

**To cite this paper:**

Pesha A., Shavrovskaya M. (2022) Focus group interviews in the employers' opinions analysis on the sought-after professional competencies of young professionals. *Human Progress*. 8 (4): 20. URL: [http://progress-human.com/images/2022/Tom8\\_4/Pesha.pdf](http://progress-human.com/images/2022/Tom8_4/Pesha.pdf). DOI 10.34709/IM.184.20. EDN DCKQNG.

## **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS IN THE EMPLOYERS' OPINIONS ANALYSIS ON THE SOUGHT-AFTER PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

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**Abstract.** In the world events context and transformational changes taking place in the education system, the problem of the supra-professional competencies formation does not lose its relevance, on the contrary, it is gaining momentum. In this article, from the position of increasing attention in higher education to the supra-professional (universal) competencies formation, the focus group interviews results with employers' representatives are conducted from the point of view of this students' competencies development opportunities and the importance. The paper presents the results of 4 focused group interviews, in which 33 managers and HR specialists from various Russian regions took part. It was revealed in the study which supra-professional competencies employers consider the most important, whether there is a gap between the developed and existing students' competencies, whether it is necessary to expand the practice of using real employers' cases in the educational process. As a result, the authors draw conclusions about the confirmation or partial confirmation of the hypotheses put forward by the study. The work carried out by the authors opens up prospects for further research on the correlation of the supra-professional competencies' development and the professional activity success; and also the implementation of the individual development trajectories of higher educational institutions graduates.

**Keywords:** higher education; supra-professional competencies; labor market; young specialist; student; focus group.

**JEL codes:** D22; D23; J24.

### **Acknowledgment**

The research was carried out with the financial support of the RFBR as part of the scientific project No. 19-29-07435

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