

# Soft skills: how much are they a product of employment contexts?

Professor Irena Grugulis

- ▶ Important aspect of work
- ▶ In demand at key stages of employment

*But...*

- ▶ Lack of clarity

# What are soft skills?

self-promotion, exploring and creating opportunities, action planning, networking, matching and decision making, values and integrity, effective communication, understanding of work and the world, interpersonal skills, problem solving, positive attitudes towards change, negotiation, political focus, coping with uncertainty, development focus, transfer skill, self-confidence, communication, team-working, improving own performance and learning, problem solving, “such additional skills as employers may need over time”, leadership, emotional intelligence, trustworthiness, self motivation, positive attitude, initiative, entrepreneurial skills, reliability, commitment, loyalty, positive outlook, motivating others, cool and level head, decisiveness, put things into perspective, weigh up options, assess relevant information, anticipate consequences, ability to work under pressure, compartmentalize and set aside stress, time management, work within tight deadlines, prioritise tasks, organize diaries, attitude which allows them to take on new tasks, flexibility, ability and willingness to acquire new skills, open-mindedness to new tasks and challenges, willing and upbeat attitude, conflict resolution, establish rapport, listening skills, empathy, ability to ‘read’ others, creative thinking, decision making, non-verbal communication, presentation, persuasion, public speaking, reading body language, story telling, visual communication, adaptable, artistic sense, design sense, desire to learn, innovative, resourceful, thinking outside the box, tolerance of change or uncertainty, trouble-shooting, deal making, facilitating, mentoring, supervising, talent management, co-operative, courteous, energetic



▶ Tendency to individualise responsibility

# Employment relationship

- ▶ Pay rates
- ▶ Nature of job
- ▶ Routines