

Making Lifelong Learning Central to University Strategy

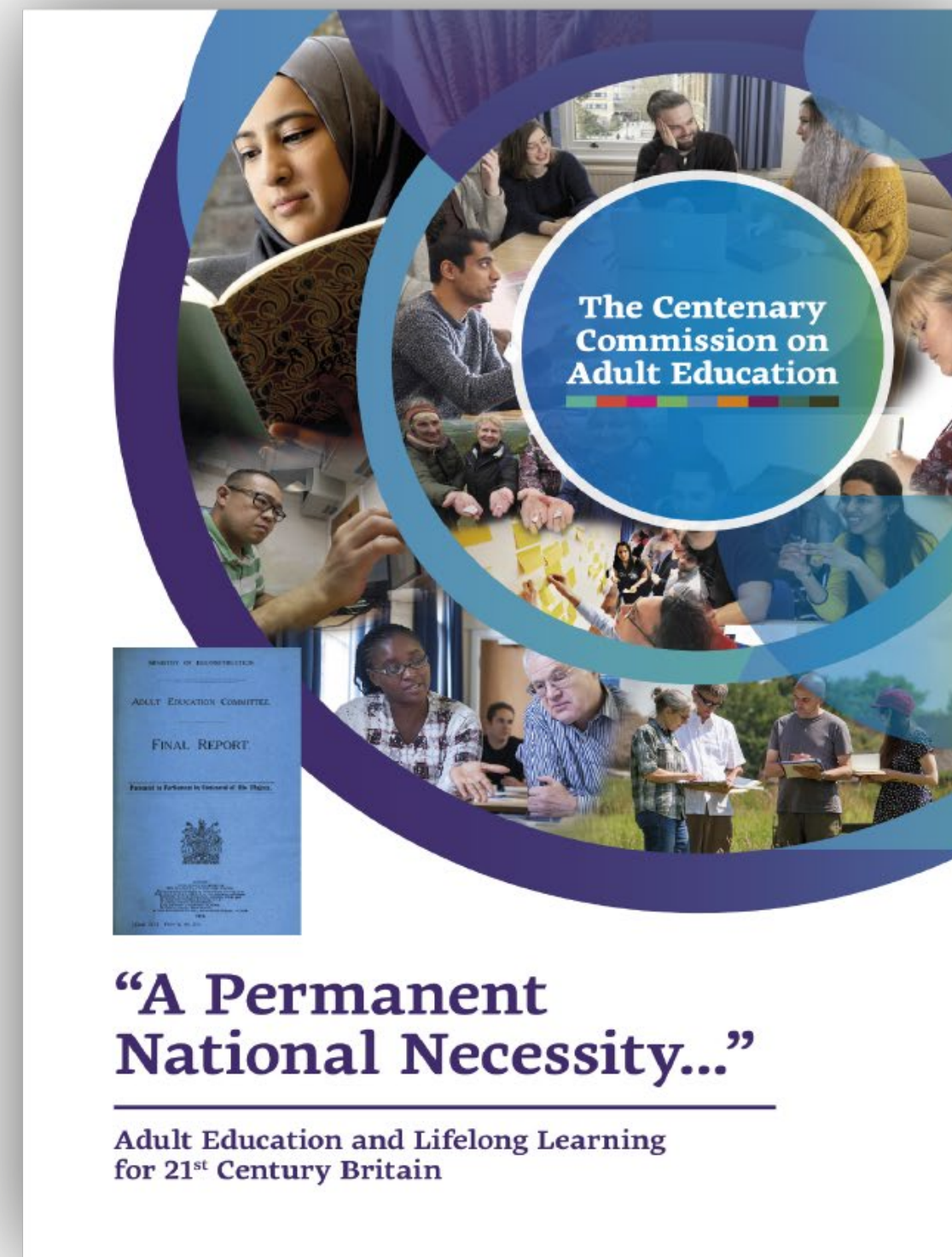
*Inaugural Roundtable on Dialogue of University
Continuing Education Schools*

Thursday 23rd April 2026

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Centenary Commission Report



Centenary Commission

▶ <https://centenarycommission.org/>

Lifelong Learning 2025

– the views of individual learners in
Hong Kong, China and India

MARCH 2026



Executive Summary I

China, Hong Kong, and India share a strong commitment to career-oriented lifelong learning, but differ in maturity, motivations, learning behaviors, and expectations.

- China shows broad, balanced interest with strong digital engagement.
- Hong Kong remains more traditional, price-sensitive, and structured in learning expectations.
- India is the most future-oriented, digitally confident, and ambitious in its learning plans.

1. Learning Motivations

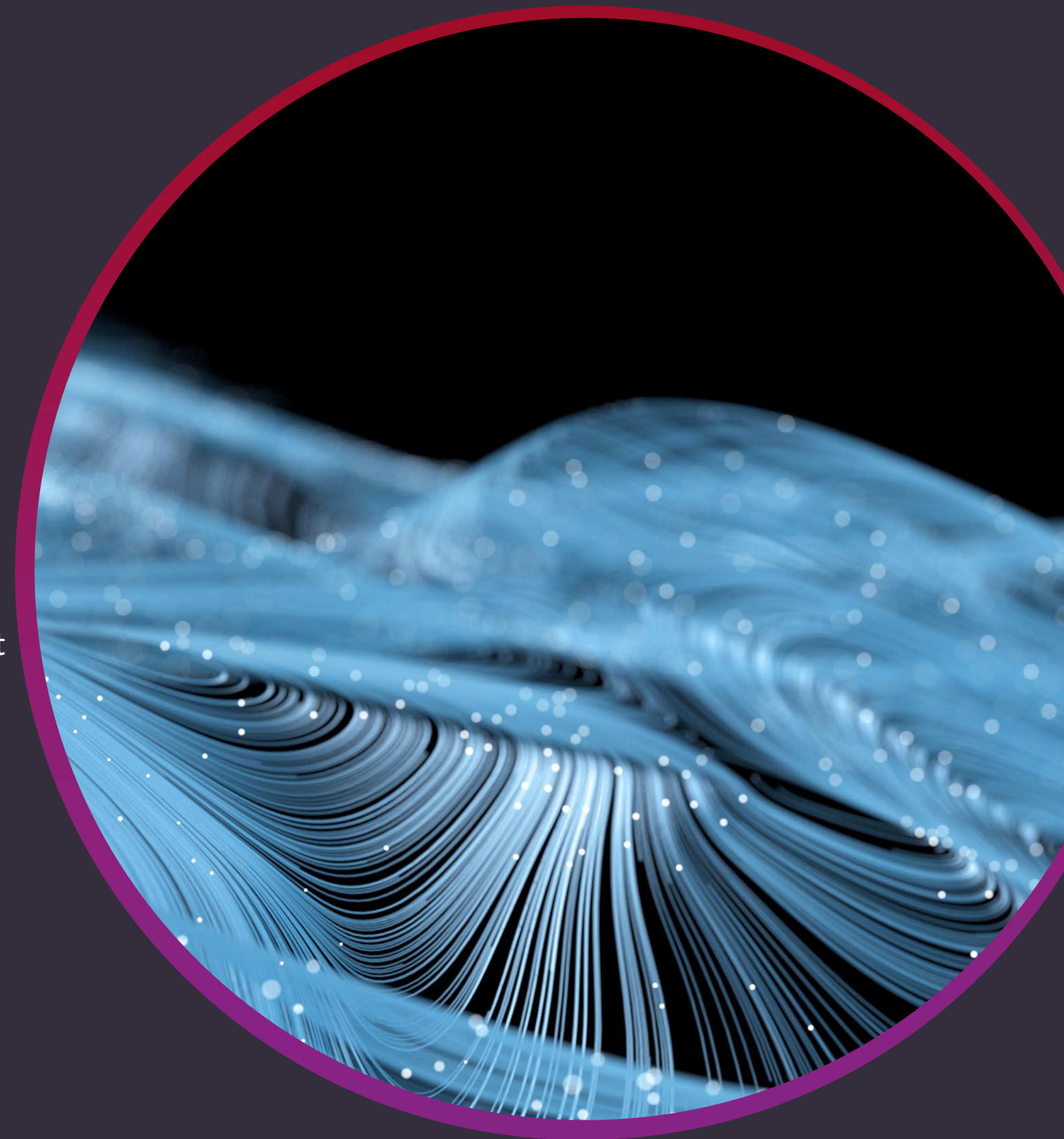
Across all three countries, adults pursue learning primarily for career advancement. India stands out for its stronger focus on rapid, career-relevant upskilling, while Hong Kong learners show greater motivation than others for personal development and subject enjoyment.

2. Demand for Course Types

Hong Kong uniquely favours evening classes (21%), while India shows comparatively strong appetite for postgraduate degrees (29%).

3. Preferred Learning Providers

Hong Kong is most likely to favour universities, while China is most open to commercial online providers (44%), and Indians suggest private training companies are more strongly considered than in Hong Kong or China.



Executive Summary II

4. Expectations of Universities

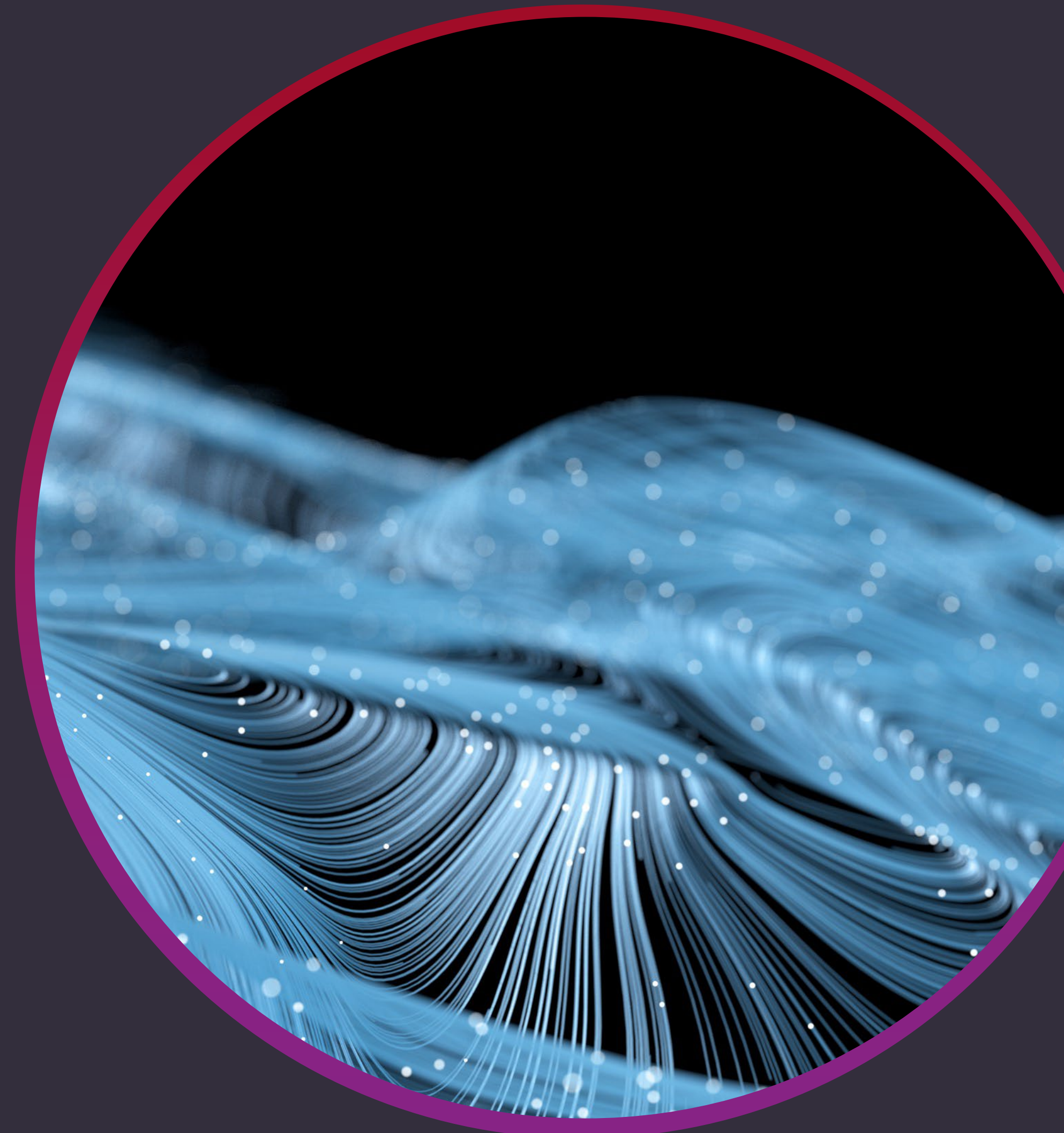
Learners expect more flexible, affordable, and career-aligned options. India expresses the strongest expectations overall—for example, 42% say universities should provide clearer lifelong learning routes, compared with 35% in China and 25% in Hong Kong.

5. How Learners Research Providers

- India: highest use of YouTube (82%) and Instagram (61%)
- China: strong reliance on TikTok (50%), WeChat (53%) and Weibo (40%)
- Hong Kong: broader but lower-intensity social media use

6. Learning Formats & Time Commitment

Blended learning is preferred in all markets. China is most enthusiastic about online-blended formats, while Hong Kong retains the strongest preference for in-person teaching.



MOTIVATION AND QUALIFICATIONS



WHY ARE YOU/WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO UNDERTAKE FURTHER LEARNING?

	China	Hong Kong	India
To study further as part of my personal development	30%	33%	24%
Enjoyment of the subject	14%	20%	13%
To learn a specific new skill	24%	35%	31%
To quickly add some new knowledge to support my career	20%	26%	30%
To help me change roles within my organisation	10%	12%	11%
To help me change sector/industry/career	13%	14%	14%
To gain a promotion more quickly	19%	13%	15%
To improve my job security	24%	19%	27%
To engage with my local community	7%	6%	8%
To start/grow my own business	16%	11%	14%
Because of a recommendation from a friend/colleague/employer	7%	8%	6%
To improve my earning potential	27%	28%	31%
Because I was made redundant and am looking to explore new opportunities	8%	8%	12%
Because I am required to take regular refresher courses to maintain my professional status (Continuing Professional Development - CPD)	18%	8%	14%
Other (please specify)	0%	0%	0%

COURSES AND QUALIFICATIONS SOUGHT BY LEARNERS

	China	Hong Kong	India
Short non-degree university programs studied across as little as one day and up to a week	21%	25%	27%
Short non-degree university programs studied across a week to a month	34%	27%	25%
Short non-degree university programs studied across a month to three months	15%	16%	13%
Coaching	17%	17%	18%
Being mentored	15%	10%	9%
Summer school programs	11%	6%	11%
Evening classes	12%	21%	19%
Community-based courses	12%	10%	12%
Certificate for completion of an online course	21%	25%	30%
A program run as part of required continuing professional development (CPD) in your occupation	26%	15%	23%
Industry certification, e.g. Microsoft/Cisco IT certification, Project Management, CPA, CFA, CIM, ACCA, etc.	34%	25%	31%
Micro-credentials	9%	9%	9%
Digital badge (an online validated indicator of a skill and/or knowledge that can be earned in various learning environments)	24%	18%	21%
Diploma/Certificate from a university	13%	18%	20%
Access to HE	0%	0%	0%
Stackable degree delivered in modules over an extended period	15%	8%	13%
Undergraduate degree e.g. Bachelors, BA, BSc, etc	14%	14%	13%
Postgraduate degree e.g. Masters, MA, MSc, MBA, MPhil, PhD, etc	24%	20%	29%
Not sure	2%	3%	2%

LEARNING PROVIDERS



HOW IMPORTANT ARE/WOULD BE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS WHEN YOU CONSIDER/IF YOU CONSIDERED A FUTURE PROVIDER FOR YOUR LEARNING? A PROVIDER THAT...

	China	Hong Kong	India
is engaged with my local community	7%	7%	5%
has a wide range of courses on offer	12%	12%	10%
supports learners to progress in their studies	14%	11%	14%
challenges world views by combining innovative and critical thinking	11%	11%	10%
has a focus on social responsibility	9%	9%	12%
is near to where I live/work	11%	12%	8%
is recognized for its quality	17%	19%	19%
allows me to personalize my learning, by choosing content relevant to my needs	18%	21%	20%
allows me to personalize my learning with flexible delivery formats	12%	14%	13%
provides support to develop my career	20%	16%	20%
embraces digital delivery of learning	10%	11%	8%
is highly ranked	8%	12%	16%
has a widely recognised name	8%	11%	7%
offers good value courses	14%	23%	21%
offers some free or very low cost programmes	12%	12%	11%

HOW IMPORTANT ARE/WOULD BE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS WHEN YOU CONSIDER/IF YOU CONSIDERED A FUTURE PROVIDER FOR YOUR LEARNING? A PROVIDER THAT...

	China	Hong Kong	India
attracts people in a similar role as myself	7%	7%	11%
offers the latest up to date topics	7%	13%	12%
has internationally-recognised accreditation for its courses	11%	16%	11%
has a global focus	9%	9%	17%
has a focus on sustainability	11%	9%	11%
provides good customer service	11%	7%	13%
has strong connections with my industry	16%	12%	16%
has a strong reputation for applied learning	12%	11%	15%
awards microcredentials	6%	7%	5%
provides job-referral services	8%	8%	9%
has a good employability record	12%	14%	16%
partners with industry	8%	9%	8%
provides support for my wellbeing as a learner	13%	9%	12%
involves relevant work based case studies and speakers	7%	6%	10%
takes feedback from learners seriously and acts on it	10%	10%	13%

WHICH PROVIDERS WOULD YOU USE FOR YOUR FUTURE LEARNING?

	China	Hong Kong	India
University/College	43%	51%	47%
Professional/industry/trade body	38%	40%	42%
Chamber of commerce	19%	17%	17%
Commercial online learning provider	44%	31%	43%
Private training company	34%	30%	42%
Public training body	36%	31%	27%
Voluntary organization	20%	23%	22%
Community body	21%	22%	14%
No particular provider comes to mind / Don't know	2%	5%	3%

WHY WOULD YOU USE UNIVERSITIES (OR COLLEGE IF IT IS RELEVANT IN YOUR COUNTRY) TO PROVIDE YOUR FUTURE LEARNING?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Proximity of universities/college to where I live/work	17%	13%	20%
A wide range of subjects offered	32%	27%	35%
University/college research adds value to the learning provided	37%	34%	49%
Solutions that fit various levels	22%	22%	22%
Flexibility of solutions offered	28%	25%	27%
To return to study at a university/college where I studied previously	16%	13%	21%
The quality of faculty delivering courses	45%	39%	44%
To build my personal network	23%	24%	33%
Universities/colleges have a reputation for developing knowledge	41%	43%	53%
To attend a summer school	15%	9%	14%
Good value for money	27%	31%	43%
University/college qualifications are recognised by employers	32%	48%	48%
Commitment to social purpose	22%	15%	24%

WHY WOULD YOU NOT USE UNIVERSITIES (OR COLLEGE IF IT IS RELEVANT IN YOUR COUNTRY) TO PROVIDE YOUR FUTURE LEARNING?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Universities/colleges are too expensive	13%	34%	17%
University/college courses don't run often enough, so I can't learn quickly	16%	17%	20%
I wasn't aware that universities/colleges offered lifelong learning	13%	12%	13%
Studying with a university/college is too bureaucratic	14%	16%	18%
I've had a poor experience with a university/college	9%	12%	7%
There are no good quality universities/colleges near where I live/work	19%	7%	15%
Universities/colleges don't have the specific expertise I am seeking	18%	15%	17%
Other providers offer programs which better meet my needs	20%	14%	24%
Universities/colleges are too theoretical	25%	18%	18%
I've not seen any real impact in the workplace among colleagues who have taken a university/college program	15%	15%	13%
Universities/colleges lack an online offer	13%	14%	21%
Universities/colleges only offer degrees and I want a short course	26%	18%	25%

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF UNIVERSITIES.

UNIVERSITIES SHOULD ...

	China	Hong Kong	India
Offer greater flexibility for degree study	28%	15%	36%
Provide clearer routes to enable and support lifelong learning	35%	25%	42%
Develop more inexpensive programs to deliver relevant skills for those working/looking for work	26%	31%	39%
Be clearer about how their work positively impacts wider society not just business and industry	30%	19%	40%
Always recognise my prior learning when taking a new course	30%	21%	38%
Provide greater lifelong learning opportunities for their alumni	32%	20%	39%
Grow their stackable qualifications which allow learning to be accumulated over an extended period	29%	22%	37%
Offer more courses at convenient times outside working hours	32%	28%	41%

IF YOU WANTED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FUTURE LEARNING PROVIDERS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU BE LIKELY TO USE?

	China	Hong Kong	India
University rankings	30%	32%	35%
Online search	43%	46%	52%
Recommendation from a friend/colleague	31%	26%	34%
Social media networks	44%	29%	45%
Other online source	26%	22%	34%
Institution/provider where I have previously studied	32%	30%	27%
Ask my line manager	22%	13%	18%
University/other provider website	35%	41%	39%
Library/Community hub	25%	19%	21%

IF YOU WANTED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FUTURE LEARNING PROVIDERS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU BE LIKELY TO USE?

	China	Hong Kong	India
LinkedIn	21%	29%	50%
Facebook	31%	45%	53%
YouTube	42%	56%	82%
Instagram	18%	37%	61%
Twitter/X	29%	15%	35%
TikTok	50%	12%	12%
WeChat	53%	13%	11%
Weibo	40%	7%	9%
I wouldn't use social media networks to find out about learning providers	6%	17%	5%

HAVE YOU USED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL PROVIDERS OF LEARNING AND/OR WOULD YOU CONSIDER USING THEM IN THE FUTURE?

China	Have used, but would not use again	Have used and may use again	Have used and would use again	Have not used but would consider using in the future	Have not used and would not consider in the future	I don't know enough about this platform to decide
LinkedIn Learning	8%	22%	25%	24%	9%	12%
Coursera	9%	23%	21%	23%	9%	16%
FutureLearn	9%	17%	24%	27%	9%	15%
Udacity	10%	16%	23%	27%	9%	16%
edX/2U/Get Smarter	8%	21%	23%	25%	7%	16%
ServiceSkills.com	8%	21%	21%	23%	10%	17%
OpenSesame	9%	23%	22%	22%	10%	14%
eduCBA	7%	23%	24%	23%	11%	13%
General Assembly	8%	19%	24%	25%	10%	15%
Udemy	8%	17%	19%	26%	10%	20%
Alison	8%	17%	25%	22%	11%	17%

HAVE YOU USED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL PROVIDERS OF LEARNING AND/OR WOULD YOU CONSIDER USING THEM IN THE FUTURE?

Hong Kong	Have used, but would not use again	Have used and may use again	Have used and would use again	Have not used but would consider using in the future	Have not used and would not consider in the future	I don't know enough about this platform to decide
LinkedIn Learning	6%	19%	19%	26%	7%	24%
Coursera	5%	14%	19%	23%	9%	30%
FutureLearn	6%	11%	12%	28%	9%	35%
Udacity	4%	12%	10%	21%	9%	44%
edX/2U/Get Smarter	5%	10%	14%	19%	11%	41%
ServiceSkills.com	6%	12%	16%	21%	8%	37%
OpenSesame	7%	12%	10%	21%	9%	42%
eduCBA	4%	12%	11%	22%	11%	41%
General Assembly	3%	13%	14%	22%	9%	40%
Udemy	6%	11%	12%	24%	11%	37%
Alison	5%	10%	12%	19%	14%	42%

HAVE YOU USED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL PROVIDERS OF LEARNING AND/OR WOULD YOU CONSIDER USING THEM IN THE FUTURE?

India	Have used, but would not use again	Have used and may use again	Have used and would use again	Have not used but would consider using in the future	Have not used and would not consider in the future	I don't know enough about this platform to decide
LinkedIn Learning	9%	34%	28%	18%	4%	6%
Coursera	7%	23%	22%	26%	9%	13%
FutureLearn	5%	22%	19%	27%	9%	18%
Udacity	7%	16%	17%	28%	10%	22%
edX/2U/Get Smarter	7%	17%	12%	27%	12%	25%
ServiceSkills.com	7%	22%	16%	25%	10%	20%
OpenSesame	7%	15%	14%	24%	12%	27%
eduCBA	6%	17%	14%	27%	12%	25%
General Assembly	6%	21%	15%	25%	10%	23%
Udemy	7%	28%	22%	24%	7%	13%
Alison	9%	19%	11%	24%	11%	27%

THE COST OF LEARNING



HOW WOULD YOU EXPECT TO PAY FOR ANY FUTURE LEARNING YOU UNDERTAKE?

	China	Hong Kong	India
I would only use free courses	17%	24%	24%
I would expect to pay from my own funds	49%	44%	48%
I would expect to use funds provided by national/local government	34%	34%	29%
I would expect my employer to pay	30%	33%	21%
I would expect to get a loan	14%	14%	21%
I would expect to get a scholarship from the learning provider	31%	23%	31%
I would expect to get help from my family	19%	14%	29%
I haven't yet thought about how I would pay for future learning	4%	6%	5%

WHAT TO LEARN?



IN WHICH, IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING, FIELDS DO YOU ANTICIPATE WANTING TO UNDERTAKE LEARNING IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Business development	26%	27%	29%
Change management	10%	14%	7%
Collaboration across virtual teams, alliances and partners	14%	9%	11%
Communication skills	24%	27%	32%
Creativity and design thinking	24%	17%	25%
Crisis management	10%	13%	11%
Decision making in uncertain and complex times	12%	9%	17%
Diversity, equality and inclusion	13%	10%	10%
Entrepreneurship	13%	13%	22%
Ethics and ethical behaviours	9%	5%	10%
Innovation	16%	18%	21%
Leadership	24%	22%	25%

IN WHICH, IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING, FIELDS DO YOU ANTICIPATE WANTING TO UNDERTAKE LEARNING IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Managing across cultures	11%	5%	9%
Managing a multi-generational, diverse workforce	17%	10%	15%
Marketing	19%	15%	18%
Negotiation skills	18%	13%	10%
Resilience/mindfulness	8%	7%	7%
Responsible management	14%	9%	14%
Risk management	16%	15%	19%
Social impact	14%	12%	16%
Strategy	18%	16%	19%
Sustainability	12%	13%	18%
None of those listed above	2%	4%	1%

IN WHICH, IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING, TECHNOLOGY-RELATED FIELDS DO YOU ANTICIPATE WANTING TO UNDERTAKE LEARNING IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Artificial intelligence	45%	40%	50%
Blockchain	17%	18%	13%
Cloud computing	23%	14%	21%
Cybersecurity	17%	16%	29%
Data analytics and data-driven decision making	28%	26%	22%
Digital marketing	24%	28%	33%
Digital transformation	18%	16%	16%
E-commerce	21%	26%	25%
Digital literacy	14%	16%	16%
Quantum computing	14%	10%	10%
5G/Telecoms	20%	10%	15%
None of those listed above	3%	6%	1%

IN WHICH, IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING, FIELDS DO YOU ANTICIPATE WANTING TO UNDERTAKE LEARNING IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Archaeology	5%	6%	6%
Art	12%	11%	10%
Creative writing	12%	12%	15%
Culture	12%	13%	10%
Economics	34%	28%	25%
Healthcare	14%	22%	21%
History	13%	10%	13%
Literature	9%	5%	9%
Mathematics	16%	9%	20%
Museum Studies	7%	5%	4%
Music	10%	10%	13%
Philosophy	14%	7%	9%
Psychology	17%	17%	18%
Politics	9%	10%	11%
Science	22%	16%	29%
Sociology	19%	13%	12%
Sustainability	17%	15%	16%
None of those listed above	3%	7%	2%

HOW TO LEARN



THINKING ABOUT ANY FUTURE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT THAT YOU MAY UNDERTAKE, WOULD YOU CONSIDER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS FOR THAT

	China	Hong Kong	India
In-person (live face-to-face teaching only)	36%	42%	41%
A mix of in-person, face-to-face teaching and self-directed online learning resources (sometimes called blended)	65%	56%	59%
A mix of live online teaching and self-directed online learning resources (sometimes called online blended)	62%	44%	54%
Self-directed study with on-line learning resources only	26%	25%	32%
None of the above	2%	2%	1%

WHEN TAKING A COURSE/IF YOU WERE TO TAKE A COURSE ALL OR PART ONLINE HOW HIGHLY DO YOU VALUE THE FOLLOWING?

China	1 (low value)	2	3	4	5 (high value)	Don't know
Live classes (online)	4%	5%	17%	34%	40%	1%
Live classes (in person)	2%	6%	18%	36%	37%	1%
Certification of hours studied	2%	5%	22%	36%	33%	2%
Completion certificate	2%	4%	18%	34%	42%	1%
Access to tutors in discussion forums	2%	7%	20%	36%	34%	1%
Feedback on your progress or assessments	1%	6%	20%	36%	36%	2%
Option to start studying immediately	1%	8%	15%	36%	37%	2%
Access to experts working in the subject	2%	6%	15%	38%	38%	2%
High quality video	1%	3%	20%	33%	41%	2%
Engaging case studies	1%	6%	16%	34%	41%	2%
Flexibility of study	3%	4%	15%	34%	44%	1%
Option to personalise content	1%	4%	19%	37%	38%	0%
Research expertise in the subject	1%	4%	20%	34%	39%	1%

WHEN TAKING A COURSE/IF YOU WERE TO TAKE A COURSE ALL OR PART ONLINE HOW HIGHLY DO YOU VALUE THE FOLLOWING?

Hong Kong	1 (low value)	2	3	4	5 (high value)	Don't know
Live classes (online)	2%	4%	28%	41%	24%	1%
Live classes (in person)	0%	6%	24%	39%	31%	0%
Certification of hours studied	1%	6%	25%	39%	27%	2%
Completion certificate	0%	4%	16%	36%	43%	1%
Access to tutors in discussion forums	2%	5%	27%	35%	28%	1%
Feedback on your progress or assessments	2%	3%	20%	43%	31%	1%
Option to start studying immediately	0%	5%	26%	39%	28%	2%
Access to experts working in the subject	0%	4%	19%	44%	32%	1%
High quality video	0%	3%	19%	41%	35%	1%
Engaging case studies	2%	4%	20%	39%	33%	2%
Flexibility of study	0%	2%	19%	29%	50%	0%
Option to personalise content	1%	5%	25%	38%	29%	2%
Research expertise in the subject	1%	4%	23%	41%	30%	2%

WHEN TAKING A COURSE/IF YOU WERE TO TAKE A COURSE ALL OR PART ONLINE HOW HIGHLY DO YOU VALUE THE FOLLOWING?

India	1 (low value)	2	3	4	5 (high value)	Don't know
Live classes (online)	3%	2%	15%	27%	53%	1%
Live classes (in person)	4%	3%	15%	28%	49%	1%
Certification of hours studied	3%	3%	13%	33%	46%	2%
Completion certificate	1%	3%	10%	21%	64%	2%
Access to tutors in discussion forums	2%	4%	15%	32%	45%	2%
Feedback on your progress or assessments	2%	3%	13%	30%	52%	1%
Option to start studying immediately	2%	3%	14%	29%	51%	2%
Access to experts working in the subject	1%	5%	12%	29%	51%	1%
High quality video	2%	3%	8%	23%	63%	2%
Engaging case studies	1%	3%	13%	27%	54%	1%
Flexibility of study	2%	3%	11%	27%	57%	0%
Option to personalise content	1%	3%	16%	32%	47%	2%
Research expertise in the subject	1%	4%	13%	30%	51%	0%

HOW MUCH TIME PER WEEK WOULD YOU EXPECT TO COMMIT TO STUDYING ON AN ENTIRELY OR PART-ONLINE COURSE?

	China	Hong Kong	India
0-2 hours	6%	16%	12%
3-4 hours	26%	37%	31%
5-8 hours	36%	33%	26%
9-16 hours	20%	8%	20%
Not sure	2%	1%	1%
I would expect to study less often than weekly	4%	3%	3%

WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS FOR YOUR LEARNING?

		No	Maybe	Yes	Not applicable
China	Studying face-to-face with a provider in a country where you are not primarily based for work	9%	39%	50%	2%
	Taking a course online with a university in a country where you are not primarily based for work	5%	32%	61%	2%
Hong Kong	Studying face-to-face with a provider in a country where you are not primarily based for work	10%	47%	41%	1%
	Taking a course online with a university in a country where you are not primarily based for work	4%	43%	52%	1%
India	Studying face-to-face with a provider in a country where you are not primarily based for work	5%	39%	54%	2%
	Taking a course online with a university in a country where you are not primarily based for work	3%	31%	64%	2%

THE FUTURE OF WORK AND LEARNING



THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF YOUR WORKING LIFE, WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTION?

		Mostly agree	Definitely agree
China	In my future career, I want to have the flexibility to work from home some of the time	36%	31%
	I expect to retire later than I thought when I first started working	36%	23%
	I expect to/already have changed career direction at least once during my working life	34%	25%
Hong Kong	In my future career, I want to have the flexibility to work from home some of the time	39%	37%
	I expect to retire later than I thought when I first started working	34%	27%
	I expect to/already have changed career direction at least once during my working life	37%	26%
India	In my future career, I want to have the flexibility to work from home some of the time	37%	50%
	I expect to retire later than I thought when I first started working	36%	30%
	I expect to/already have changed career direction at least once during my working life	37%	32%

THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE LEARNING, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

	China		Hong Kong		India	
	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
I expect to undertake more learning to upskill and reskill in the future to advance my career	28%	41%	43%	32%	31%	50%
Location of a learning provider will become less important as online provision becomes more sophisticated	29%	19%	35%	31%	32%	40%
It is important to me that any future learning I undertake is with a provider with an international reputation	37%	22%	37%	33%	38%	39%
I expect to have to update my learning more frequently in the future to keep up to date with skill needs	36%	34%	43%	30%	36%	45%
When I stop working, I would like to be able to take courses for pleasure	32%	36%	34%	32%	31%	40%
I expect to learn for enjoyment	31%	30%	37%	33%	37%	34%

THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE LEARNING, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

	China		Hong Kong		India	
	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
Learning needs to be delivered flexibly if I am to engage with it	34%	35%	47%	31%	35%	45%
I would appreciate guidance on the most valuable skills to learn to further enhance my career prospects	32%	37%	43%	35%	33%	49%
My employer should pay any costs associated with my future career learning	29%	25%	36%	31%	34%	30%
I'm not prepared to undertake learning outside of work hours	27%	18%	27%	19%	25%	25%
I prefer taking courses at the same time as colleagues	26%	32%	33%	20%	36%	32%
I would be more likely to stay at an organisation that values and supports my development	35%	37%	40%	31%	35%	48%
I am only interested in courses that are recognised by my employer	24%	20%	28%	22%	28%	32%
I would be more likely to join an organisation which offered lifelong learning as part of my package	37%	28%	42%	27%	36%	41%

BEYOND FORMAL COURSES, HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO GROW AND MAINTAIN THE IMPACT OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR YOU?

	China		Hong Kong		India	
	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
Individual coaching	39%	30%	43%	18%	34%	40%
Online learning hubs to access further courses	38%	29%	37%	26%	38%	40%
Subscription models allowing me to personalise my learning	39%	27%	38%	24%	35%	38%
On-demand video to supplement and extend learning	42%	26%	37%	26%	33%	42%
Free learning updates that can be taken in an hour or less	36%	37%	36%	30%	33%	43%
Articles on topics covered in previous learning	36%	31%	43%	19%	37%	42%

HOW INTERESTED WOULD YOU BE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS FOR YOUR FUTURE LEARNING?

	China		Hong Kong		India	
	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
A learning subscription allowing me to access courses as and when I wish	36%	21%	31%	11%	34%	29%
Joining a community of learners to continue peer learning beyond formal studies	32%	25%	29%	13%	37%	23%
A Netflix-style platform for learning where I can choose from a variety of providers	37%	22%	27%	16%	36%	28%
Creating your own certificate journey by combining courses in different formats	34%	26%	33%	15%	37%	28%

Making lifelong learning central to university strategy

- the views of employers in China, Hong Kong and India

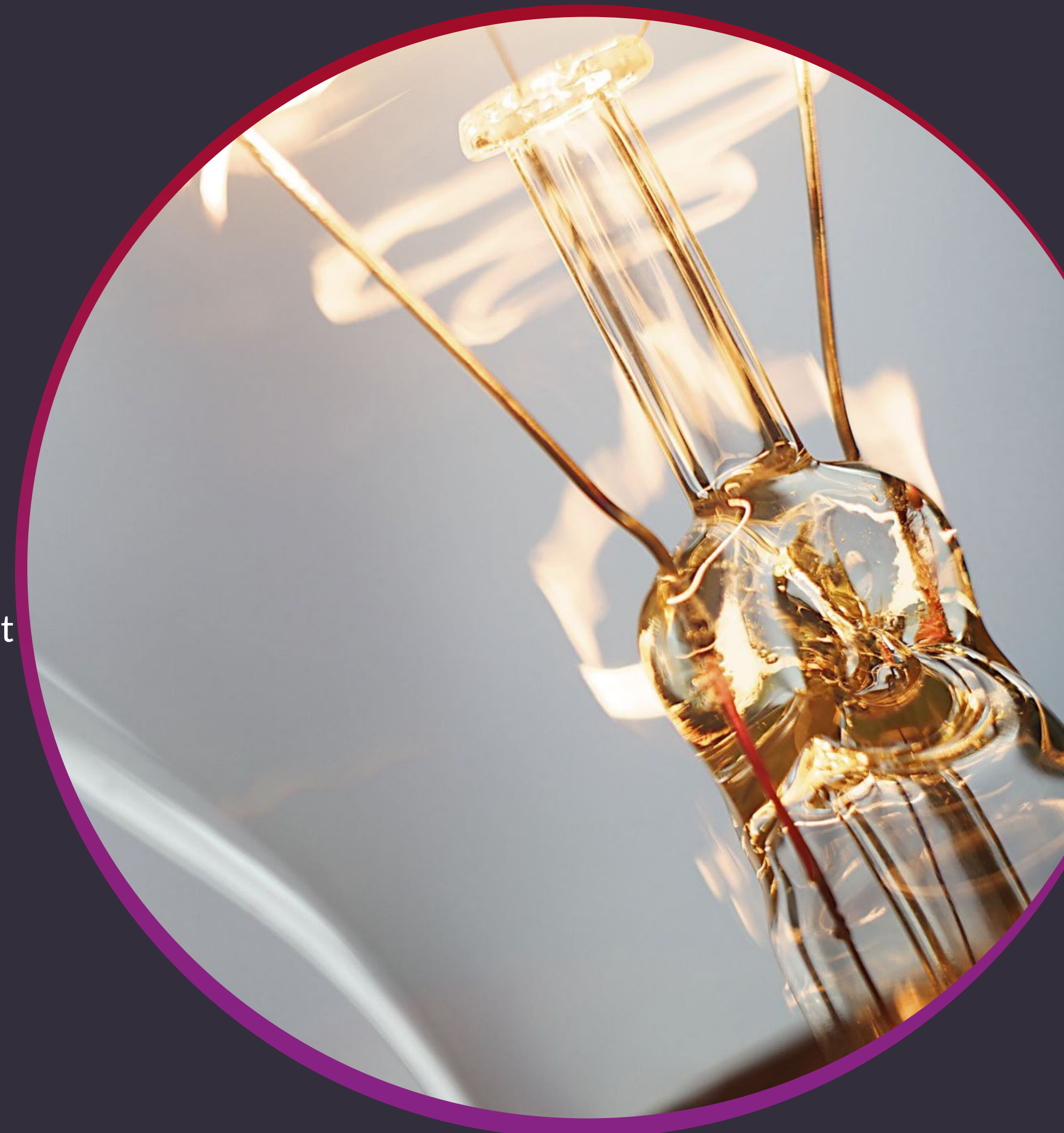


Executive Summary I

L&D investment is set to rise across Asia, led by China, where 83% of organisations expect budgets to increase over the next two years, compared with 78% in India and 40% in Hong Kong. This signals a strong regional commitment to workforce capability building, though Hong Kong demonstrates more caution relative to its neighbours.

Employers' preferred learning activities vary by market. China and Hong Kong continue to rely heavily on short, non-degree university programmes, while India shows the strongest demand for industry certifications (58%) and digital credentials (43%), reflecting a skills-first orientation aligned with rapid digital transformation.

Preferences for provider qualities also diverge. China emphasises flexibility and learner support, with 58% highlighting flexible delivery as a key reason to work with universities. Hong Kong places more weight on course relevance and value, while India values academic reputation, faculty quality, and research-backed content, with up to 69% citing universities' knowledge-development strengths.



Executive Summary II

Significant differences emerge in skill availability. India reports the broadest availability of both non-technical and technical capabilities—for example, high availability in communications (78%) and sustainability-related skills (65%). In contrast, Hong Kong reports greater shortages across areas such as leadership, business development, and cross-cultural management. China shows specific capability gaps in areas including sustainability (53% not widely available) and DEI-related skills (50% not widely available).

Looking ahead, employers in India express the strongest expectations for workforce transformation, with 55–65% anticipating greater flexible working, longer working lives, and more frequent career shifts.

Across the region, there is broad alignment that self-directed digital learning, micro-credentials, and flexible delivery models will shape the future of learning. Organisations increasingly seek providers who not only deliver content but also partner strategically to build long-term capability and measure real workplace impact.



DRIVERS, BUDGETS AND ACTIVITIES



HOW HAVE BUDGETS FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR ORGANISATION CHANGED OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS AND HOW DO YOU EXPECT THEM TO CHANGE OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS?

		Have decreased / Will decrease	Remained / will remain about the same	Have increased / Will increase	Not sure
China	In the last two years	5%	45%	50%	0%
	In the next two years	0%	18%	83%	0%
Hong Kong	In the last two years	13%	53%	35%	0%
	In the next two years	13%	45%	40%	3%
India	In the last two years	10%	28%	63%	0%
	In the next two years	10%	13%	78%	0%

LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES LIKELY TO MAKE USE OF IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS

	China	Hong Kong	India
Coaching for individual staff	23%	10%	23%
Short non-degree university programs studied across a week to a month	38%	43%	33%
Short non-degree university programs studied across as little as one day and up to a week	35%	35%	35%
Mentoring for individual staff	23%	13%	25%
Industry certification, e.g. Microsoft/Cisco IT certification, Project Management, etc.	45%	28%	58%
Apprenticeships	8%	13%	20%
Micro-credentials	8%	15%	23%
Undergraduate degree e.g. Bachelors, BA, BSc, etc	20%	25%	30%
CPD programs	28%	20%	23%
Short non-degree university programs studied across a month to three months	35%	38%	30%
Custom designed programs	20%	8%	33%
Postgraduate degree e.g. Masters, MA, MSc, MBA, MPhil, PhD, etc	33%	18%	38%
Self-badged programs	8%	3%	13%
Digital badge (an online validated indicator of a skill and/or knowledge that can be earned in various learning environments)	23%	15%	43%
Not sure yet	0%	0%	0%

USE MADE OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT BEARING PROGRAMS

	China	Hong Kong	India
We only use credit bearing programs, i.e. those that recognise the learning that has been undertaken	33%	30%	53%
We only use non-credit bearing programs, i.e. those that receive only a 'certificate of completion' (or similar)	25%	30%	10%
We use a mix of credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing programs	40%	35%	38%
Not applicable / Not sure	3%	5%	0%

LEARNING PROVIDERS



THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS WHEN CONSIDERING A FUTURE PROVIDER FOR LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

	China	Hong Kong	India
enables staff to continue working while learning	28%	18%	20%
offers good value courses	23%	23%	15%
has a strong reputation for applied learning	15%	23%	20%
ensures that programme delivery approaches are flexible and reflect our needs	20%	23%	20%
provides good customer service	28%	20%	8%
challenges world views by combining innovative and critical thinking	23%	10%	23%
has leading edge expertise	28%	8%	20%
partners with industry	13%	18%	20%
has a wide range of courses relevant to our needs	15%	28%	18%
offers qualifications widely recognised by employers	8%	5%	10%
promotes equality, diversity and inclusivity	23%	13%	28%
embraces digital delivery of learning	8%	15%	20%
supports learners to get the most from their studies	30%	20%	20%

THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS WHEN CONSIDERING A FUTURE PROVIDER FOR LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

	China	Hong Kong	India
has strong connections with my industry	20%	23%	23%
has a focus on social responsibility	20%	5%	18%
is highly ranked for learner success/satisfaction	15%	3%	23%
offers some free or very low cost programmes	3%	15%	10%
has recognised accreditation for its courses	5%	18%	18%
is engaged with and supports my local community	10%	15%	20%
recognises, values and integrates work-based learning within programmes	25%	20%	18%
works in partnership with us to co-design programmes	13%	13%	18%
awards microcredentials	3%	5%	8%
provides job-referral services	10%	8%	5%
is near to our main work sites	8%	5%	8%
is recognised for the quality of its programs	8%	23%	20%
has a widely recognised name	5%	13%	18%

PROVIDERS USED FOR LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	China	Hong Kong	India
In-house service	40%	23%	30%
Professional/industry/trade body	53%	40%	63%
Private training provider	38%	40%	53%
University/College or other regulated higher education provider	48%	25%	40%
Non-university online learning provider	18%	13%	18%
Consulting firm	53%	28%	33%
Public training body	35%	35%	25%
Freelance consultant	13%	10%	20%
Chamber of commerce	15%	28%	33%
Voluntary organisation	25%	13%	33%
We don't use any specific providers	0%	0%	0%
Others (please specify)	0%	0%	0%

REASON FOR USING UNIVERSITIES TO PROVIDE LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	China	Hong Kong	India
The qualifications are widely recognised by employers	42%	40%	50%
Quality of faculty delivering courses	47%	30%	63%
Universities/colleges have a reputation for developing knowledge	37%	30%	69%
Solutions that fit various leadership levels in our talent pool	32%	30%	56%
University/college research adds value to the learning provided	47%	50%	50%
A wide range of relevant subjects offered	53%	30%	50%
Content backed by research and expertise	37%	30%	25%
Long standing relationships with key universities/colleges	53%	30%	31%
Good value for money	47%	30%	50%
Flexibility of learning provision, offering different delivery modes	58%	0%	19%
Their involvement in the local community	16%	20%	13%
Existing relationships with universities/colleges	42%	30%	19%
Proximity of universities/colleges to our business locations	26%	30%	50%
Flexibility of solutions offered	37%	10%	38%
The self-accrediting status of universities allows them to award qualifications	42%	30%	44%



REASON FOR NOT USING UNIVERSITIES TO PROVIDE LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	China	Hong Kong	India
Universities/colleges are too expensive	0%	23%	21%
Universities/colleges are too theoretical and not sufficiently abreast of the real-world business challenges we face	33%	40%	8%
We have not seen any real impact back in the workplace after investing in a university/college program	29%	17%	33%
I wasn't aware that universities/colleges offered staff and management development programs	14%	17%	0%
University/college training is not appropriate to our level of staff	5%	10%	13%
Working with a university/college is too bureaucratic	5%	17%	29%
Universities/colleges don't have the specific expertise we are seeking	10%	27%	29%

REASON FOR NOT USING UNIVERSITIES TO PROVIDE LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	China	Hong Kong	India
There are no good-quality universities/colleges near our facilities	10%	3%	33%
Other providers offer programs which better meet our development needs	19%	17%	29%
Universities/colleges are too slow to respond to our enquiries	29%	10%	8%
Our organisation only uses in-house provision	5%	20%	17%
Our organisation stopped using universities/colleges after a previous poor experience	0%	10%	21%
Universities/colleges lack an online offer and are too far for our staff to travel	10%	7%	17%
Other (please specify)	0%	0%	0%

THE CHALLENGE OF ONLINE



HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION MADE USE OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL PROVIDERS OF LEARNING AND/OR WOULD YOU CONSIDER USING THEM IN THE FUTURE?

China	Used, but would not use again	Used and may use again	Used and would use again	Have not used but would consider using in the future	Have not used and would not use in the future	Not familiar with this / not sure
LinkedIn Learning	10%	28%	45%	8%	8%	3%
Coursera	3%	30%	25%	25%	3%	15%
FutureLearn	5%	30%	35%	20%	3%	8%
edX/2U /GetSmarter	10%	28%	23%	18%	13%	10%
Udacity	8%	30%	20%	28%	5%	10%
ServiceSkills.com	3%	28%	28%	28%	8%	8%
OpenSesame	3%	30%	25%	30%	0%	13%
eduCBA	10%	25%	25%	20%	10%	10%
General Assembly	5%	28%	30%	20%	10%	8%
Udemy	5%	20%	25%	33%	5%	13%
Emeritus	3%	25%	40%	20%	0%	13%
Alison	3%	28%	30%	25%	5%	10%

HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION MADE USE OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL PROVIDERS OF LEARNING AND/OR WOULD YOU CONSIDER USING THEM IN THE FUTURE?

Hong Kong	Used, but would not use again	Used and may use again	Used and would use again	Have not used but would consider using in the future	Have not used and would not use in the future	Not familiar with this / not sure
LinkedIn Learning	8%	10%	40%	23%	13%	8%
Coursera	5%	18%	25%	20%	13%	20%
FutureLearn	3%	10%	15%	33%	20%	20%
edX/2U /GetSmarter	8%	15%	13%	38%	5%	23%
Udacity	0%	3%	23%	43%	15%	18%
ServiceSkills.com	8%	3%	20%	33%	13%	25%
OpenSesame	3%	18%	10%	35%	8%	28%
eduCBA	3%	15%	20%	25%	13%	25%
General Assembly	5%	15%	23%	18%	15%	25%
Udemy	3%	13%	25%	25%	20%	15%
Emeritus	8%	10%	18%	43%	5%	18%
Alison	5%	13%	23%	30%	8%	23%

HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION MADE USE OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL PROVIDERS OF LEARNING AND/OR WOULD YOU CONSIDER USING THEM IN THE FUTURE?

India	Used, but would not use again	Used and may use again	Used and would use again	Have not used but would consider using in the future	Have not used and would not use in the future	Not familiar with this / not sure
LinkedIn Learning	8%	28%	45%	15%	5%	0%
Coursera	5%	33%	35%	18%	8%	3%
FutureLearn	5%	28%	35%	15%	3%	15%
edX/2U /GetSmarter	3%	33%	25%	28%	5%	8%
Udacity	15%	25%	43%	5%	13%	0%
ServiceSkills.com	8%	28%	33%	18%	5%	10%
OpenSesame	5%	30%	25%	15%	10%	15%
eduCBA	0%	35%	25%	20%	8%	13%
General Assembly	10%	28%	20%	23%	8%	13%
Udemy	5%	25%	45%	10%	10%	5%
Emeritus	3%	33%	28%	23%	8%	8%
Alison	5%	25%	28%	15%	8%	20%

VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF UNIVERSITIES

UNIVERSITIES SHOULD ...

	China	Hong Kong	India
Continue to develop more flexible approaches to learning	33%	28%	53%
Provide clearer routes to enable and support lifelong learners	23%	43%	58%
Develop more inexpensive programs to deliver relevant skills for those working	30%	28%	50%
Develop a wider range of short courses	38%	20%	50%
Be clearer about how their offer positively impacts wider society not just business and industry	38%	18%	60%
Be more responsive to employer needs	25%	28%	60%
Be more innovative in their development of lifelong learning	38%	28%	58%

Values represent "Definitely Agree"

SOURCES LIKELY TO BE USED WHEN SEARCHING FOR PROVIDERS TO USE FOR LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	China	Hong Kong	India
Online search	43%	23%	60%
YouTube	23%	38%	75%
LinkedIn	30%	25%	65%
Recommendation from a colleague/friend	40%	35%	35%
Employer partner endorsements	45%	20%	45%
Previous provider	30%	28%	25%
University website	35%	28%	50%
Organisation I have previously worked at	25%	25%	45%
Institution where I have previously studied	18%	10%	30%
Quality benchmarks	35%	23%	50%
Membership body in the HR/L&D fields	43%	23%	43%
University rankings	28%	28%	50%
Twitter/X	20%	20%	43%
Instagram	20%	18%	53%
Other (please specify)	0%	0%	3%
None of these	0%	0%	0%

SKILL DEMAND



China	Key skill, widely available when recruiting	Key skill, not widely available when recruiting
Agility	33%	43%
Risk Management	53%	30%
Decision making in uncertain and complex times	38%	40%
Responsible management	40%	45%
Crisis management	45%	43%
Innovation	53%	33%
Leadership	43%	35%
Productivity and operational efficiency	55%	30%
Risk management	53%	30%
Strategy	43%	48%
Business development	53%	35%
Collaboration across virtual teams, alliances and partners	45%	40%
Managing across cultures	43%	33%
Negotiation	40%	35%
Managing a multi-generational, diverse workforce	50%	35%
Creativity	58%	30%
Ethics and ethical behaviours	48%	45%
Social impact	40%	38%
Sustainability	33%	53%
Marketing	38%	43%
Communications	43%	38%
Diversity, equality & inclusion	45%	50%
Entrepreneurship	25%	45%

THINKING ABOUT NON-TECHNOLOGY SKILLS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION TO SUCCEED OVER THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS, HOW WOULD YOU CATEGORISE THOSE LISTED HERE?



Hog Kong	Key skill, widely available when recruiting	Key skill, not widely available when recruiting
Agility	25%	53%
Risk Management	35%	25%
Decision making in uncertain and complex times	35%	43%
Responsible management	33%	35%
Crisis management	35%	35%
Innovation	30%	35%
Leadership	28%	43%
Productivity and operational efficiency	40%	25%
Risk management	35%	25%
Strategy	25%	30%
Business development	33%	43%
Collaboration across virtual teams, alliances and partners	33%	50%
Managing across cultures	18%	45%
Negotiation	28%	35%
Managing a multi-generational, diverse workforce	30%	30%
Creativity	35%	38%
Ethics and ethical behaviours	30%	20%
Social impact	30%	30%
Sustainability	25%	25%
Marketing	23%	45%
Communications	53%	25%
Diversity, equality & inclusion	25%	28%
Entrepreneurship	23%	35%

THINKING ABOUT NON-TECHNOLOGY SKILLS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION TO SUCCEED OVER THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS, HOW WOULD YOU CATEGORISE THOSE LISTED HERE?

India	Key skill, widely available when recruiting	Key skill, not widely available when recruiting
Agility	58%	33%
Risk Management	63%	33%
Decision making in uncertain and complex times	58%	38%
Responsible management	60%	28%
Crisis management	60%	20%
Innovation	63%	25%
Leadership	58%	33%
Productivity and operational efficiency	63%	28%
Risk management	63%	33%
Strategy	58%	35%
Business development	68%	30%
Collaboration across virtual teams, alliances and partners	53%	33%
Managing across cultures	60%	28%
Negotiation	50%	35%
Managing a multi-generational, diverse workforce	55%	28%
Creativity	60%	23%
Ethics and ethical behaviours	65%	28%
Social impact	60%	25%
Sustainability	65%	25%
Marketing	58%	33%
Communications	78%	13%
Diversity, equality & inclusion	60%	35%
Entrepreneurship	48%	38%

THINKING ABOUT NON-TECHNOLOGY SKILLS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION TO SUCCEED OVER THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS, HOW WOULD YOU CATEGORISE THOSE LISTED HERE?



THINKING ABOUT TECHNOLOGY SKILLS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION TO SUCCEED OVER THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS, HOW WOULD YOU CATEGORISE THOSE LISTED HERE?



		Artificial intelligence	Blockchain	Cybersecurity	Data analytics and data-driven decision making	Digital literacy	Digital marketing	Digital transformation	E-commerce	Metaverse	Augmented/visual reality
China	Key skill, widely available when recruiting	60%	38%	48%	53%	48%	43%	53%	48%	35%	38%
	Key skill, not widely available when recruiting	28%	40%	40%	38%	40%	45%	38%	33%	33%	48%
Hong Kong	Key skill, widely available when recruiting	33%	20%	38%	25%	25%	28%	20%	20%	10%	20%
	Key skill, not widely available when recruiting	50%	40%	25%	38%	35%	33%	48%	40%	38%	30%
India	Key skill, widely available when recruiting	65%	50%	55%	68%	70%	70%	58%	55%	53%	55%
	Key skill, not widely available when recruiting	28%	30%	38%	20%	28%	20%	25%	35%	30%	38%

HOW AND WHERE TO LEARN



WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS FOR YOUR STAFF?

		No	Maybe	Yes
China	Sending them to study face-to-face with a provider in a country where they are not primarily based for work	10%	55%	30%
	Have them take a course online with a university in a country where they are not primarily based for work	8%	38%	55%
Hong Kong	Sending them to study face-to-face with a provider in a country where they are not primarily based for work	13%	60%	28%
	Have them take a course online with a university in a country where they are not primarily based for work	13%	50%	38%
India	Sending them to study face-to-face with a provider in a country where they are not primarily based for work	15%	33%	53%
	Have them take a course online with a university in a country where they are not primarily based for work	5%	33%	63%

IF YOUR STAFF WERE TO LEARN ALL OR PART ONLINE, WHAT FORMAT WOULD YOU PREFER?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Self-directed learning that allows individuals to study at their own pace rather than in fixed sessions with other learners	45%	40%	58%
Synchronous learning that requires all learners engage in learning at the same time	23%	25%	13%
A combination of both synchronous and self-directed learning	33%	35%	30%
No preference	0%	0%	0%

THE FUTURE OF WORK AND LEARNING



THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WORK, WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

	China	Hong Kong	India
I expect our organization to embed flexible working as part of its future operations	48%	35%	65%
I expect our organization to embed remote working as part of its future strategy	45%	33%	53%
I expect senior staff to work full-time in an office	28%	28%	53%
I expect staff to work longer beyond current retirement ages in the future	23%	38%	55%
I expect staff to change career direction at least once during their working life	33%	18%	53%

Values represent “Definitely Agree”

THINKING ABOUT LIFELONG LEARNING, WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Location of a learning provider will become less important as online provision becomes more sophisticated	5%	15%	43%
Measuring impact of learning and development will become key in selecting providers	28%	33%	55%
Our organisation will seek to build long term relationships with learning providers to build understanding of our business and maximise impact from learning	23%	20%	55%

Values represent "Definitely Agree"

A FLEXIBLE FUTURE



WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

		Most of our training now involves blended learning, involving a mix of face-to-face and online delivery	Short bursts of learning, delivered flexibly, are valuable in meeting our development needs	Customised programs tailored to my organisation are key to meeting our development needs	Online learning will become the standard approach to developing people in our organisation	Programs with a mix of custom and open learning provide a valuable option to maximise impact for individual staff	Learning that enables our staff to continue working while studying is a priority
China	Mostly agree	38%	35%	20%	38%	40%	38%
	Definitely agree	25%	35%	40%	20%	30%	30%
Hong Kong	Mostly agree	45%	23%	38%	40%	40%	28%
	Definitely agree	20%	33%	28%	20%	28%	33%
India	Mostly agree	30%	20%	23%	20%	38%	23%
	Definitely agree	55%	50%	68%	58%	48%	50%

HOW VALUABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING LEARNING APPROACHES FOR YOUR STAFF?

	China	Hong Kong	India
Webinars to bring together remote learners to grow the benefits of learning	25%	5%	45%
Subscription models allowing individual staff to personalise their learning	18%	8%	40%
On-demand video to supplement and extend learning	20%	10%	55%
Free learning updates that can be taken in an hour or less	23%	13%	43%
Articles on topics covered in previous learning	15%	5%	40%
Interactive online learning materials that track and confirm progress	23%	10%	53%

Values represent “Extremely Valuable”



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Invitation to attend the UALL & SCUTREA 2026 Annual Conference

Re-imagining Lifelong Learning in Higher Education

Join practitioners, academics, and policymakers worldwide to explore lifelong learning in higher education—its opportunities, challenges, and future.

Key Themes:

- Lifelong learning for a changing world
- Inclusivity & social justice
- Innovation & change

 **Venue:**
University of Warwick, Scarman Centre

 **Date:**
June 15th – June 17th, 2026

 **Travel Info:**
Closest airport: Birmingham International
(20min by taxi)



For more details visit:

www.warwick.ac.uk/conferences/spaces/scarman

Conference details including Call for Submissions and Registration will be available on the UALL website from September 2025:
www.uall.ac.uk/events&conferences
For any queries please email: admin@uall.ac.uk



THANK
YOU!
