When employees were asked what the most important skills new graduates were missing, responses were highest in the foundational knowledge category (24%), followed by professionalism (18%), experience (17%). However, when it came to the type of skills companies would seek to develop in their workforce in the coming years, all graduate attributes came in low, all under 11% compared with almost 50% responses leaning towards specific skills and knowledge such as specific types of software, programming or technologies, different types of management skills, and industry specific knowledge such as regulatory, permits, applications.

Similarly, for what post-secondary institutions could do better when preparing graduates, responses in the graduate attribute categories were all less than 11% but real-world experience and specific knowledge totalled 56%. When it comes to micro-credential programming 57% of responses fell into technical/hard skills compared with 15% for soft/professional skills and 28% for other. New technologies implemented over the past three years lean towards those in computer science and software engineering (48%) and operational systems (21%) also rated well above all the other program technologies (all 10% or less). For the coming three years the distribution looks very similar with most of the new technologies falling under computer science and software engineering but slightly higher representation across operating systems, mechanical and electrical engineering (ranging from 17% - 11%).

Roles/jobs difficult to fill in the past three years were highest (34%) in computer science and software engineering (including related design and developer positions). All other categories of jobs fell below 10%. Interestingly, while talent shortage and lack of qualified applicants were evenly distributed around 28% each, “other” reasons rated most highly at 36%. A closer look at responses under “other” shows that it’s difficult to attract candidates to either Vancouver or the Island due to the cost of living, qualified candidates are after the big companies with offices further east or in other countries, and difficulty in offering competitive salaries.