# TOOLKIT 1: H-SKILLS RESEARCH
## CHARTING PERCEPTIONS OF (HUMANITIES) STUDENTS' SKILLS

## Short summary
- The ASSET-H team has conducted research to chart the perceptions of the skills of Humanities students at three European universities. In this toolkit, you will find information on the several steps you need to undertake to replicate the study at other institutions, both for Humanities students or non-Humanities students.
- These steps are: (1) define the relevant skills statements, (2) develop and conduct a survey and (3) conduct exploratory factor analyses. For those who need detailed information, we have added a reference at the end.

## Step 1: Define the relevant skills statements

For research on skills of Humanities students
- Inspect the 6 skills clusters and 78 corresponding skills items used in the ASSET-H research. Consider whether you want to revise, add or delete items to better fit the students in your institution.
- Include distractor items, not related to Humanities students.
- See resource *"SkillsDescriptions"* for an overview of the 78 skills items and distractor items used in our research.

For research on skills of non-Humanities students
- Conduct a three-tiered pilot study to determine the relevant skills statements:
  - Open question to a sample of students: "Write down what skills you have acquired during and through your education.";
  - Cluster answers to question ideally using automatic tools like Word Space Models;
  - Label conceptual clusters using concrete skills items.
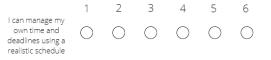- See the resource "*PilotStudy*" for more information.

## Step 2: The survey

Who?
- Target students, in our case Humanities Students
- Control group, in our case Pedagogy Students. Make sure that the distractor items used are related to the control group.

What?

The relevant skills items are shown in a random order. For each item, students have to indicate the degree to which they felt they had developed this skill during their university education (from 1 'completely disagree' to 6 'completely agree'). For example:

I can manage my own time and deadlines using a realistic schedule
    1    2    3    4    5    6
    ○    ○    ○    ○    ○    ○

## Step 3: Exploratory factor analyses

Exploratory factor analyses cluster the items that students interpret as similar into clusters, based on answer behavior and variance. For each cluster, researchers then need to manually create a label, based on the content of the items.

For example:
- Creativity cluster description: "Humanities graduates have an artistic side and thus have a knack for coming up with new and innovative ideas."
- Example item from the cluster: "I can think out of the box to come up with new ideas."

## More information

A full overview of the methodology used in this research can be found in: De Dijn, M., Jacobs, C., Zenner, E., Ihalainen, L., Palander-Collin, M., Peterson, E., Arens, S., De Baar, M., Touwen, J., & Heyvaert, L. (2023). Skills as stepping stones for employability: Perception research into the skills of Humanities students. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, 22*(2), 194-210.



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Identifying Humanities Skills.

Co-funded by
the European Union

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