

The University of Surrey's Role in Influencing Graduate Employability

Professor Gill Nicholls

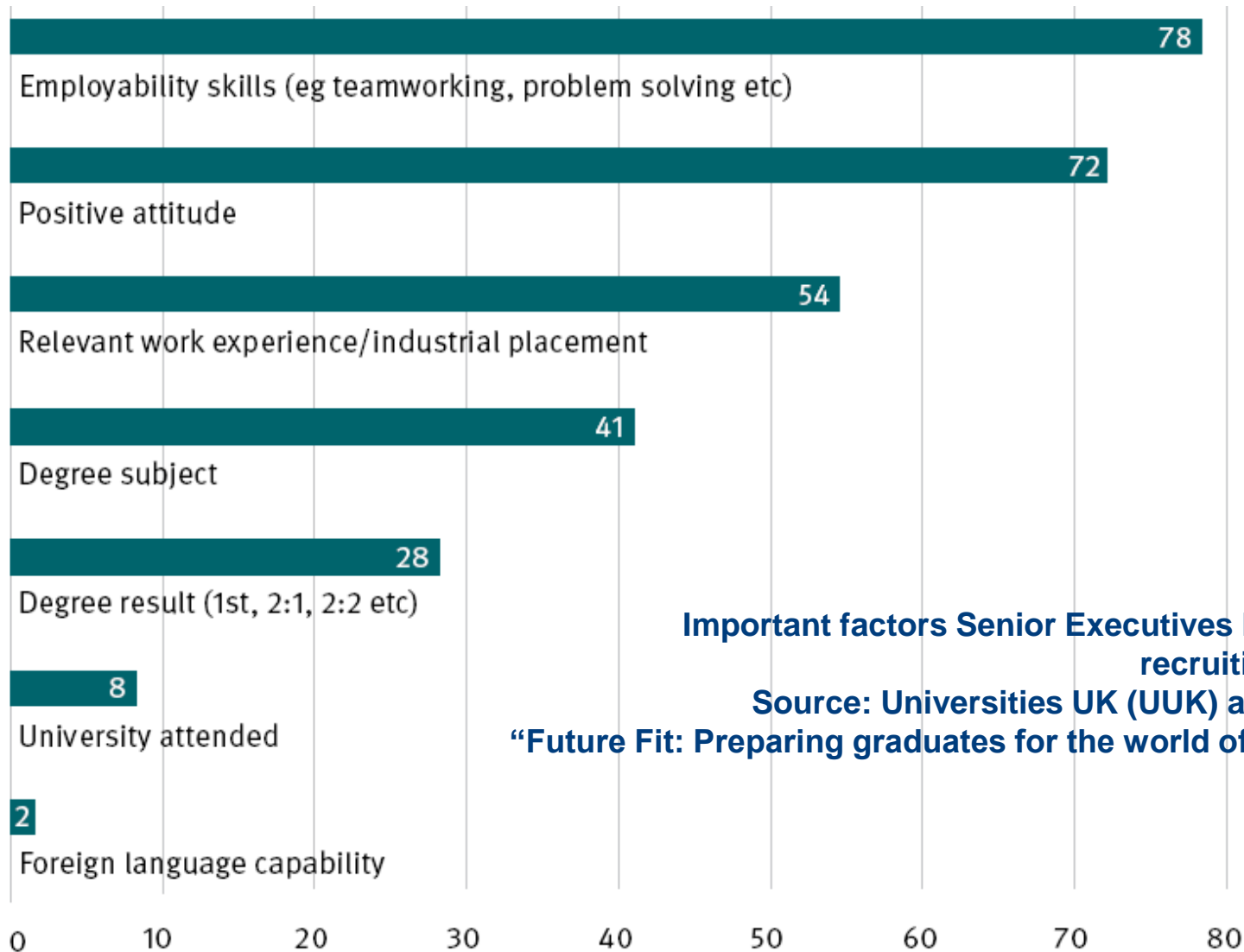
Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor
University of Surrey
g.nicholls@surrey.ac.uk

Universities and Economic Prosperity



- **Universities generate £59 Billion (€70Bn) a year of output for the UK economy**
- **Universities have a key role to play in creating a sustainable economy through:**
 - > **being a key provider of a higher skilled workforce**
 - > **innovation and knowledge exchange to the wider society**
 - > **the development of new ideas, products and services from research**
 - > **continuing to raise the education levels of citizens**

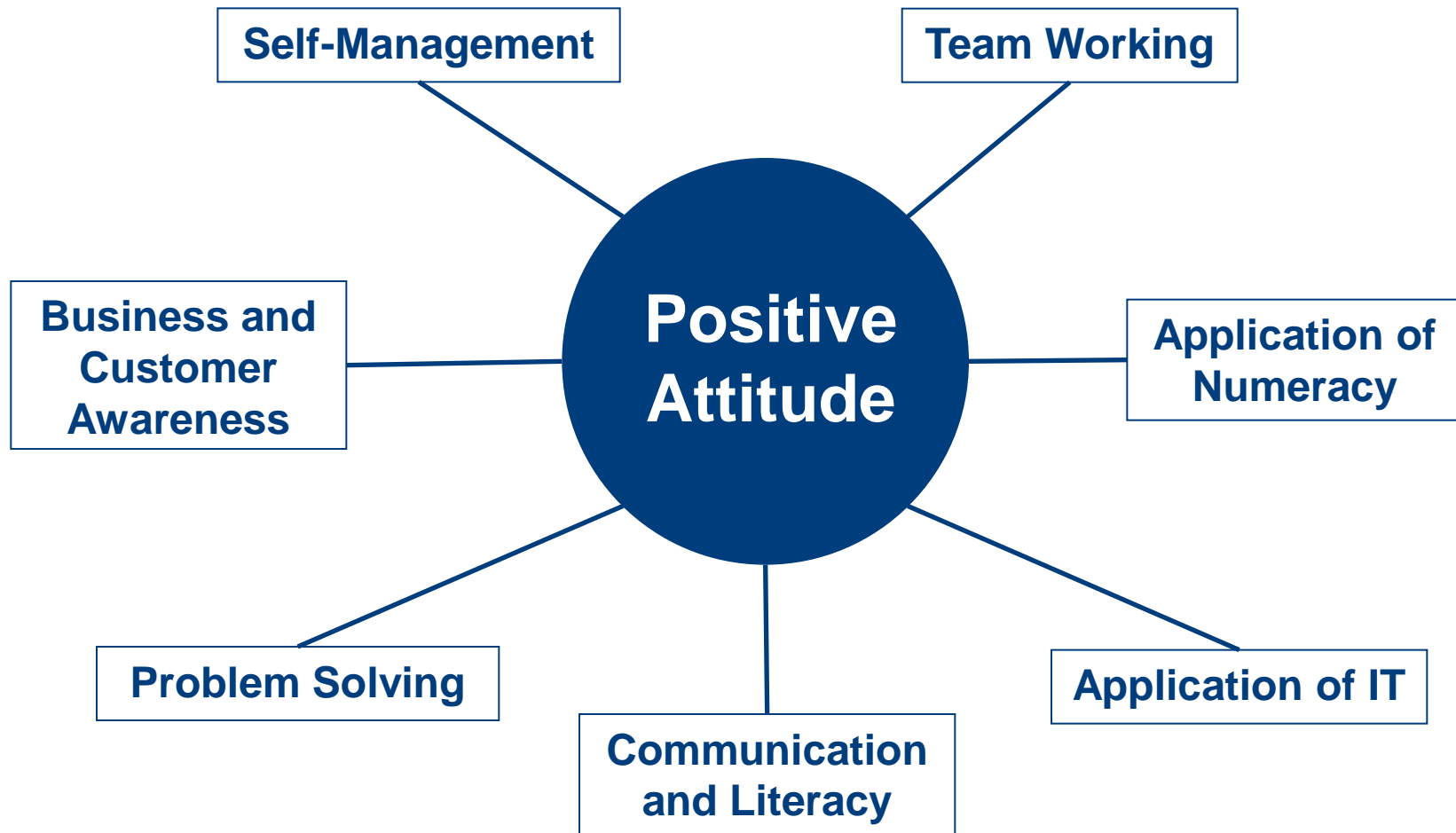
Understanding What Employers Seek



Important factors Senior Executives look for when recruiting graduates

Source: Universities UK (UUK) and CBI report "Future Fit: Preparing graduates for the world of work" (2009)

Employability Skills Businesses Need



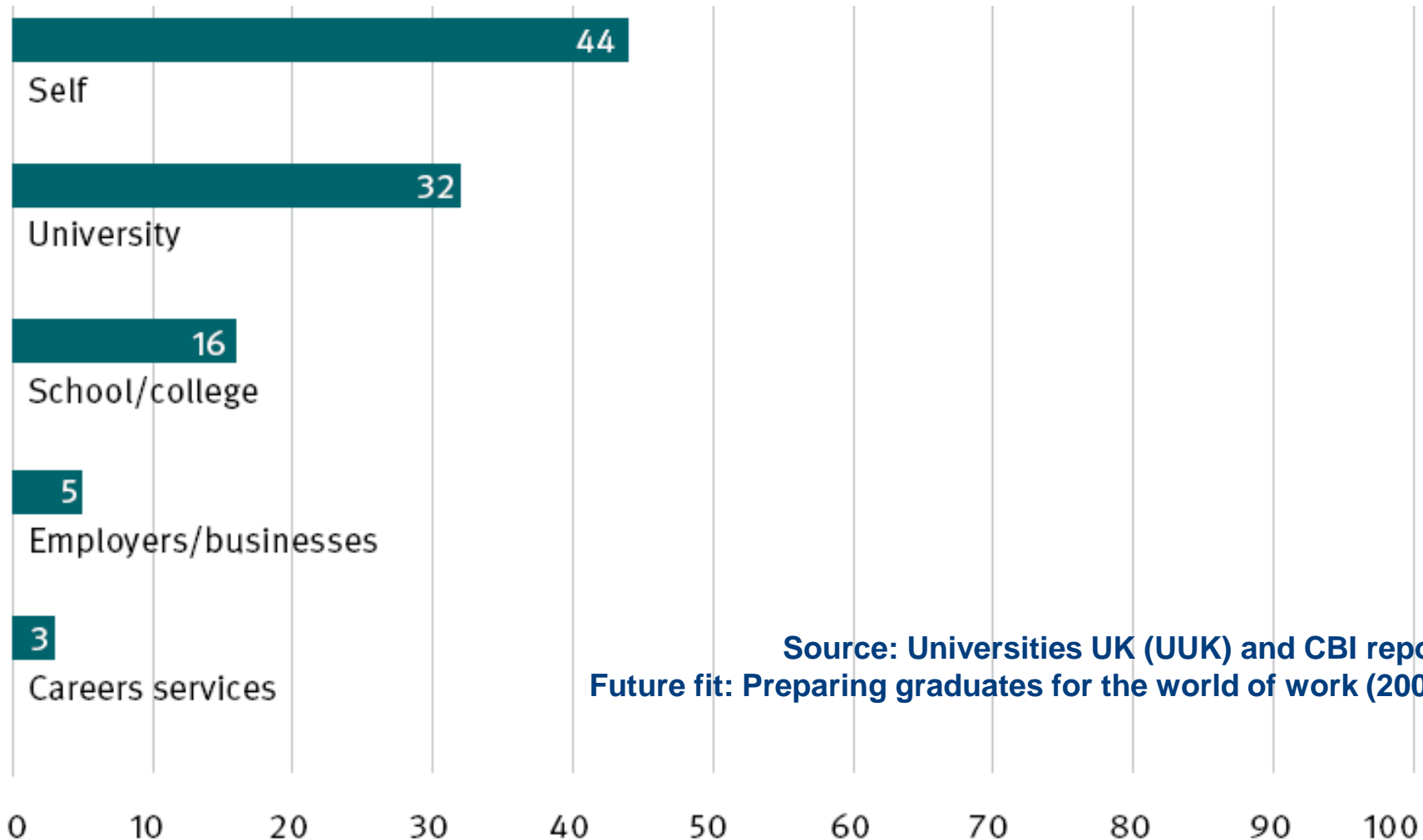
Source: "Time Well Spent" a report by the CBI for the Department of Education and Skills (2007)

International Employers

- **International Employers rate high employability skills but also look for a higher calibre of employee with:**
 - > **overseas professional work experience – 65% of international employers believe this makes graduates more employable**
 - > **a good degree classification – 70% value this highly compared to 52% of companies with no international dealings**
 - > **language skills – 26% of multinational employers place importance on language skills among new graduates compared to 5% of UK-only companies**

Source: CIHE Survey Report
“Graduate Employability: What do Employers think and want?” (2008)

Students View: Who is Responsible for Helping Them Acquire Employability Skills



Source: Universities UK (UUK) and CBI report
Future fit: Preparing graduates for the world of work (2009)

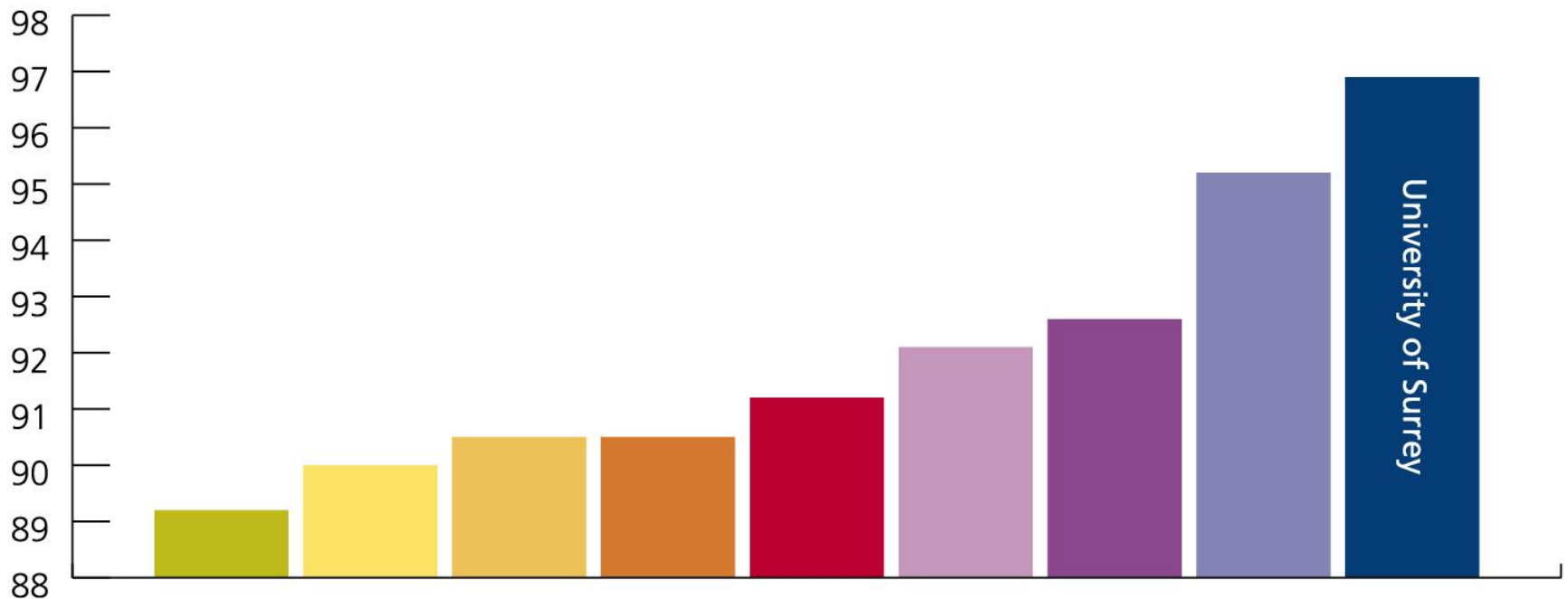
Case Study

The University of Surrey
Working with Business to give Students
a Competitive Edge for the Future

No 1 for Graduate Employment

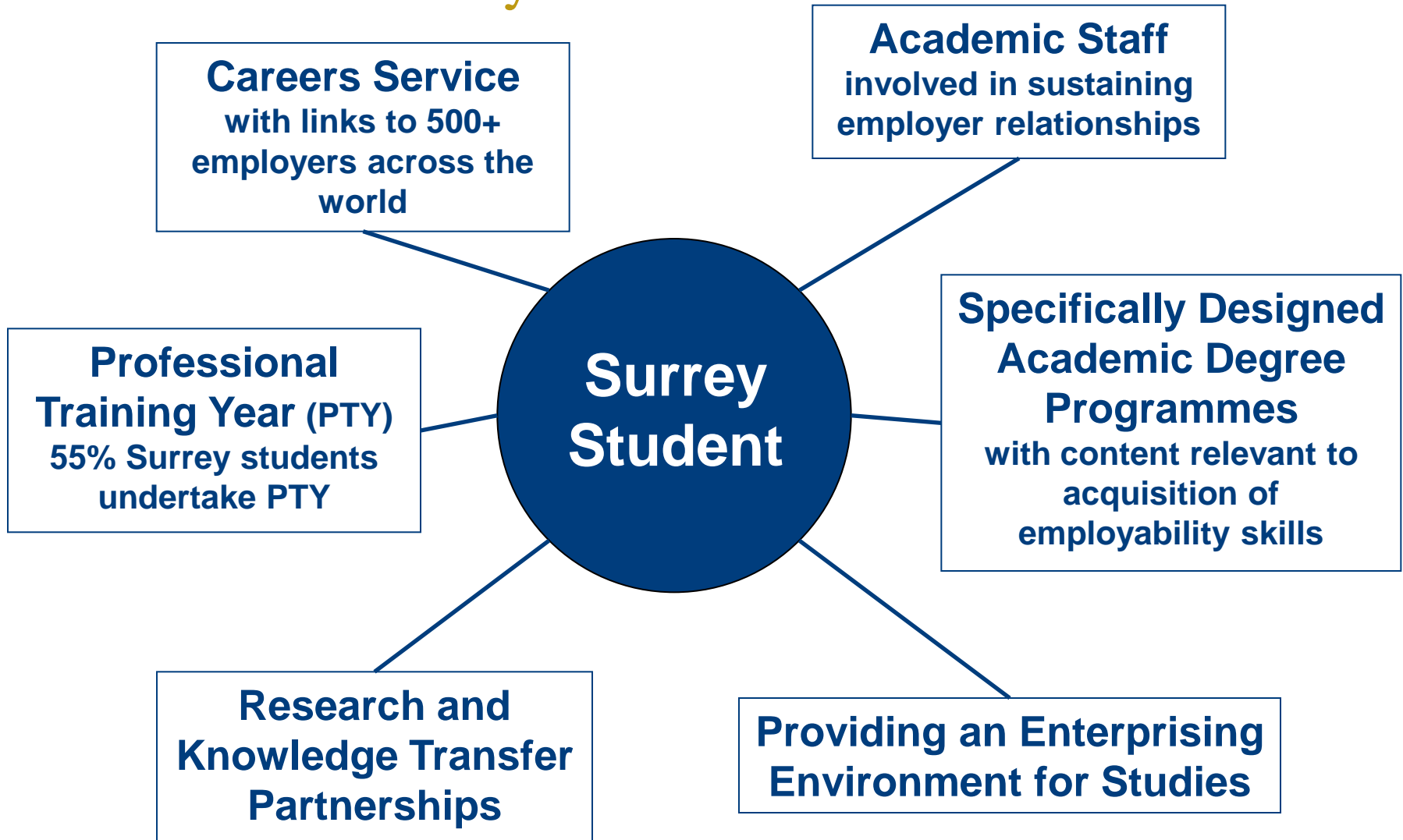
Selected universities

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| University of Surrey: 96.9% | University of Bath: 90.5% |
| University of Cambridge: 95.2% | Loughborough University: 90.5% |
| University of Oxford: 92.6% | Imperial College: 90% |
| University of Exeter: 92.1% | University of Warwick: 89.2% |
| University of Southampton: 91.2% | |



Figures from HESA (Higher Education Statistical Agency)

Creating Highly Employable Graduates at Surrey



Providing Valuable Work Experience



- **Surrey has been pioneering Professional Training since 1940s**
- **The Professional Training Year (PTY) is integral to degree programmes**
- **Students work in business and other organisations in a professional capacity**
- **Over 55% of students choose to do a Professional Training placement per year**
- **Students interests, academic strengths and career ambitions are matched to employer requirements**
- **We have placements in all major companies, research institutes, charities and hospitals in the UK**



ARUP



Harrods

AIRBUS



LSO

edf

YOUR M&S



CPS



Deloitte.



THE RITZ-CARLTON

Microsoft®

gapFORCE
SINCE 1989

Why It Works

- **The benefits of PTYs for students:**
 - > **gaining confidence, maturity and motivation**
 - > **providing focus for their final year of study**
 - > **confirming their career path**
 - > **opening their eyes to new opportunities**
 - > **experiencing jobs that they may not otherwise be considering**
 - > **40% of Surrey students receive direct or conditional job offers from their placement provider**

Why It Works

- **The benefits of PTYs to employers:**
 - > **valuable contribution to the workforce**
 - > **opportunity to engage with the universities**
 - > **access to high-level skills and innovative ideas**
 - > **potential to recruit talented and experienced graduate**

In Conclusion

- **The role of universities in the economic recovery is not to train people for jobs but to develop the skills and education to meet tomorrow's challenges for a skilled workforce and increase their capacity to innovate**
- **It's vital that Universities achieve very high levels of graduate employability**
 - > **to meet interests of student**
 - > **by achieving a high level of employability skills**
 - > **by understanding what employers seek**

But ...

- **We mustn't lose sight of the real purpose of why HE exists – as a place of learning to broaden knowledge**