

Unlocking Researchers' Potential: Transferable Skills Gained and Enhanced Through COMPASS Activities

Deliverable 6.1

Guide on best practices
and lessons learned on
transferable and
complementary skills

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Deliverable 6.1

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This brief report *Unlocking Researchers' Potential: Transferable Skills Gained Through COMPASS Activities* offers a focused examination of the question what transferable skills researchers acquired and enhanced through their participation in selected activities within the COMPASS project. In doing so, the primary emphasis is on the COM-PASS Conference: *Transferable Skills for Research & Innovation*, hosted by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki on October 4-5, 2023 – the reason for that being that that conference was specifically designed to equip researchers with and improve already existing transferable skills to unlock their potential for succeeding in their future careers.

The report consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 first tries to answer the questions what transferable skills are and why they are important for researchers, before it gives an overview of the crucial role of transferable skills in the European Union. Chapter 2 shortly discusses the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and how it is used in the European Union because the investigation into the acquisition and improvement of transferable skills by researchers through their participation in selected COMPASS activities takes recourse to this framework.

In the chapter 3, the focal point of this report, provides a succinct description of the selected activities, followed by an exploration of how these activities helped the researchers gain and enhance transferable skills. Finally, a short conclusion to close up the key points of enhancing transferable and complementary skills of researchers.

Chapter 1

What are transferable skills?

And why are they important for researchers?

Transferable skills are essential for researchers as they provide a solid foundation for success in the ever-evolving field of research. These skills, which can be applied across various disciplines and industries, play a vital role in helping researchers navigate the complexities of their work, collaborate effectively with others, and excel in different roles within and outside of academia.

One of the primary reasons why transferable skills are important for researchers is their ability to adapt to the rapidly changing landscape of research. According to a study published in the *Journal of Research Administration* in 2018, researchers who possess transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability are better equipped to respond to new challenges and opportunities in their field. This adaptability allows researchers to stay abreast of the latest developments in technology and methodologies, enabling them to produce high-quality research that is relevant and impactful. ¹

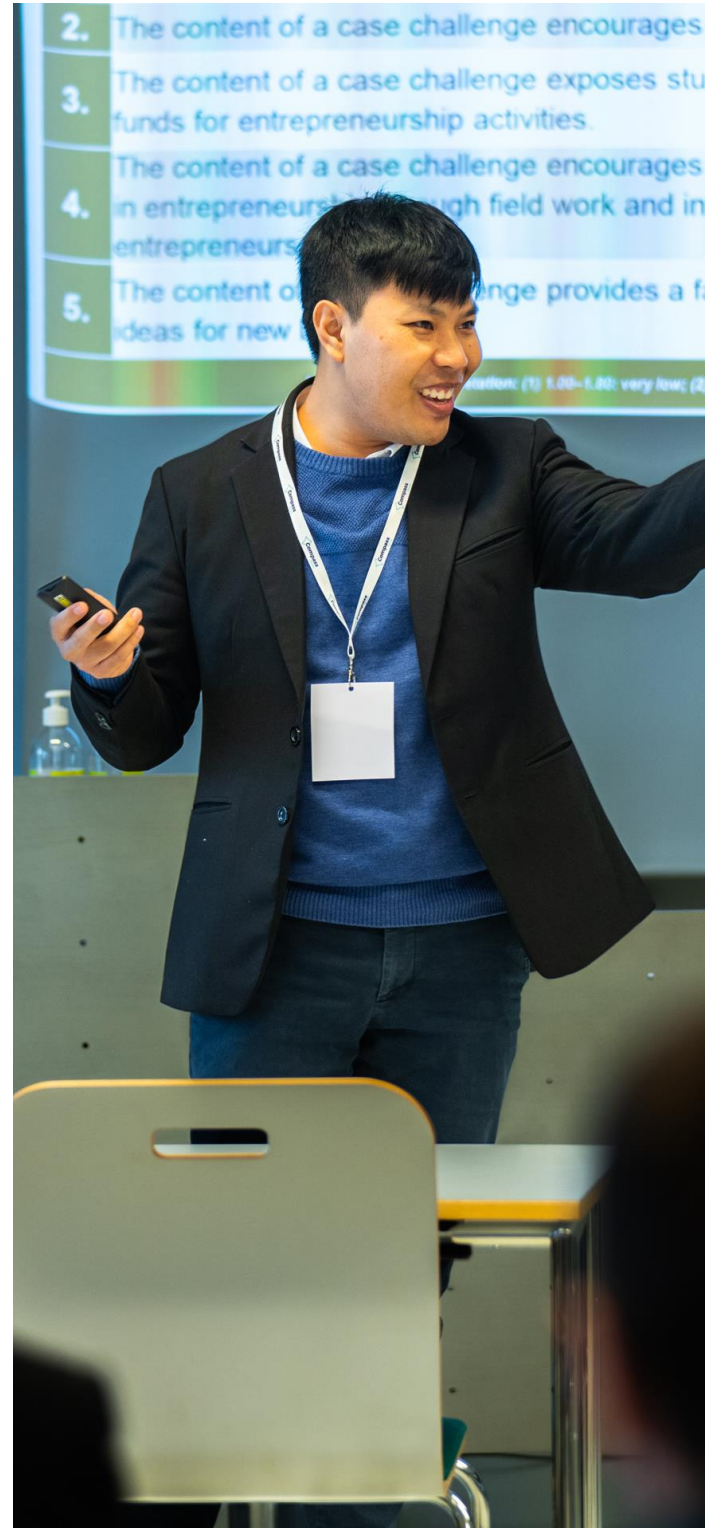
Moreover, transferable skills are essential for fostering effective collaboration among researchers from diverse backgrounds. Research projects often require teamwork and cooperation among individuals with varying expertise and perspectives. A report published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in 2019 emphasizes the importance of transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and conflict resolution in building strong relationships with colleagues and achieving successful outcomes in collaborative research endeavors. ²

¹Smith, J., Johnson, A., & Brown, K. (2018). The importance of transferable skills for researchers. *Journal of Research Administration*, 42(3), 215-230.

²National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). *Building strong relationships through transferable skills in collaborative research*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Furthermore, transferable skills are invaluable for researchers seeking to transition into careers beyond academia. While many researchers begin their careers in academic settings, some may choose to explore opportunities in industry, government, or non-profit organizations. A report by the Council of Graduate Schools (2020) highlights the significance of transferable skills such as project management, data analysis, and presentation abilities in enhancing researchers' marketability to employers outside of academia. ³

In addition to enhancing career prospects, transferable skills also contribute to personal development and overall job satisfaction for researchers. Skills such as time management, organization, and networking not only improve efficiency in research activities but also foster a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment in one's work. A study conducted by the American Psychological Association (2017) found that re-searchers who actively develop transferable skills experience greater job satisfaction and overall well-being compared to those who focus solely on technical expertise. ⁴



³ Council of Graduate Schools. (2020). Enhancing researchers' marketability through transferable skills. Re-trieved from <https://www.cgsnet.org> (February 28, 2024).

⁴ American Psychological Association. (2017). The impact of transferable skills on job satisfaction in re-searchers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 25(4), 345-360.

In summary, transferable skills are indispensable for researchers as they provide a versatile toolkit that enables them to thrive in the dynamic world of research. By honing these skills alongside their technical expertise, researchers can enhance their professional capabilities, build successful collaborations, explore diverse career opportunities, and ultimately achieve greater success in their chosen field.

Transferable skills in the EU

Transferable skills are not only important for individual researchers but also play a crucial role in the European Union (EU) as a whole. In today's globalized and interconnected world, the EU faces numerous challenges that require innovative solutions and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are essential for researchers working within the EU to address complex issues such as climate change, healthcare disparities, and economic inequality.

According to the European Research Council (2019) one of the key reasons why transferable skills are important in the EU is their ability to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration among researchers from different countries and cultural back-grounds. The EU is home to a diverse community of researchers who bring unique perspectives and expertise to the table. By possessing transferable skills that enable effective communication and teamwork, researchers can bridge cultural and linguistic barriers, foster mutual understanding, and work together towards common goals. ⁵

Moreover, transferable skills are essential for researchers in the EU to adapt to the changing landscape of research funding and policy. The EU invests significant re-sources in research and innovation through programs such as Horizon Europe, which aims to support cutting-edge research projects that address societal challenges.

⁵ European Research Council. (2019). ERC Annual Report 2018. Retrieved from <https://erc.europa.eu/document-category/annual-reports> (February 28, 2024).

Re-searchers who possess transferable skills such as project management, grant writing, and networking are better equipped to secure funding, navigate complex regulatory frameworks, and comply with ethical standards in their research activities.

Additionally, transferable skills are crucial for researchers in the EU to enhance their employability and career prospects. As the job market becomes increasingly competitive, researchers must demonstrate a diverse set of skills beyond their technical expertise to stand out to potential employers. Transferable skills such as leadership, adaptability, and resilience are highly valued by employers in both academia and industry, making researchers more versatile and marketable in today's job market.

In conclusion, transferable skills are essential for researchers in the EU to succeed in their careers, collaborate effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and address complex challenges facing society. By investing in the development of transferable skills alongside their technical expertise, researchers can contribute to advancing knowledge, driving innovation, and promoting sustainable development within the EU and beyond.



Chapter 2

When examining what transferable skills researchers gained and improved through their participation in selected COMPASS activities, the report takes a twofold approach: First, it provides a detailed description of each activity; after that, by taking re-course to the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), it explores how the activity in question helped the researchers acquire and enhance transferable skills. In order to carry out this approach, therefore, it is necessary to first say a few words about the RDF.

The Researcher Development Framework

The RDF is a tool developed by Vitae; an organization dedicated to supporting the professional development of researchers.⁶ The RDF provides a comprehensive framework for the personal, professional, and career development of researchers at all stages of their careers. It outlines the knowledge, behaviors, and attributes that researchers need to be successful in their roles and helps them identify areas for development and set goals for improvement.

Furthermore, the COMPASS project proposal explicitly referred to the RDF as a guiding tool to be incorporated in the deployment of activities focused on bolstering researchers' competencies through career advancement and the acquisition of essential transferable skills

The RDF is structured around four domains (see the figure on the following page):

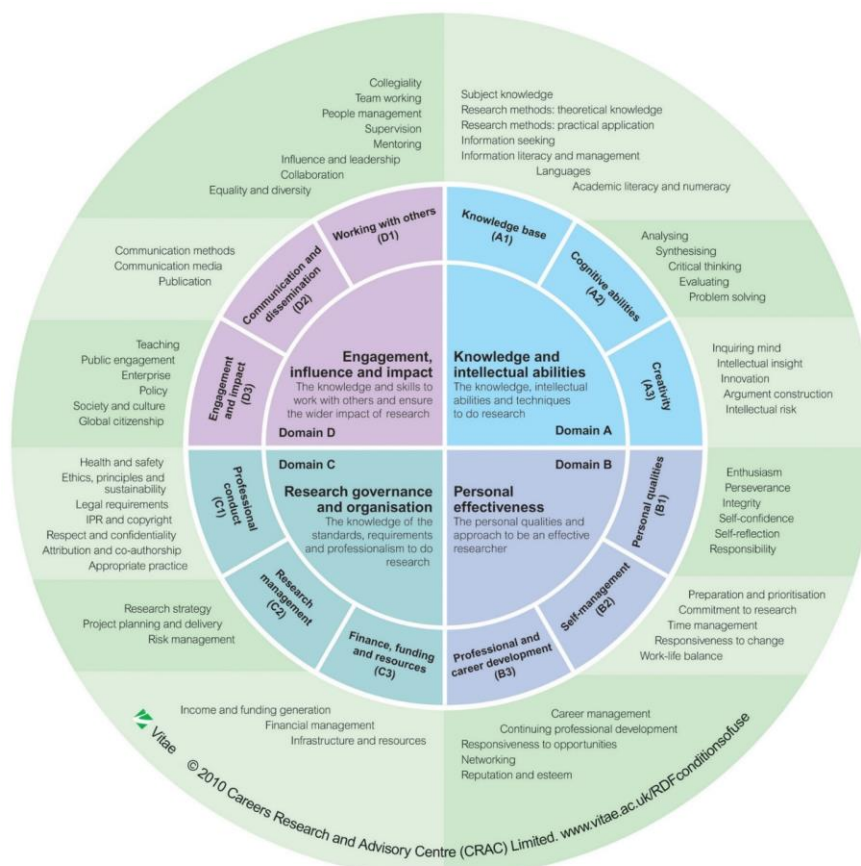
- Domain A: Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities,
- Domain B: Personal Effectiveness,
- Domain C: Research Governance and Organization, and
- Domain D: Engagement, Influence, and Impact.

⁶ <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/> (Retrieved: February 29, 2024). The full RDF is available at <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/rdf-related/researcher-development-framework-rdf-vitae.pdf/view>.

Each domain is further divided into subdomains that cover specific skills and competencies relevant to researchers. For example, under the Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities domain, subdomains include Subject Knowledge and Understanding, Cognitive Abilities, Creativity, and Critical Thinking.

The RDF is used by researchers to assess their current skills and competencies, identify areas for development, set goals for improvement, and track their progress over time. It can also be used by supervisors, mentors, and institutions to support the professional development of researchers and ensure they have the necessary skills to succeed in their roles.

In addition to helping individual researchers develop their skills and advance their careers, the RDF can also be used by institutions to inform the design of training programs, workshops, and other professional development opportunities for researchers. By aligning these activities with the competencies outlined in the RDF, institutions can ensure that they are providing relevant and effective support for their research community.



The Evolution of Researcher Development Frameworks in the European Union

In the European Union, the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) has been used for a long period as a point of reference model for supporting the professional development of researchers across member states. It covers a wide range of competencies needed for successful research activities, including academic, technical, and transferable skills. Additionally, the RDF has gained international recognition and acceptance as a robust framework for researcher development.

As a result of consulting stakeholders, the European Commission has opted to establish a framework that offers a unified language at the EU level to bolster the career progression and mobility of researchers.

In 2023, the European Commission announced that the European Competence Framework for Researchers (ResearchComp)⁷ will be part of the ERA toolbox, which creates a shared understanding of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that researchers need for a successful research career, both inside and outside academia and support comparable and interoperable research careers across countries facilitating intersectoral mobility and employability of researchers.

To conclude, the journey from the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) to the European Competence Framework for Researchers (ResearchComp) has been a significant milestone in the professional development landscape within the European Union. By recognizing the importance of a unified framework to support researchers' career progression and mobility, the European Commission has taken a proactive step towards fostering a collaborative and innovative research ecosystem.

⁷ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/jobs-research/researchcomp-european-competence-framework-researchers_en

“ With ResearchComp set to become a key component of the ERA toolbox, researchers across member states can look forward to enhanced opportunities for career advancement, intersectoral mobility, and employability. The evolution of these frameworks underscores the EU's commitment to nurturing talent, driving research excellence, and fostering cross-border collaboration in pursuit of scientific advancement and societal impact.”

European Commission

Chapter 3

This chapter 3 is the focal point of the entire report since it provides an examination of the question what transferable skills researchers acquired and improved through their participation in selected activities within the COMPASS project. As already mentioned above, it provides a detailed description of each activity that is discussed, followed by an exploration (that draws on the RDF) of how the activity in question helped the re-searchers gain and enhance transferable skills.

Given that the COMPASS Conference: Transferable Skills for Research & Innovation, hosted by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki on October 4-5, 2023, was specifically designed to equip researchers with and improve already existing transferable skills to make them succeed in their future careers, it is the heart of the chapter.⁹ The first subchapter, thus, lays the focus on the first day of the conference when the participating researchers had the chance to present their work-in-progress projects or completed research papers, either in person or online, while the second subchapter, then, concentrates on the second day of the conference on which the participants were taking part in engaging and interactive workshops. Finally, the third subchapter draws the attention to three webinars from eleven more organized as part of the COMPASS project ⁸.

⁸ The web page designed for the conference is still accessible at: <https://ulyseus.eu/de/events/compass-transferable-and-complementary-skills-conference/> (Retrieved: March 4, 2024).

COMPASS Conference day 1

The conference at a glance

The COMPASS Conference⁹ offered participants an international forum that involved peers from all Ulysseus European University¹⁰ partner universities and beyond to tackle the key research and innovation challenges faced in the EU, and which are addressed by the Ulysseus Innovation Hubs¹¹ :

- Sustainable Energy, Transport, Mobility for Smart Cities
- Ageing and Wellbeing
- Tourism, Arts and Heritage
- Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Impact
- Digitalization, Robotics and Cybersecurity Transforming the Future
- Applied AI for Business and Education
- Socio-ecological Sustainability



⁹ <https://ulyseus.eu/events/compass-transferable-and-complementary-skills-conference/>

¹⁰ <https://ulyseus.eu/de/> (Retrieved: March 4, 2024).

¹¹ <https://ulyseus.eu/de/innovation-hubs/> (Retrieved: March 4, 2024).

The two main objectives of the conference were

1. to enhance already existing transferable skills of the attendees and to make them acquire new ones, and
2. to facilitate the scientific cooperation in the fields of Ulyseus Innovation Hubs by bringing together early-stage and experienced researchers from all Ulyseus partner universities and beyond to present and share experiences or their work-in-progress projects or completed research papers.

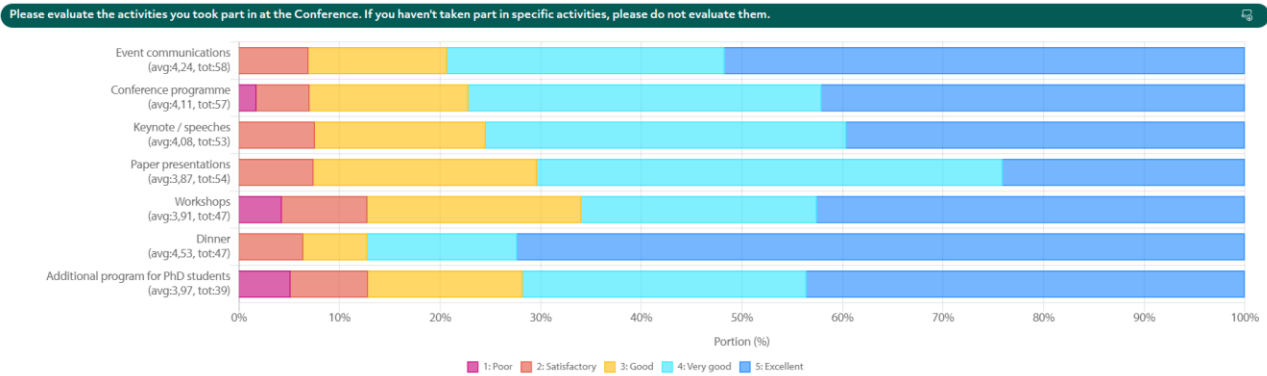
On the first day of the conference, the participants had the chance to present their work in one of six paper presentation sessions corresponding to the seven topics, and on the second day they were taking part in workshops, informative panels, and thought-provoking roundtable discussions.

Two keynote speeches were given, one on each day of the conference, by Atte Jääskeläinen, President of Sitra (Finnish Innovation Fund), and Pauli Aalto-Setälä, Member of Parliament, respectively, in which they shared their insights and thoughts about some of the main topics of the conference. Jääskeläinen's speech was entitled Research and Innovation During Times of Wicked Problems, whereas Aalto-Setälä spoke about Tools of Change.

The conference was complemented by two speeches given at the opening ceremony by Salla Huttunen, PhD, Vice President of Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, and Carmen Vargas, PhD, Vice Rector of University of Seville and Ulyseus General Coordinator, and a supporting program (including a Helsinki city tour and a joint dinner).

In total 205 attendees participated in the conference (173 on-site and 32 online). On the first day of the conference 82 research papers were presented.

At the end of the conference a feedback survey was distributed to the participants. A total of 59 attendees responded (46 of them participated on-site and 13 online). Presented below are the average ratings for specific activities before and during the conference:



Some comments submitted online by the participants included:

“The event proved to be a splendid occasion, marked by the seamless convergence of various spheres of knowledge. During this gathering, we successfully identified potential collaborators willing to lend their support to our research.”

“It has been an amazing congress, congratulations to the organizers because the quality of the activities, lectures, presentations, and participants have exceeded my expectations. The synergies that have been created among the doctoral students have led to new forms of collaboration that can boost the future of research in Europe within our institutions.”

“Thank you for the all the effort that went into the organization! The conference was a great event [...]. I liked the workshops a lot, I got very valuable learnings out of them.”

“The Compass Conference was a great experience for me and helped me to grow personally and professionally.”

“

“The Compass Conference was a great experience for me and helped me to grow personally and professionally.”

Visitor of the COMPASS Conference

Day 1: paper presentations

In order to make their work-in-progress projects or completed research papers known and receive valuable feedback, the invited early-stage and experienced researchers from the Ulysseus partner universities and other higher education institutions were given the chance to present their work at the conference. By doing so they contributed not only to helping facilitate the scientific cooperation in the fields that are in the focus of the Ulysseus European University Innovation Hub, but also improved their already existing transferable skills and gained new ones.

All researchers who wanted to give a presentation at the conference had to submit an extended abstract – whose scope was not restricted and could be conceptual, empirical, et cetera – of not less than 1500 and not more than 2000 words in English that de-scribed their work and was structured as follows:

- Background of the study and literature review
- Aim of the study including originality & novelty
- Methodology (the methods used in your research including data collection and data analysis)
- Result/findings and argumentation
- Conclusion, managerial implications, and limitations
- References

Additionally, they had to decide to which of the six Ulysseus European University Innovation Hub topics their work belongs because six paper presentation sessions corresponding to the seven topics were organized.

The deadline to submit the extended abstracts was a few months before the conference. After the deadline, the submitted abstracts were peer-reviewed by experts (with a group of at least two experts reviewing all the abstracts for one topic) and, if necessary, revised by their authors. Finally, all the authors of accepted abstracts were invited as paper presenters to the conference.

The presenters could give their presentations in person or online, but regardless of which way they chose to participate, they needed to prepare a presentation for the conference. The presentation needed to have the same structure as the extended abstract and could not be longer than 15 minutes (ten minutes for the presentation and five minutes for audience questions). Each of the six sessions was chaired by two persons (who were in some cases the same as the reviewers of the same topic) and held parallelly. The session on the topic Digitalization, robotics and cybersecurity transforming the future & Applied AI for business and education was also live streamed. The distribution of abstracts between topics was as follows:

Sustainable energy, transport, mobility for smart cities	8
Ageing and wellbeing	22
Tourism, arts and heritage	13
Sustainable entrepreneurship and impact	12
Digitalization, robotics and cybersecurity transforming the future & Applied AI for business and education	14
Socio-ecological sustainability	13

To give an idea of how the sessions unfolded, the chairpersons' description of the session Socio-ecological Sustainability is given here:

“The presentations formed an interdisciplinary polyphonic whole. The studies ranged from conceptual analysis to very specific examples of sustainable agriculture and from development of urban green areas to analysis of aesthetic experience. By investigating socio-ecological sustainability as a whole, we could see how sustainable actions reach both personal and societal levels. Personal consuming decisions were visible for example in the analysis of short useful life cycles of electronic equipment and wider societal levels in re-search on how microalgae are a good source of nutrients and bioactive compounds and thus may play an essential role in improving health and well-being and reducing hunger. A key perspective that united session’s presentations was opening the awareness on alternative future with holistic solutions and visions.”

Good examples on sustainable food production technologies both already in use and under development were introduced. The dimension of regional decision-making brought visible the importance of utilizing this scientific information. On a general level, the socio-ecological sustainability session connected individual perspective to political decision making when considering issues like sustainable packaging, life cycle of electronic devices and global issues of food productivity. Presentations on conceptual underpinnings linked sustainability to aesthetic experience of life and democratic informed decision making.”

Extended abstracts accepted for publication by the authors are published by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences ¹²

Transferable skills gained and enhanced on day 1

Based on the feedback survey, discussions with the participants, and general considerations of the organizers, scholars and management involved in the planning of the conference, the most significant transferable skills gained and enhanced on day 1 of the conference can be summarized in the following way:

- **Presentation skills:** Giving a presentation at the COMPASS Conference required a combination of technical proficiency and creative flair to deliver information in a compelling and memorable way. Effective presentations were not just about conveying data or results but also about telling a story that captivated the audience, conveyed the significance of the research, and left a lasting impression. This usually involved structuring a presentation in a logical sequence, using visual aids such as slides or posters to enhance understanding, incorporating storytelling techniques to engage emotions, and employing rhetorical devices to persuade or inspire the audience. Developing strong presentation skills through their presentations helped the participants become more engaging and impactful presenters, capable of communicating complex ideas with clarity and confidence.

These skills align predominantly with the RDF domain of Engagement, influence, and impact (D), which focuses mostly on engaging with diverse audiences and maximizing the impact of your research through effective communication

¹² COMPASS Conference Transferable Skills for Research & Innovation - eSignals julkaisut, accessible at: <https://julkaisut.haaga-helia.fi/en/compass-conference-2023-introduction/> (Retrieved: May 2, 2024).

strategies. More specifically, they link to the sub-domains D2 (Communication and dissemination) and D3 (Engagement and impact).

- **Communication skills:** Presenting at the COMPASS Conference involved a multifaceted approach to communication that went beyond simply conveying information. Effective communication in this context involved not only articulating the research findings clearly and concisely but also tailoring a message to suit the needs and interests of your audience. This involved adapting the language, tone, and level of technical detail to ensure that the presentation was accessible and engaging for a diverse audience. Additionally, effective communication in the setting of the COMPASS Conference setting involved non-verbal cues such as body language, eye contact, and vocal delivery, which often significantly impacted how the message was received. Developing strong communication skills through giving a presentation at the conference helped the presenters become more persuasive and influential communicators, capable of engaging with stakeholders, fostering collaborations, and disseminating their research effectively.

These skills are primarily linked to the same RDF sub-domains as the ones discussed in the last passage – D2 (Communication and dissemination) and D3 (Engagement and impact) –, which emphasize the importance of communicating research outcomes to different audiences in a variety of formats.

- **Time management skills:** Preparing for the COMPASS conference presentation involved juggling multiple tasks and deadlines while ensuring to have enough time to conduct research, analyze data, create visuals, rehearse the presentation, and address any last-minute changes or revisions. Effective time management in this context required careful planning, prioritization, and organization to allocate resources efficiently and meet deadlines without compromising the quality of the work. This involved breaking down complex tasks into smaller manageable steps, setting realistic goals and timelines, delegating responsibilities where necessary, and adapting flexibly to unexpected challenges or set-backs. Developing strong time management skills through giving a presentation at the COMPASS Conference helped the presenters become more productive, resilient, flexible, and adaptable in managing competing demands on their time effectively.

These skills are mostly associated with the RDF domain of Personal effectiveness (B), which emphasizes the importance of managing time efficiently and working productively to achieve research goals. More precisely, they link to the sub-domains B1 (Personal qualities) and B2 (Self-management).

- **Networking skills and skills involving resources:** Giving a presentation at the COMPASS Conference provided valuable opportunities to connect with other researchers, academics, industry professionals, policymakers, or potential collaborators who share similar interests or expertise in the researchers' fields. Engaging with attendees before or after their presentations through informal conversations or networking events helped them build relationships, establish connections, exchange ideas or resources, seek feedback or advice on their research projects, explore potential collaborations or partnerships for future projects.

These skills line up particularly with the RDF sub-domains of B3 and C3, which stress Professional and career development and Finance, funding, and resources, respectively.



COMPASS Conference day 2

Workshops

On the second day the participating researchers took part in engaging workshops that aimed to equip them with valuable tools, methodologies, and insights that extend beyond their specific research topics, in order to improve their already existing transferable skills and to give them the opportunity to gain new ones. The seven (six on-site and one online) workshops were:

- Beyond the Ivory Tower: Exploring Diverse Career Pathways for Master's and PhD Graduates (hosted by John Rowel, PhD)

As the academic landscape continues to evolve, it becomes increasingly vital for Master's and PhD students to consider the array of opportunities that lie beyond traditional research careers. This workshop aims to shed light on the exciting and often overlooked avenues available to graduates, encouraging participants to explore diverse and fulfilling career paths. By delving into the world of non-canonical professions, we will uncover the transferable skills and unique experiences that make researchers highly sought-after assets. Embrace the possibilities, broaden your horizons, and embark on a journey of self-discovery to unleash the full potential of your advanced degree!

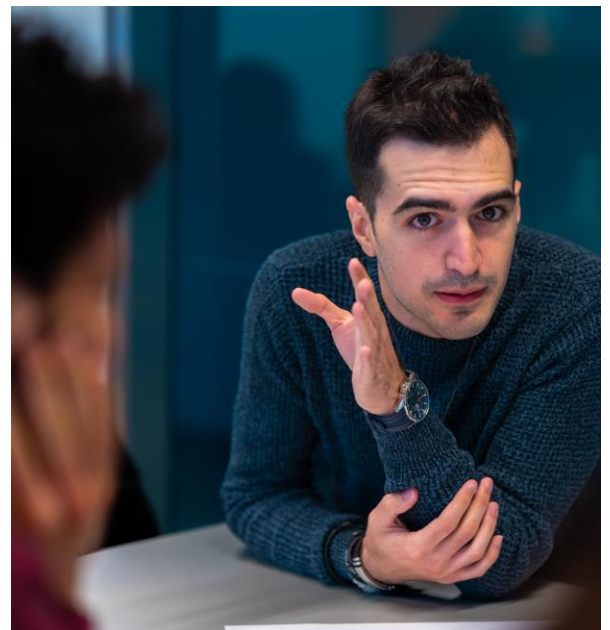


- Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Mindset for Researchers (hosted by Antti Leppilampi)

This workshop is tailored for PhD students from who are eager to explore the inter-section of research and entrepreneurship. “Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Mindset for Researchers” not only helps you grasp the essence of entrepreneurship but also guides you in finding innovative ways to infuse your research into existing businesses. Dive into the world of entrepreneurial traits, gain inspiration from successful re-searcher-entrepreneurs, and learn strategies to bridge the gap between your research and established enterprises.

- Intellectual Property Rights and Entrepreneurship (hosted by Natacha Estèves, PhD)

- This workshop will introduce the participants to Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and their importance for researchers and entrepreneurs. IPRs are some of the most valuable assets for companies, big or small. Consequently, understanding what they are and how they can be managed to turn innovation into market value and competitiveness is crucial. Whether you are an innovator yourself, support others in the innovation process or work in an innovative business, IPRs will be essential tools you will have to familiarise yourself with. This workshop aims to give an overview of the different IPRs, as well as how they can be managed to increase visibility, generate revenues and more generally promote your business growth. This webinar will also give an overview of the various services that can support you as a researcher and future entrepreneur when dealing with IPRs.



- **Owning My Academic Career – Keys to Self-Management and Self-Leadership** (host-ed by Rebecca Meier)

Self-Management and Self-Leadership seem to be vague and dazzling terms. Yet they are viewed as key competencies to academic success and as important assets to withstand various challenges and crises on the career path. In this two-hour work-shop we will touch upon certain aspects of self-management and self-leadership in order to, boost your academic confidence. You will have time to reflect on yourself, discuss with others and work on strategies to effectively own your academic career.
- **EU Project Funding – Fuel for Your Research** (hosted by Maria Radvanska)

The participants will assess the viability of their research focus in the context of international collaboration, expand their research networks and gain insights into attributes of EU funding. Based on that they will be able to redirect their research emphases, get motivated to use the Ulyssus Alliance ecosystem for amplification and consider EU funding as a catalyst of their forthcoming endeavors.
- **Boosting Equality in Research and Development** (hosted by Merja Drake, PhD)

In this two-hour workshop, you will get information about the EU requirements for equality in research and development. We will discuss, ideate, and create tools how to take equality into account at various stages of research. You will also learn what HRS4R (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers quality label) is and its importance to your university in the viewpoint of equality.
- **EU Project Funding – Fuel for Your Research** (hosted ONLINE by Marí Soriano, PhD)

This workshop will show the participants the importance of developing transferrable skills, such as a global mindset, innovation, and proactivity to succeed in their next career steps. These skills are highly valuable both inside and outside academia. The best organizations around the world are looking for talented individuals who, in addition of holding a PhD, have a skillset that make them the 360° professionals they are longing for their companies.

Transferable skills gained and enhanced on day 2

Based on the same sources as the ones mentioned for day 1, the most noteworthy transferable skills gained and improved on day 2 of the conference (in addition to the knowledge acquired about transferable skills in the workshops that might have, in turn, led to acquisition of those transferable skills) are the following:

- **Problem-solving skills:** The workshops often involved interactive activities or case studies that challenged participants to analyze complex problems, think critically, and develop innovative solutions. By engaging in these problem-solving exercises, the participants enhanced their ability to identify issues, explore different perspectives, and apply creative thinking to address research challenges effectively.

These skills align predominantly with the RDF domain of Knowledge and intellectual abilities (A), specifically to the sub-domains A2 (Cognitive abilities) and A3 (Creativity).

- **Collaboration skills:** The Workshops provided ample opportunities for the participants to collaborate with peers from diverse backgrounds, disciplines, or institutions on group projects or tasks. Collaborating in a workshop setting re-quired effective communication, teamwork, and mutual respect to leverage collective expertise and achieve common objectives.



Participating in the work-shops helped build relationships, foster interdisciplinary collaborations, and enhance the ability to work effectively in diverse teams.

These skills are primarily linked to the RDF sub-domain D1 (Working with others), which focuses, e.g., on team working and collaboration with others.

- **Critical thinking skills:** Engaging in the COMPASS Conference workshops exposed the participants to new ideas, theories, or methodologies that challenge them to think critically about their assumptions, biases, or preconceptions. Through critical discussions, debates, or problem-solving exercises, the participants developed analytical thinking skills, evaluated evidence objectively, and made informed decisions based on reasoned arguments. They strengthened their abilities to assess information critically and to solve complex problems systematically.

These skills are mostly associated with the RDF sub-domains A2 (Cognitive abilities) and A3 (Creativity).

- **Communication skills:** Effective communication was essential for sharing ideas, presenting findings, asking questions, seeking feedback, and engaging in discussions during the conference workshops. Communicating clearly and persuasively in the workshop setting involved active listening, articulating thoughts coherently, responding thoughtfully to others' contributions, and adapting communication styles to suit different audiences or contexts.

These skills are above all linked to the same RDF sub-domains as the ones discussed in the passage Communication skills in the sub-chapter Transferable skills gained and enhanced on day 1 above, namely D2 (Communication and dissemination) and D3 (Engagement and impact).

- **Adaptability skills:** The workshops often introduced the participants to new concepts, methodologies, technologies, tools, approaches, and perspectives that may have required them to adapt quickly to unfamiliar situations or challenges.

Being adaptable in a workshop setting involved being open-minded, flexible, resilient, resourceful, willing to learn from others' experiences while embracing change positively as an opportunity for growth and development. Developing strong adaptability skills through workshop participation helped researchers navigate uncertainty successfully, respond proactively to changing circumstances and innovate creatively under pressure while remaining focused on achieving desired outcomes efficiently.

These skills line up particularly with the RDF sub-domain B1 (Personal qualities).

- **Leadership skills:** In some workshops, participants had the opportunity to take on leadership roles such as facilitating group discussions, guiding activities, or coordinating project tasks. Developing leadership skills through workshop participation involved inspiring others, fostering collaboration among team members, delegating responsibilities effectively and making decisions under pressure while maintaining a positive team dynamic throughout the process.

These skills align predominantly with the RDF domain of Engagement, influence, and impact (D).



COMPASS Webinars

This final subchapter draws the attention to three of eleven more webinars that were organized as part of the COMPASS project:

“Human-Centric AI and its applications held by the Artificial Innovation Hub, based at Haaga-Helia UAS , *How to transfer interdisciplinary competences in heritage studies* organized by the

Arts, Tourism and Heritage Innovation Hub, based at the University of Genoa, and *Industrial Sustainability: Challenges, Perspectives, Actions* organized by the Sustainable Entrepreneurship & Impact Innovation Hub, based at MCI | The Entrepreneurial School® in Innsbruck.



These webinars were part of COMPASS Insights, a series of webinars on key regional and local challenges. Organized by the Ulysseus Innovation Hubs, this series brought together experts from academia, industry, and NGOs, among other organizations to discuss key regional and local challenges.

“Human-Centric AI and its applications”

The webinar at a glance ¹³

This webinar lasted 90-minute-long featured four keynotes and over 62-thousand-views on YouTube channel. It occurred on April 21, 2022. The organizers outlined the content as follows:

“Human-Centric AI emphasizes cognitive, emotional and social aspects of human interaction when using AI applications. Existing AI applications are able to detect human emotions derived from images or videos. Although machines, such as AI applications are often considered as unsocial devices, they are, however, able to provide increased social signals and socially

¹³ <https://ulyssseus.eu/events/webinar-human-centric-ai-and-its-applications/>

Most AI applications represent low-level intelligence and biased data-sets which, among other limitations, might cause discrimination, biased recommendations and misinterpretations. Thus, there is increasing discussion about the ethics of AI and the ethical use of AI in both education and businesses. Despite the challenges, there are also more opportunities to create useful AI applications by using ready-made components and services and open-source solutions.”

“How to transfer interdisciplinary competences in heritage studies”

The webinar at a glance¹⁴

The one-hour long webinar with four speakers and 374 participants took place on February 21, 2023. The description of the content reads as follows:

“All over Europe there is an urgent need to develop an interdisciplinary training approach in order to answer complex problems related to the enhancement of cultural heritage sites and related services. This requires a high degree of interaction and engagement, often limited by coordination barriers and the difficulties in finding appropriate funding opportunities.

At the educational level, this means enhancing the development of flexible learning paths, improving learning processes and boosting the acquisition of a broad range of skills. Studies, research, and training need to converge methods and analytical frame-works from multiple disciplines, integrating human sciences with scientific experiences and competences.

In this context, what are the main educational gaps in interdisciplinary instruction? And what means of support would be useful at national and/or inter-national level? Through some good practices and hands-on experiences, the interdisciplinary approach will be analyzed and promoted widely.”

¹⁴ <https://ulyssus.eu/events/webinar-interdisciplinary-competences-in-heritage-studies/> (Retrieved: March 4, 2024).

“Industrial Sustainability: Challenges, Perspectives, Actions”

The webinar at a glance¹⁵

The 90-minute-long webinar with three speakers and 191 participants took place on May 23, 2023. The organizers described the content in the following way:

“Sustainable management aims to address environmental and social issues, such as climate change, resource depletion, and inequality. By promoting sustainable practices, businesses can reduce their environmental impact, improve their reputation, and create new opportunities for innovation and growth. Furthermore, sustainable management can decrease operating costs and increased profitability by reducing waste and using resources more efficiently, hence creating a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

This webinar will provide insights into sustainability management from scratch to application and point out challenges and perspectives in local and global acting businesses. Discover how sustainable management is essential for creating a more resilient and equitable economy that can meet the needs of current and future generations!”

Transferable skills gained and enhanced in the webinars

Based on the feedback of the participants, some of the transferable skills acquired and improved in these webinars – in addition to the knowledge gained about transferable skills in them that might have, in turn, led to attainment of those transferable skills – are:

- **Communication skills:** The webinars required participants to engage in virtual discussions, ask questions, and interact with presenters or other attendees through chat functions or Q&A sessions. Through articulating thoughts clearly, listening actively, asking relevant questions, and engaging with others respectfully the participants developed effective communication skills in the webinars. This, in turn, helped them to become more confident speakers and active listen.

¹⁵ <https://ulyseus.eu/events/industrial-sustainability-challenges-perspectives-actions/> (Retrieved: March 4, 2024).

These skills are mainly linked to the same RDF sub-domains as the ones discussed in the two passages Communication skills in the sub-chapters Transfer-able skills gained and enhanced on day 1 and Transferable skills gained and enhanced on day 2 above, namely D2 (Communication and dissemination) and D3 (Engagement and impact).

- **Digital skills:** Participation in the COMPASS Webinars required familiarity with online platforms, technology tools, and digital resources for accessing and engaging with webinar content. Developing digital literacy skills in the setting of these webinars involved navigating virtual environments, using multimedia features, interacting with online materials, and troubleshooting technical issues effectively. Strengthening such digital literacy skills through participation in them helped the participants adapt to remote work environments, collaborate virtually with colleagues, and leverage digital tools for research dissemination and networking.



These skills are primarily associated with the RDF sub-domain A1 (Knowledge base), which focuses, e.g., on digital literacy and information management.

- **Time management skills:** Attending the COMPASS Webinars required the participants to balance their schedules effectively, prioritize tasks, allocate time for learning activities, and manage competing demands on their time. Developing strong time management skills in these webinars involved planning ahead, setting goals for participation, staying focused during sessions, and maximizing productivity while juggling multiple responsibilities. The participants learned to optimize their workflow, meet deadlines efficiently, and make the most of their professional development opportunities.

These skills align with the same RDF sub-domains as the one discussed in the passage Time management skills in the sub-chapter Transferable skills gained and enhanced on day 1 above, namely B1 (Personal qualities) and B2 (Self-management).

- **Critical thinking skills:** Engaging with COMPASS Webinar content such as presentations, case studies, or research findings challenged the participants to think critically about complex issues, evaluate evidence objectively, and draw informed conclusions based on reasoned arguments. Developing critical thinking skills in such a setting involved analyzing information critically, synthesizing key points from presentations or discussions, questioning assumptions or biases, and applying logical reasoning to solve problems effectively. This enhanced the participants' ability to assess information rigorously, make informed decisions confidently, and contributed meaningfully to advancing knowledge within their field.

These skills are predominantly associated with the same RDF sub-domains as the one discussed in the passage Critical thinking skills in the sub-chapter Transferable skills gained and enhanced on day 2 above, namely A2 (Cognitive abilities) and A3 (Creativity).

- **Networking skills:** The COMPASS webinars offered opportunities for researchers to connect with peers from different institutions or disciplines, engage with experts in their field, or build relationships with potential collaborators or mentors. Developing networking skills in the setting of the COMPASS webinars involved introducing oneself professionally, initiating conversations with other participants or presenters, exchanging contact information for future collaboration opportunities, and following up on connections made during the event.

These skills are above all linked to the RDF sub-domain D1 (Working with others), which focuses, e.g., on team working and collaboration with others.

- **Problem-solving skills:** The webinars included interactive activities or case studies that challenge participants to analyze complex problems related to their research area or professional development goals. Engaging in problem-solving exercises during the COMPASS webinars enhanced the participants' ability to identify issues systematically, to explore different perspectives creatively and to apply innovative solutions effectively while collaborating with peers towards achieving common objectives.

These skills align primarily with the same RDF sub-domains as the one discussed in the passage Problem-solving skills in the sub-chapter Transferable skills gained and enhanced on day 2 above, namely A2 (Cognitive abilities) and A3 (Creativity).

In conclusion, investing in the acquisition of transferable skills is imperative for researchers to excel in today's rapidly evolving research environment and make meaningful contributions to society. By prioritizing the development of transferable skills, researchers can enhance their adaptability, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities, preparing them for success across various career paths.

Integrating transferable skills development into research training programs not only equips the next generation of scientists with essential tools for addressing global challenges but also fosters innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the resolution of complex societal issues.

Moreover, according to More (2019)¹⁶, there is a growing recognition of the importance of transferable skills among EU researchers. Nevertheless, only a minority of PHD candidates in the EU receive training in transferable skills during doctoral studies and the MORE4 studies do not show a positive evolution.

What we have learned from COMPASS project during these years is that organizing conferences, workshops, and webinars for researchers is essential for enhancing their transferable skills and promoting professional development.

These events offer researchers valuable opportunities to expand their knowledge, refine their communication skills, and network with peers and experts in their field. Conferences provide a platform for researchers to present their work, receive feedback, and engage in scholarly discourse, while workshops offer practical skills development opportunities tailored to researchers' needs. The webinars provided convenient access to expert knowledge and insights, allowing researchers to stay updated on the latest developments in their field.

¹⁶ <https://www.more-4.eu/>

The logo features a white outline of a compass rose pointing left, followed by the word "Compass" in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, and "Ulysseus" in a smaller, white sans-serif font below it.

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