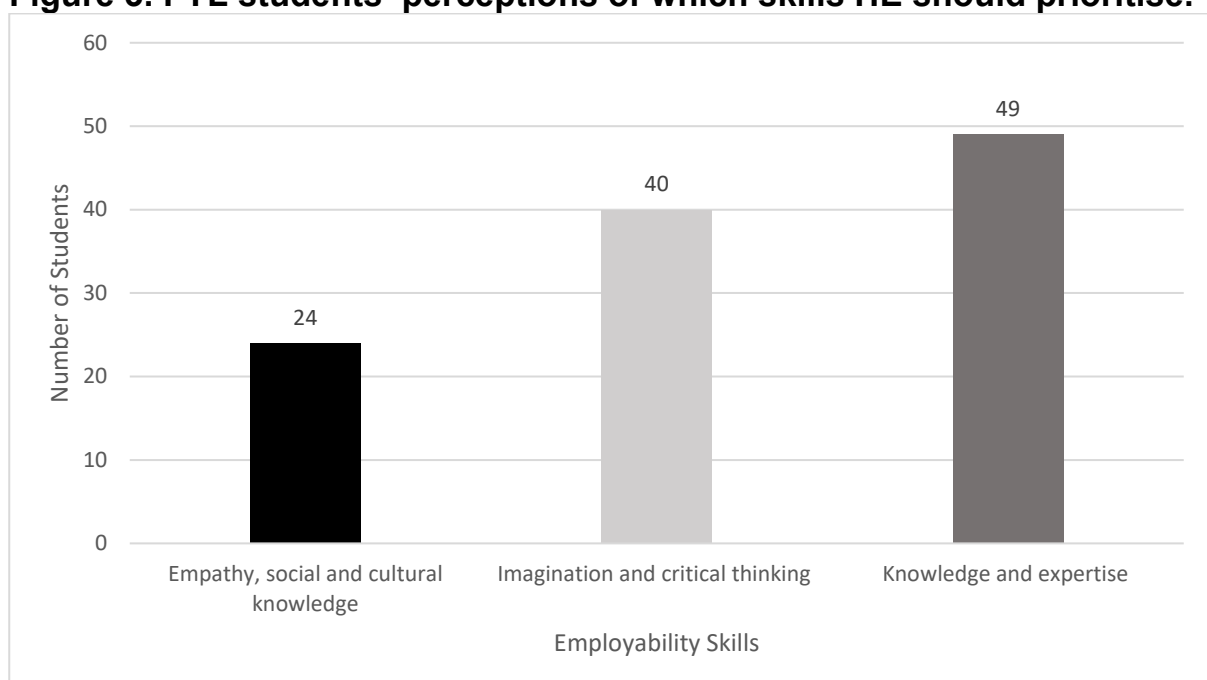
A total of 71% (n=81) of students joined university to enhance their future career, 19% (n=22) wanted to benefit society, 5% (n=6) followed the idea that joining HE is a family tradition, as other family members went to university, and 3% (n=4) of FYL students did so because it was something that should be done, more out of habit or obligation than with a genuine motivation or interest to join university.

**Figure 2. FYL students' perceptions of which skills employers value most.**



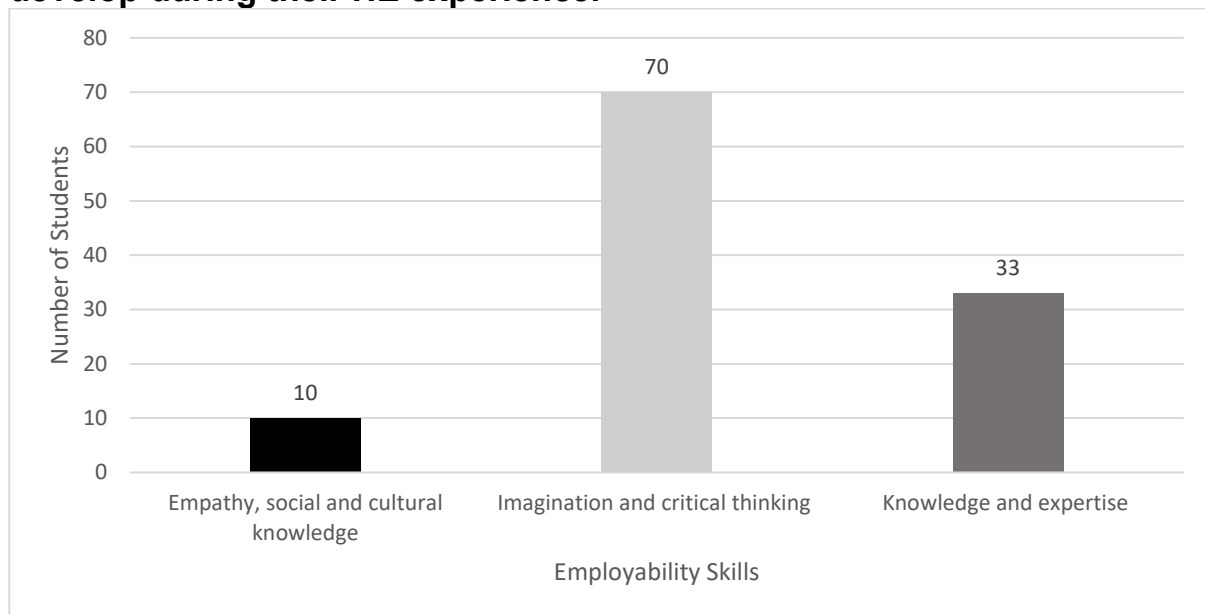
A total of 53% (n=60) of students thought that knowledge and expertise would be the most valued skills, 30% (n=34) of students thought imagination and critical thinking would be the most valued skills, and 17% (n=19) of students thought empathy, and social and cultural knowledge would be the most valued.

**Figure 3. FYL students' perceptions of which skills HE should prioritise.**



A total of 43% (n=49) of students indicated they thought HE would prioritise knowledge and expertise as skills, 35% (n=40) of students thought imagination and critical thinking would be prioritised, and 21% (n=24) of students believed empathy, and social and cultural knowledge would be prioritised.

**Figure 4. FYL students' perceptions of which skills are most important to develop during their HE experience.**



A total of 62% (n=70) of students believed the most important skills to develop in HE were imagination and critical thinking, 29% (n=33) of students believed knowledge and expertise were the most important skills, and 9% (n=10) of students believed empathy, and social and cultural knowledge were the most valued skills.

Across the three key questions, FYL students, on average, appear to view empathy, and social and cultural knowledge as the least important skills. Knowledge and expertise are consistently perceived to be the most important skills for employability and HE in general. Surprisingly, however, the majority of FYL students view imagination and critical thinking as the most important skills to develop during their HE experience.

## ***Discussing the results with the help of the qualitative results: learning from the FYL student voices***

The interviews conducted in this study were designed to investigate, at a deeper level, the data gathered from the questionnaire and to learn about any other information our FYL law students were willing to add (Denscombe, 2021). The focus group conversations started with the main questions from this study, the FYL students' reasons for joining university and their perception on the importance of the skills presented to them in the questionnaire. Remarkably, FYL students from non-traditional backgrounds voiced at the outset the barriers and disadvantages they faced whilst at university, compared with other peers (Dickinson, 2023; Sherwood and Johnson, 2024).

Honestly, when we talk about the need for critical thinking, empathy, cultural knowledge. I think I have a night shift today; I am always tired and I need to pass my exams. I wish I could enjoy University and think about all these skills, and participate in the extra curriculum and employability stuff the university offers, but this sound to me as things for those students that don't need to work and have the luxury of mum and dad's bank. (S 21)

Regrettably, some FYL students discussed poor well-being in conversations about employability and their futures:

Sometimes I feel it is too much. People will say there is no jobs out there, and I think about my debts and about my family sacrifices and about what will happened and I can't breathe. (S 3)

This paper will discuss FYL students' perceptions on disadvantages they face due to their non-traditional background in Section Three below.

### **University as a medium for a better future despite massification**

It was no surprise that FYL students chose 'improving career perspectives' as the main reason to attend university (Baloo, Pauli and Worrell, 2017). Some FYL students talked about self-improvement, but the leading motive was clearly their hope for a better employment future.

I am sacrificing so much, crazy students' debts, studying hard all the time and missing out on things with my mates back home, but hopefully I will forget about all this when I get my well-paid job and my quality future. (S 9)

Generally, it has been established that attending university has given students opportunities for 'rewarding careers' (Christie et al., 2018, p.1947). However, graduates from non-traditional backgrounds tend to be in the lower end of the graduate labour market years after leaving university (Christie et al., 2018; Clarke, 2018). This differential outcome from non-traditional and less privileged graduates is widely recognised in the case of law students (Ashley and Empson, 2013; Guth and Dutton, 2018; Alexander, 2023; SRA, 2023; Balan, 2024). In the interviews, FYL students voiced concerns about massification in HE and the fact that this would diminish their chances of finding employment.

Now everyone can do a degree, in the old times only really clever people could study. That is why we will struggle to find a job, no matter how many skills we get. There are too many of us. (S 10)

This feeling of hopelessness is aggravated, as we will see in the sections below, if the law student comes from a non-traditional background.

### **Skills for the future, the discrepancies between FYL students' perception and HE and employers' aspirations**

According to our quantitative data, FYL students thought that HE and employers would rank knowledge and expertise as the highest skills. This sentiment was reinforced via FYL students' testimony.

Let's be honest, everything about skills and employability in uni is about your grades and networking, and the employer will want the job done, who cares about being critical or helping society. (S 28)

In reality, employers value critical thinkers and graduates with imagination (Frankham, 2017; Succi and Canovi, 2020). Moreover, critical thinking seems to be the 'foundation of graduate identity' in HE (Clarke, 2018, p.1931). In the words of Papastephanou and Angeli, 'Learners with a critical mind will no longer be passive vessels of knowledge' (2007, p.604). Fortunately, FYL students considered critical thinking to be the most important skill to acquire while at university.

I think critical thinking is the most exciting thing at university, no-one can take that away from me now. I will probably forget all about Constitutional Law the minute I study another subject. (S 15)

However, many FYL students incorrectly perceived the value HE and employers give to critical thinking and imagination.

I thought after A levels, at University I will be free to think and imagine a better world. They will not tell me what to do as much as before, here in uni. I was wrong, you need these skills and this knowledge, and the exam is like this and employers like this and that. (S 6)

There was also an erroneous perception by FYL students on the value HE and employers attach to 'empathy and cultural knowledge' (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011; Evans et al., 2021). The FYL law students appear to be unaware of this fact based on some of their comments.

Empathy and cultural knowledge are not skills, who cares? Employers want you to work hard and know your stuff and I want to pay back my student loan. (S 28)

This lack of awareness is detrimental for FYL students. This is more poignant if we accept that students from non-traditional backgrounds show more empathy, are more able to initiate interdependent social relationships, and are more aware of the feelings others express (Manstead, 2018).

Your background is key, my parents were immigrants, I want to help people like me, I think we need more empathy and cultural knowledge. But the people that get the powerful jobs that really can help people like me, do not ever look like me or have my background. (S 17)

Employers value students from non-traditional backgrounds for their ability to engage with a wide variety of customers and clients due to their cultural, religious, or linguistic knowledge (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011; Alexander, 2023; Balan, 2024).

My neighbours always bring me their council letters; they do not understand them and feel scared. I want to help people like this in my community. People at the council do not understand them, and it is not just a language barrier, is cultural. (S 18)

This lack of awareness about the value of employability skills, such as 'empathy and cultural knowledge', stresses the need for more collaboration between HE, employers, and

student representatives, including new bodies like the OfS. Increased collaboration will go some way to helping new law graduates make more informed decisions regarding employability and feel more confident about their background being a positive attribute to their skill set (Jackson, 2016; Donald, Baruch and Ashleigh, 2019; Moxey and Simpkin, 2021).

### **The elephant in the classroom: socio-economic and cultural barriers for students from non-traditional backgrounds**

FYL students' perception of their employability was not only based on the value of their degree and the skills acquired at university, but were strongly linked to their background.

I am sure skills are important, I am clever and believe critical thinking is the most important thing for a degree. I can pick any professional skill very quickly. But people will know where I come from the minute, they look at me. It is sad, but it is what it is. (S 25)

Many universities are focusing on promoting networking activities and the use of alumni to help with employability (Clarke, 2018; Succi and Canovi, 2020). However, listening to FYL students' experiences and opinions, their engagement with those activities was heavily dependent on their socio-economic circumstances and cultural background. As expected, FYL students from a more traditional background appear to find it easier to participate in university employability activities (Cartwright, 2020).

The employment fairs and extra curriculum activities are open to all, if other students don't go to it, is not my fault. (S 8)

According to Culliney (2020, p.125) the major driver of 'social class destination' is a student's social background. In the law context, it has been established that access to legal professional jobs is harder for 'less privileged people' (Ashely and Empson, 2013, p.220), hence, law institutions and teachers should re-think employability activities in their curriculum. These activities need to acknowledge and accommodate the needs of our non-traditional and diverse law student body, if we want their equal participation (Balan, 2024). It is recommended that employability activities in law schools should be designed in a more inclusive manner (Alexander, 2023). Similarly, employers can help by informing

future law graduates that they are open to students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and value their uniqueness (Alexander, 2023).

Sadly, FYL students from non-traditional backgrounds voiced their fears of lacking social capital, family contacts, money, and work experience, which many of their peers from middle-class families had (Wheeler, 2013; Childs, Firth and de Rijke, 2014; Francis, 2015; Loveday, 2015). Also, students from non-traditional backgrounds, including those who are the first generation in their family to attend university, and who are surpassing social and familial expectations, are also potentially facing 'tensions' due to high expectations from their family or social network (Francis, 2015, p.199). FYL students may struggle because they adopt new 'identities as university students' that can conflict with family ties and even with friends who are not at university (Manstead, 2018, p.280), as in the example below.

My dad does not understand, he thinks a degree is like buying a Mercedes, I pay so much in fees that I should have a good future and earn lots of money. It is very stressful; he never went to university. I feel like I never will be a Mercedes, I am a little car and no tool can change that. (S 33)

This pressure can add to law students' disengagement at university and to their uncertainty about their future, which can affect their self-confidence and well-being. In turn, they may suffer more stress, have to work, be saddled with greater debt, and experience less familial guidance and opportunities than their more privileged peers (Ibrahim, Kelly and Glazebrook, 2013; Guth and Dutton, 2018; Morrison and Guth, 2021). The interviews revealed how some FYL students struggled even with equal access to the professional clothing expected in the legal profession (Chatterjee, 2023).

I went to the interview for the summer scheme, but I was embarrassed about my accent and my clothes. It was not jeans, but really cheap supermarket trousers and blouse. Others went to the interview with designer clothes and looked really confident and had beautiful haircuts and make up. (S 3)

Fortunately, some FYL students from non-traditional backgrounds described a more positive experience, and felt that the values arising from their unique background gave them motivation and a direction for their future (Papastephanou and Angeli, 2007).

You should see my grandma; how proud she is because I am in uni. She lives with us at home. She taught me Hindi. I am proud of my background and I want to continue to make my grandma proud by helping others. (S 17)

I am happy I speak other languages apart from English and I also really know how to listen to people not born in the UK. Cultural knowledge is my best skill and I really enjoy helping in my community. I hope I will use my skills in my future job. (S 18)

This paper provides some qualitative insight into the research questions, from the FYL students' perspective. Many FYL students understand that skills acquired at university are not enough to dismantle barriers to becoming the students, employees, and citizens they want to be. As university teachers, we do not have control over inequalities in society, but we can help our students to navigate difficult futures. We need to acknowledge that for some, the journey is more difficult than for others (Tomlinson, 2012; Sherwood and Johnson, 2024), while finding ways to communicate to students that their unique and non-traditional background and socio-economic struggles can equip them with skills highly valued by HE, employers, and society in general (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011; Holmes, 2013). We can also embark on designing more inclusive employability activities, and help inspire confidence in FYL students who may have felt at a disadvantage from the moment they joined university (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011; Brooman and Stirk 2020; Alexander, 2023). This can enhance their employability prospects (Alexander, 2023) and improve their well-being (Veld, Semeijn and Vuuren, 2015).

## ***Limitations***

This paper has several limitations. First, the quantitative questionnaires could have included open-ended questions, giving our FYL students the option to add their own reasons for joining university and their own perceived employability skills. This was a missed opportunity to gain additional feedback and limited students to pre-selected choices. Further, similar studies should include 'other' as an option in the quantitative questionnaires.

Additionally, our analysis of skills and the notion of employability was based primarily on traditional literature (Clarke, 2018). Consequently, we did not take into account the increasingly diverse student body when designing the project's questions. After gaining a qualitative insight into student experience, it has become evident that the massification and diversification of HE has not necessarily led to equal or meaningful participation for all students in university life (Guth and Dutton, 2018, p.426). Hence, it has lowered the impact

of our quantitative results. Also, the sample of this study is small; future studies could expand the sample base used here.

Another possible limitation of this work is that the data were collected pre-COVID19. It must be noted that there have been many changes in areas of diversity and inclusivity with HE in recent years. A replication of this study may signal whether these changes are reflected in the perceptions of non-traditional students who have started HE more recently. Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable qualitative insights into the lived experiences of non-traditional FYL students in HE and thus helped fill an important gap in the emerging literature.

## ***Conclusion***

In an ever-changing HE landscape with increasing pressure on ensuring graduate employability and widening participation, this work reflected on FYL students' perceptions on why they chose to study at university, which pre-determined skills they thought would be more valuable for their future careers, and how their socio-economic and cultural background would affect their future. The FYL students' answers regarding the value of employability skills were misinformed and it was clear that those from non-traditional backgrounds generally lacked confidence. These findings have key implications for HE and employers, and most importantly the employability and well-being of FYL students. These students should have their unique skills acknowledged and appreciated, which will help to build their confidence to find employment. This may mitigate the FYL students' feelings of disadvantage compared with their peers from a traditional background, and encourage them to reach equal participation in university life and in their future careers.

To amplify the voices of FYL students, this work suggests improving and enhancing communication among HE, employers, and student representatives to better support FYL students who feel disadvantaged throughout their HE experience. Non-traditional FYL students need to be made aware that their unique skills, shaped by their non-traditional backgrounds, are valued by both HE and employers. At a more practical level, institutions and law teachers can create more inclusive employability activities. These may help improve the confidence and overall well-being of our diverse FYL student body, so that they become the employees and citizens they aspired to be when they joined university.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Students' skills, employability and Higher Education.**

**THIS IS AN ANONYMOUS AND VOLUNTARY QUESTIONNAIRE (please tick)**

#### **0-Statistic data**

Male

Female

British (permanent resident in UK)

International

#### **1- Please tick the statement below that you MOST identify with:**

- To me, Higher Education is an established family tradition in that all my family members go to university.
- To me, Higher Education is a way to develop and enhance my knowledge and expertise for future career benefit.
- To me, Higher Education is a way to develop and enhance my knowledge and expertise to benefit society.
- To me, Higher Education is just the thing that you should do.

#### **2- Which of these skills do you think employers value the most? (Tick only one)**

- a. Empathy, social and cultural knowledge
- b. Imagination and critical thinking
- c. Knowledge and expertise

#### **3- Which of these skills are most important for you to develop during your HE experience? (Tick only one)**

- a. Imagination and critical thinking
- b. Empathy, social and cultural knowledge
- c. Knowledge and expertise

#### **4- Which of these skills do you think Higher Education should prioritise? (Tick only one)**

- a. Knowledge and expertise
- b. Imagination and critical thinking
- c. Empathy, social and cultural knowledge

## ***Author details***

Maribel Canto-Lopez is an Associate Professor and Teaching Excellence Lead at the University of Leicester Law School. Her research interests include students' skills development, inclusive and diverse assessments strategies, TEF and teachers' voices, and digital poverty in higher education.

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