



## MINUTES OF 71ST IFFTI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

<b>Meeting</b>	71st Executive Committee Meeting
<b>Date</b>	13th April 2026
<b>Time</b>	10:30 -11:00 & 13:30 – 17:00 (ITC)
<b>Location</b>	RMIT University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Building 2, Room 2.2.007

### Present

#### Chairperson-IFFTI

1. Prof. Robyn Healy, RMIT University, Australia

#### Regional Members:

2. Prof. Liz Barnes, MMU, UK – Deputy Chairperson, IFFTI, Deputy Chair, Membership Sub-Committee
3. Prof. Margo Barton, Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand- Chair, Membership Sub-Committee
4. Dr. Vanessa Nichol-Peters, FIT, USA- Member
5. Dr. Circe Henestrosa, LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore- Member
6. Prof. Norio Nakanishi, Bunka Gakuen University, Japan – Member
7. John Lau, LCF, UK –Deputy Chair, Education Initiative Sub-Committee
8. Prof. Dr. Dennis Jie Sun, Donghua University, P.R. China – Member

#### Co-opted Member:

9. David Zajtmann, IFM, France- Chair, Research Sub-Committee

#### General Manager-IFFTI :

10. Surbhi Nijhawan- IFFTI Secretariat, IFFTI

#### Online:

11. Ms. Aditi Srivastava, Pearl Academy, India – Chair, Finance Sub-Committee.
12. Prof. Jose Teunissen AMFI, The Netherlands – Chair, Education Initiative Sub-Committee
13. Laura Washington, FDS TAFE Australia- Member

#### Apologies:

14. Prof. Gargi Bhaduri, KSU, USA – Member
15. Prof. Carolyn Hardaker, DMU, UK- Member
16. 15. Dr. Lisa Chapman, NCSU, USA – Deputy Chair, Finance Sub-Committee

### 1. Welcome to the 71<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee Meeting

The Chairperson thanked Ms Corinna and her team for arranging the Executive Committee meeting at RMIT University in Vietnam.

She welcomed the EC members and thanked them for making the effort to attend the conference in person.

### 2. Chair's Report

#### 2.1 Executive Committee Composition

The Chairperson informed the Committee that, following the 2026 IFFTI Conference, the composition of the Executive Committee would be revised to increase regional representation from Asia and Europe to five members each.

The Committee approved the proposal.

#### 2.2 Chair and Deputy Chair Tenure and Nomination Process

The Chair informed the Committee that the tenure of the Chair and Deputy Chair would conclude following the 2026 IFFTI Conference. It was noted that the Secretariat would initiate the nomination process for both positions



from the existing EC members.

The Chair also emphasized the importance of clearly defining the expectations associated with these appointments and ensuring that appropriate rules and procedures are established for future appointments.

### **2.3 IFFTI Faculty Exchange Initiative**

The Chairperson provided an update on the IFFTI Faculty Exchange Initiative, which was launched in 2015 to encourage faculty exchange among member institutions.

It was noted that, to date, 11 out of 50 member institutions have participated in the initiative, indicating that participation has been concentrated among a limited number of institutions. The Committee acknowledged the need to encourage wider participation across the membership.

### **3. Update from the Membership Sub-Committee:**

Prof. Margo Barton informed the Committee that she would be stepping down as Chair of the Membership Sub-Committee. She invited members of the Sub-Committee to consider volunteering to take on the role.

Prof. Margo Barton volunteered to be the deputy chair of the membership subcommittee as a way of providing support for the transition.

The Committee also discussed the Associate Membership category. It was agreed that the Associate Membership category should be removed from the IFFTI website and that, going forward, IFFTI should offer only Regular Membership.

It was noted that Associate Membership had originally been introduced to support newer and smaller institutions through a mentoring pathway. However, the Committee agreed that the membership structure should now be simplified.

The Committee suggested that IFFTI consider sharing a quarterly newsletter with its members. It was also recommended that a subscription option be added to the IFFTI website to enable wider outreach and engagement.

### **4. Update from Research Sub-Committee:**

David Zajtmann provided an update from the Research Sub-Committee meeting:

He thanked all members of the Research Sub-Committee for their support and contribution throughout the abstract review and full paper selection process for the 2026 IFFTI Conference.

It was noted that Daniëlle Bruggeman had expressed her willingness to step down from the Research Sub-Committee.

The Committee acknowledged the active contribution of Sayaka Kamakura from Bunka Gakuen University, particularly during the process relating to abstracts, full papers, and awards for the 2026 IFFTI Conference.

It was also noted that Prof. Erin Cho from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, had joined the Research Sub-Committee and participated in her first meeting.

Prof. David Zajtmann further stated that, following the completion of the 2026 review and selection process, the Research Sub-Committee looks forward to supporting the 2027 IFFTI Conference.

### **5. Update from Education Sub-Committee-**

The following update on the meeting with members of the Education Initiative sub-committee was given by John



Lau (Deputy Chair) to the EC.

**Attendees:** *Jurrie Barkel, John Lau (Chair), Claudia Ebert Hesse, Helen McCormick (in person), Jose Teunissen, Patricia Sumod, Maggie Tao, Matthijs Crietee (online).*

Welcome (John as Chair, Prof.Jose online)

1. Update on IAF, 20-minute survey results; **see attached**. Relevance of the outcomes was discussed. It was raised that IFFTI could work on a survey for their members to share with IAF and the industry leaders
2. Finalising the education/research workshop at RMIT Vietnam. Details were discussed on the delivery of the workshop.
3. Further opportunities. John opened a discussion on what themes should be explored for the upcoming year to work out for online talks and/or Regional meetings.

The following themes were set :

- **Future pedagogy/education workshops:** the workshop on AI was well-received and engaged with academics globally. There are current and common issues higher education institutions are facing globally, and workshops are a good method for sharing good practice.
- **Educational leadership** – to explore in future education subcommittee meetings. Last point mentioned in that we offered support to Pearl Academy in 2027 to help them to set themes around education and workshops

**6. Update from Finance Sub Committees-**

In the absence of Ms. Aditi Srivastava, Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee, the General Manager presented the IFFTI Budget and Income & Expenditure statement to the Executive Committee.

It was noted that the same financial update would also be shared with the members at the Annual General Meeting.

**7. Additional Points:**

**8.** The Chairperson thanked the Executive Committee members for their contributions and participation. The meeting was formally closed.



# International Apparel Federation

## Introduction and results of flash survey on education 2026

# Results so far of ongoing IAF Flash survey on education needs for apparel industry

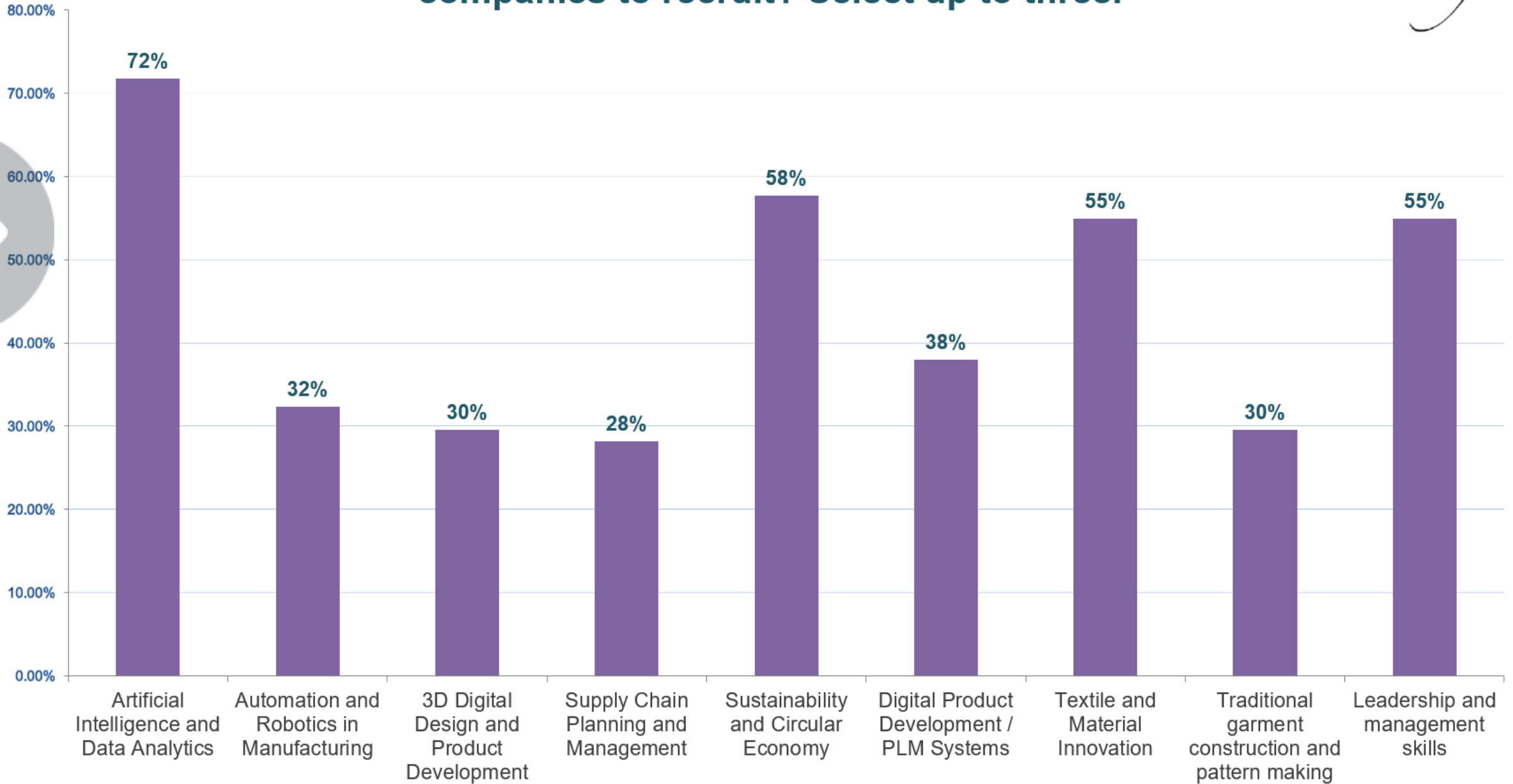
with replies from Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt,  
Indonesia, Morocco, Türkiye and Pakistan

The **International Apparel Federation (IAF)** conducted a short industry survey to better understand the **current and future skills needs of the global apparel manufacturing sector.**


### **Survey Methodology**

- **Respondents:** apparel manufacturers and industry associations
- **Total responses:** 32
- **Geographic scope:** multiple countries across the global apparel manufacturing ecosystem
- **Survey format:** short questionnaire including multiple-choice questions and open-ended responses
- **Focus areas:**
  - skills mismatch between graduates and industry needs
  - emerging and declining job roles
  - future skills shortages
  - attractiveness of the industry for young professionals
  - industry–education collaboration


# Which skills are currently most difficult for apparel manufacturing companies to recruit? Select up to three.



## *What job roles do you see emerging in the apparel industry?*

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- a. Circular Product designer: Plans the product's "second life" from the design stage*
  - b. 3D digital designer, capable of independently producing digital assets with physical properties (drape, elasticity).*
  - c. Automation and smart manufacturing technician*
  - d. Process designers and supply chain management experts.*
  - e. Data analysts.*
  - f. Talent development and workforce planning.*

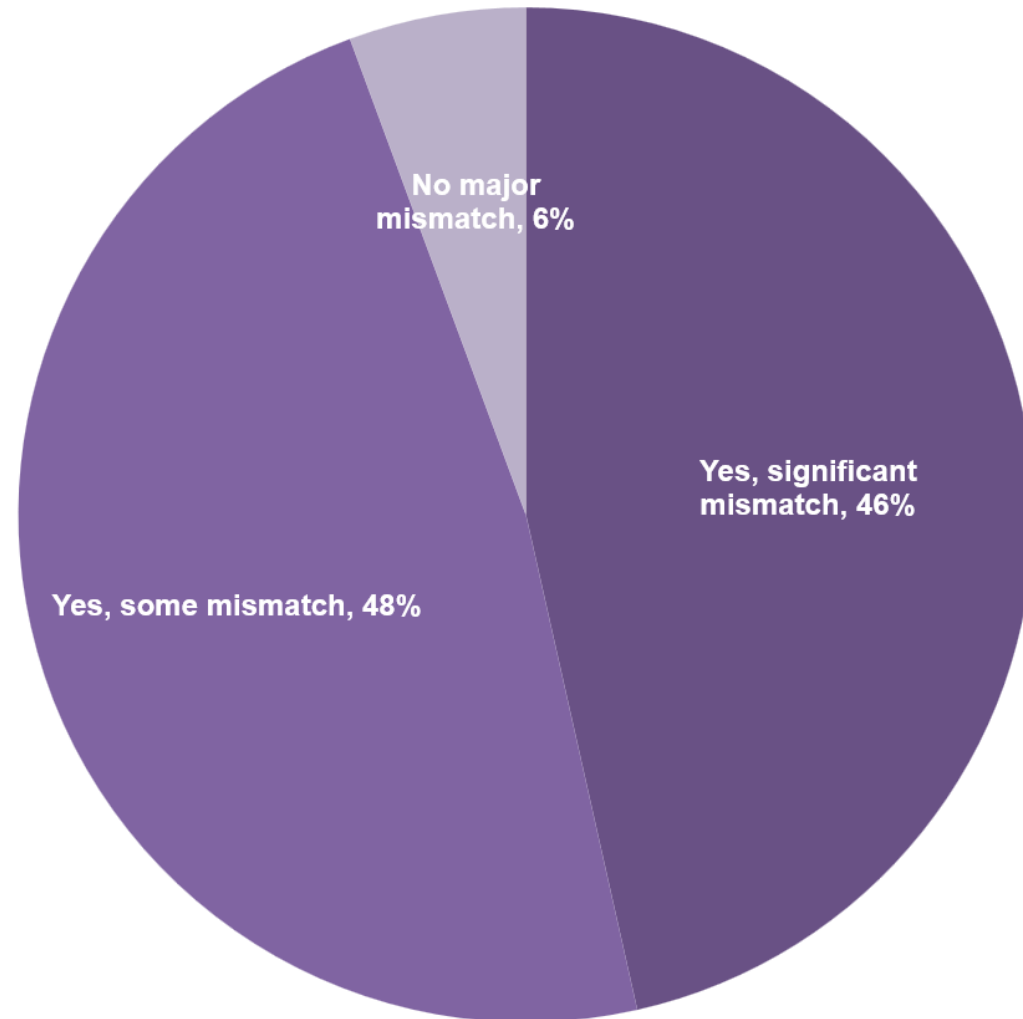
*What job roles do you see declining or disappearing in the apparel industry?*

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- a. Administration, data entry
  - b. Manual low skilled jobs like folding
  - c. Traditional floor management
  - d. Quality control
  - e. Manual pattern making
  - f. Process engineers.
- g. Some roles in the apparel industry are gradually evolving rather than disappearing, especially those involving repetitive manual tasks such as traditional sewing, manual pattern making, and basic administrative work. With the adoption of automation and digital technologies, these roles are shifting toward more technical, digital, and value-added functions.

## *What job roles do you see declining or disappearing in the apparel industry (2)?*

- a. Compared to last year, this year's survey includes the widespread belief that AI will make numerous jobs obsolete. At the same time, it reflects the uncertainty about exactly what jobs will be replaced and to what extent.
- b. The responses reflect the technology paradox in garment making, where the core basic operation, the sewing of the product, is actually among the hardest of all industrial operations to automate.
- c. The responses also pinpoint those simple or even moderately complex, manual, repetitive tasks which can be fully or partly replaced by AI, such as quality control, pattern making, folding and data entry. It also shows that certain more complex tasks at management level are expected to be replaced by AI, such as process engineering and floor management.

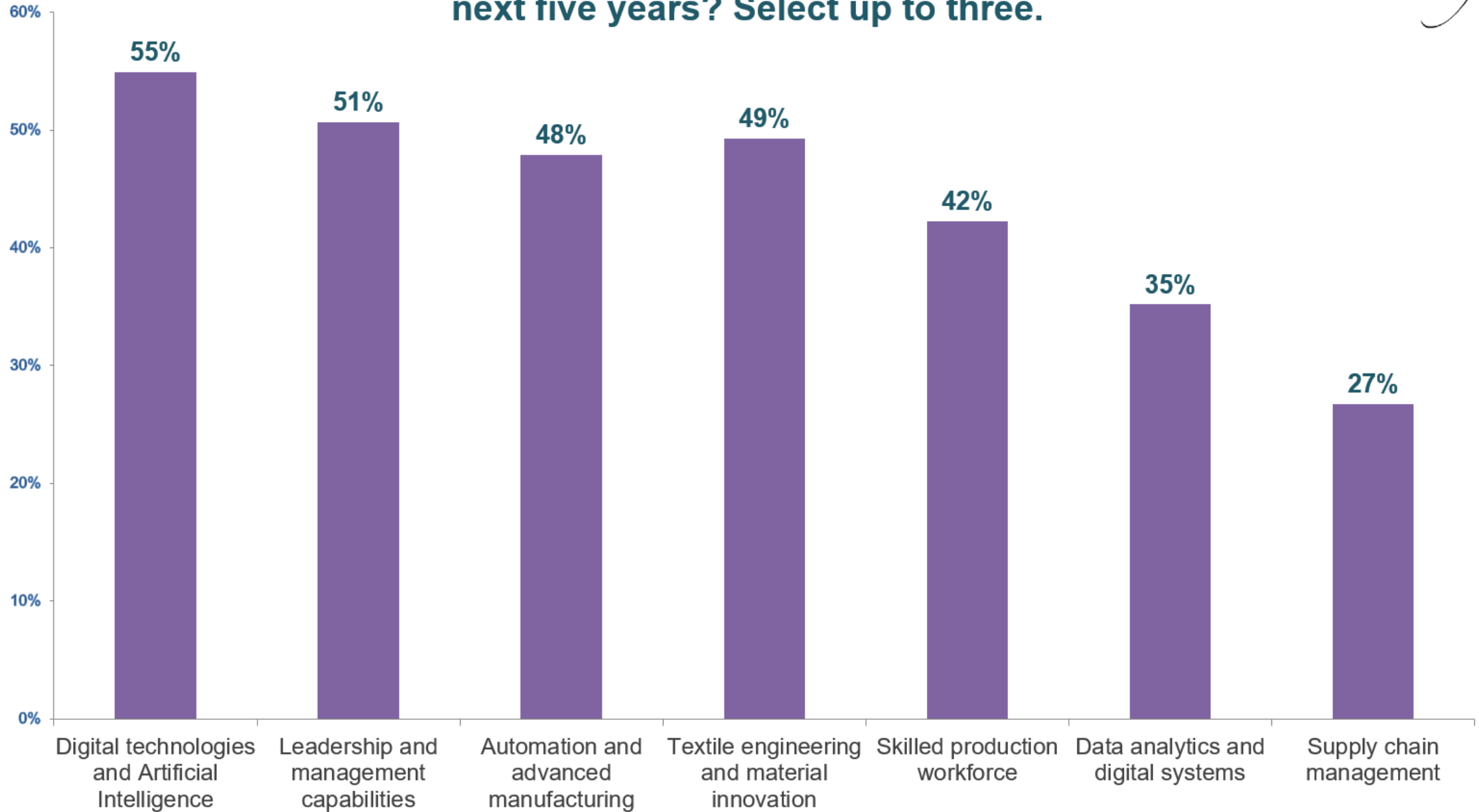
## Do you observe a mismatch between the skills the industry needs and the skills graduates currently have?



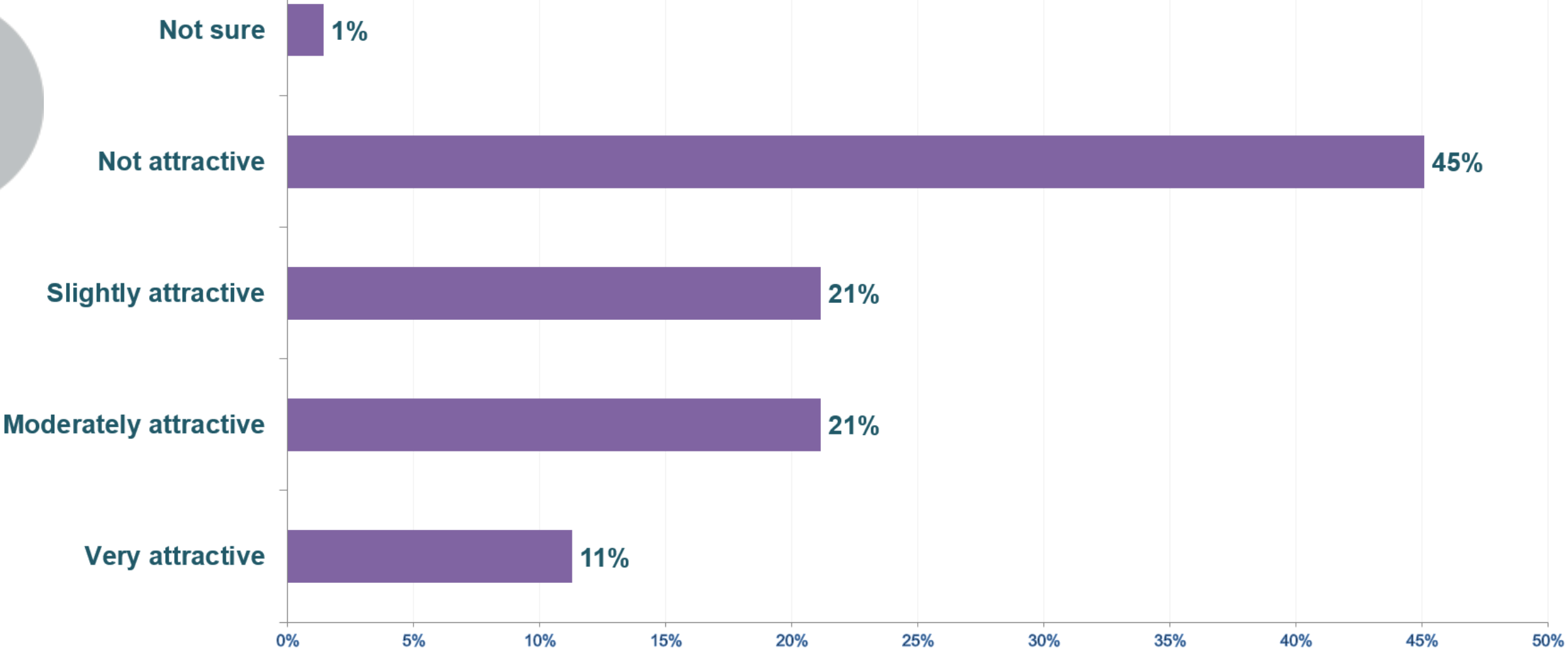
*Do you observe a mismatch between the skills the industry needs and the skills graduates currently have?*

- a. Traditional curricula do not sufficiently incorporate the use of emerging technologies and applications. Students are insufficiently exposed to projects demonstrating practical use or industry integration
- b. Lack of institutions that train mid management. “management maturity directly affects productivity”
- c. Organization of the production process (Including concepts of Lean Manufacturing)
- d. Companies are looking for "Digital Pattern Makers" who can create virtual twins that mimic real-world physics (drape, tension, and fabric weight). Graduates often lack the technical "fit" knowledge to make a digital garment production-ready.
- e. While fashion schools are still largely focused on the "romantic" side of design—sketching, hand-draping, and runway aesthetics—the industry has pivoted toward a high-tech, data-heavy, and regulated reality.
- f. "Data Fluency." Students can identify a trend, but they can't use advanced BI tools to validate if that trend justifies a 10,000-unit production run.

## Which skills shortages do you expect to become most critical in the next five years? Select up to three.



# How attractive do you believe the apparel industry currently is for young professionals in your country?



*If you believe the industry is not sufficiently attractive, what are the main reasons?*

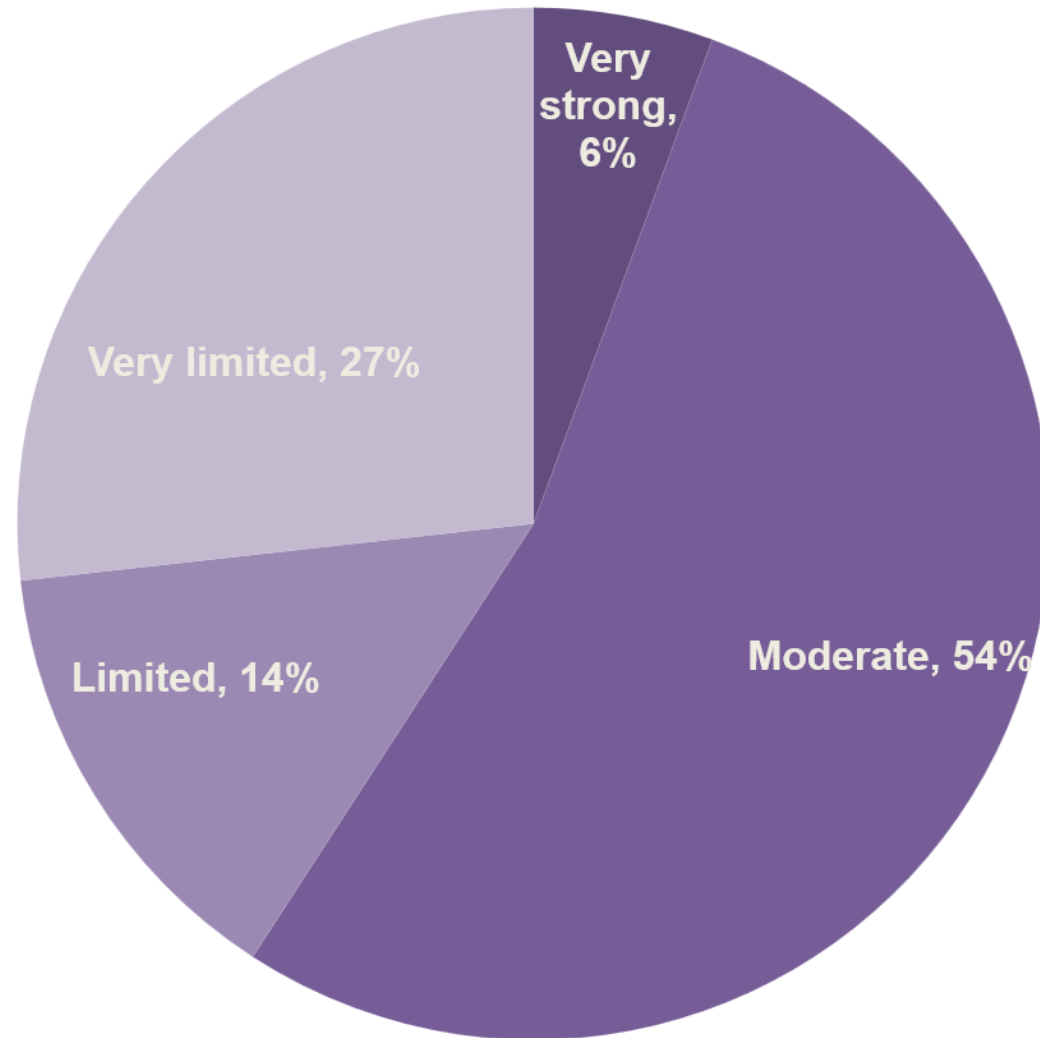
- a. Perceived as low wage, low tech, low prestige. Inflexible working hours
- b. This is partly a reality, partly a question of poor communication and promotion which causes a limited visibility of modern and high-tech roles, and insufficient awareness of career opportunities linked to sustainability and digitalisation.
- c. Poorly prepared managers; Companies in the sector do not have marketing and HR departments with a defined strategy for generating an "employer brand".
- d. There is no escaping the fact that the current prevalent apparel production system is hard on manufacturers, which translates to tough, less attractive working conditions. On the other hand, the exciting, pioneering and promising parts of our industry, where cutting edge technology is inserted into an inherently low tech energy, can be better marketed. This is both a collective challenge, but also an individual management challenge.

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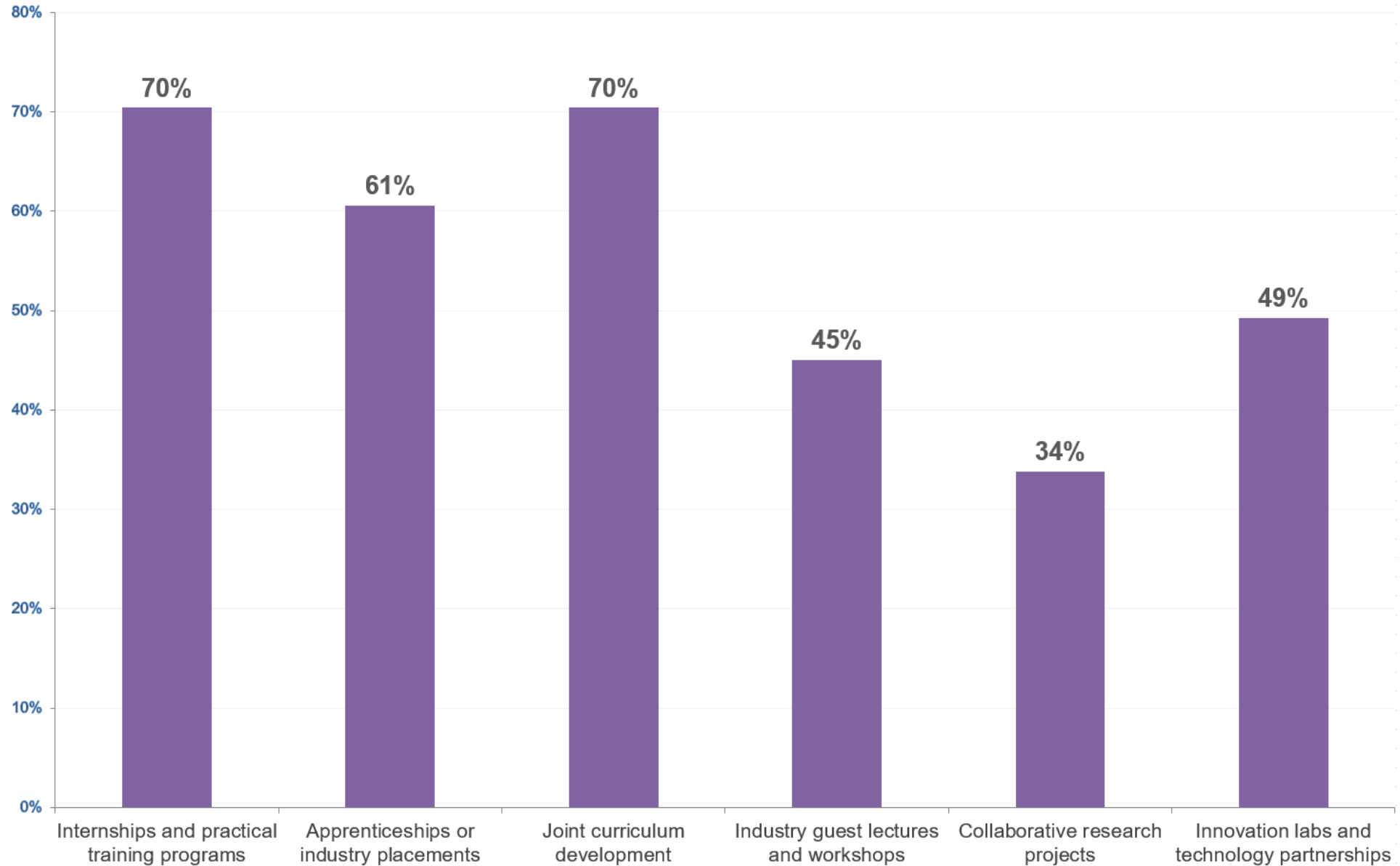
## *What could the industry do to become more attractive to young professionals?*


- a. Apprenticeships, workbased learning.
- b. Career progression opportunities.
- c. Market jobs in 3D design, AI, automation, and circular fashion as modern, innovative careers..
- d. Creating operational conditions to promote more flexible work schedules;
- e. Developing an "employer brand" strategy on social media;
- f. Better preparing leaders to promote talent retention.
- g. Raise entry-level wages – Compete with other sectors to attract talent.
- h. Partner with schools – Offer internships, hackathons, and digital labs to change the "old factory" image early on.
- i. Governments must clearly show that they still believe in the future of our industry

## How strong is the collaboration between industry and educational institutions in your country?



## What types of collaboration between industry and education would be most valuable? Select up to two.





What is the single most important change educational institutions should make to better prepare graduates for the apparel industry?

- a. Partner with the industry, expose students to industry realities and co-design programs that are relevant, practical and solution-oriented, thereby bringing education closer to industrial reality
- b. Better integrate practical, work-based learning and real industrial processes into curricula, including digital and sustainability skills aligned with industry needs.
- c. Upgrade curricula frequently to keep pace with rapid developments.
- d. Create centers of excellence offering consultancy and advise to manufacturing units. Create innovation labs and pilot projects
- e. Shift from "Siloed Creative Design" to "Integrated Systems Thinking"
- f. Create more interaction with the textile industry.

## *Conclusions from surveys and from IAF's further experience (2025 and 2026)*

- Industry perceives fastest growing demand and most difficulty for education to keep up with AI, automation/digitalization, sustainability, process-, data- and people management related skills .
- Industry needs graduates that bring a combination of both knowledge of and adaptability to evolving technology.
- Industry is looking for graduates with sufficient problem-solving skills
- Industry is looking for a mix of new and traditional knowledge and skills.
- AI will make jobs obsolete and also certain jobs. Much is still uncertain
- The difficulty with the fashion industry is that industry transition is often slow and its speed of transition always unpredictable.
- Industry can sell itself better to students. The industry is more attractive to work in than its reputation would suggest.

# IAF World Fashion Conventions

## 41st IAF World Fashion Convention & ITMF Annual Convention



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INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION OF  
FASHION TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTES

# Minutes

## MINUTES OF 71ST IFFTI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING CLOSING SESSION

<b>Meeting</b>	71st Executive Committee Meeting- Closing Session
<b>Date</b>	16th April 2026
<b>Time</b>	16:00 – 17:30 (ITC)
<b>Location</b>	RMIT University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Building 2, Room 2.1.004
<b>Attendance:</b>	
<b>Present</b>	
<b>Chairperson-IFFTI</b>	
1. Prof. Robyn Healy, RMIT University, Australia	
<b>Regional Members</b>	
2. Prof. Liz Barnes, MMU, UK – Deputy Chairperson, IFFTI, Deputy Chair, Membership Sub-Committee	
3. Prof. Margo Barton, Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand- Chair, Membership Sub-Committee	
4. Dr. Vanessa Nichol-Peters, FIT, USA- Member	
5. Prof. Norio Nakanishi, Bunka Gakuen University, Japan – Member	
6. John Lau, LCF, UK – Member	
<b>Co-opted Member</b>	
7. David Zajtmann, IFM, France- Chair, Research Sub-Committee	
<b>General Manager-IFFTI</b>	
8. Surbhi Nijhawan- IFFTI Secretariat, IFFTI	
<b>Attended Online -</b>	
9. Prof. Carolyn Hardaker, DMU, UK- Member	
10. Dr. Circe Henestrosa, LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore- Member (Online)	
<b>Apologies</b>	
11. Prof. Gargi Bhaduri, KSU, USA – Member	
12. Prof. Dr. Dennis Jie Sun, Donghua University, P.R. China – Member	
13. Laura Washington, FDS TAFE Australia- Member	
14. Ms. Aditi Srivastava, Pearl Academy, India – Chair, Finance Sub-Committee.	
15. Dr. Lisa Chapman, NCSU, USA – Deputy Chair, Finance Sub-Committee	
16. Prof. Jose Teunissen AMFI, The Netherlands – Chair, Education Initiative Sub-Committee	



INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION OF  
FASHION TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTES

# Minutes

**Discussions/Outcomes-**Each EC member shared their reflections and thoughts on the conference program and suggestions for future conferences.

**Circe Henestrosa** shared that the Conference was wonderful overall and very well organised. She appreciated the food, accommodation, and the apartment option, which added value to the overall experience. She observed that, since the Conference was hosted in Vietnam, it would have been valuable to see more papers presented by Vietnamese speakers, rather than papers on Vietnam presented by international speakers. She also suggested considering either keynote sessions or panel discussions, instead of having both.

**Prof. David Zajtmann** noted that the Q&A sessions during the paper presentations were particularly interesting. He shared that the level of interaction reflected strong audience engagement and meaningful participation.

**Vanessa Nichol-Peters**, as this being her First IFFTI Conference, appreciated the event and highlighted that the time between sessions created valuable opportunities for networking.

**Prof. Norio Nakanishi** appreciated the strong research-based papers presented at the Conference. He also raised a concern regarding one presentation by a colleague from Bunka, which was scheduled during lunchtime, resulting in very low attendance.

**Prof. John Lau** noted that the authors were confident, well prepared, and presented their papers effectively.

**Prof. Margo Barton** appreciated the high quality of the papers presented at the Conference.

**Prof. Liz Barnes** shared that the Conference was well planned and that the paper presentations were interesting and interactive.

A suggestion was made by the EC to consider reducing workshop duration from two hours to 60 to 90 minutes. It was also suggested that workshops could be scheduled earlier in the day, preferably on the first day after lunch.

**Prof. Robyn Healy** appreciated the Conference as a well-coordinated event. She further shared that Intellect would present a recognition award to selected paper presenters, with the award this year comprising a book from Intellect.

**Additional Point: Chair and Deputy Chair Nominations**



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# Minutes

The GM informed the EC that two nominations had been received for the position of Chair and one nomination for the position of Deputy Chair.

The Chairperson noted the importance of having a clear succession plan for these positions and suggested that this should be formally included in the IFFTI Rule Book. She further emphasised the need to clearly define the duties, expectations, and requirements for the roles of Chair and Deputy Chair.

The Chairperson stated that she, together with the Deputy Chair, would work on developing the proposed rules and framework for succession going forward. Until such time, the current EC structure would remain unchanged. All EC members present agreed to this arrangement

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