



# Survey: How are professional economists using AI at work?

Ramin Nassehi (UCL)

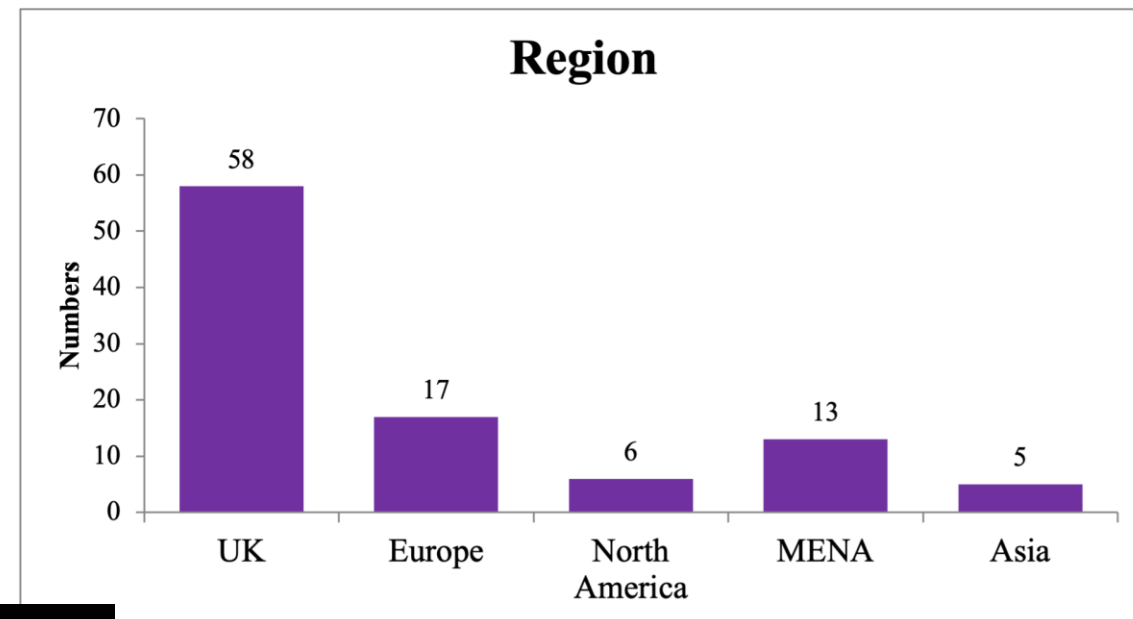
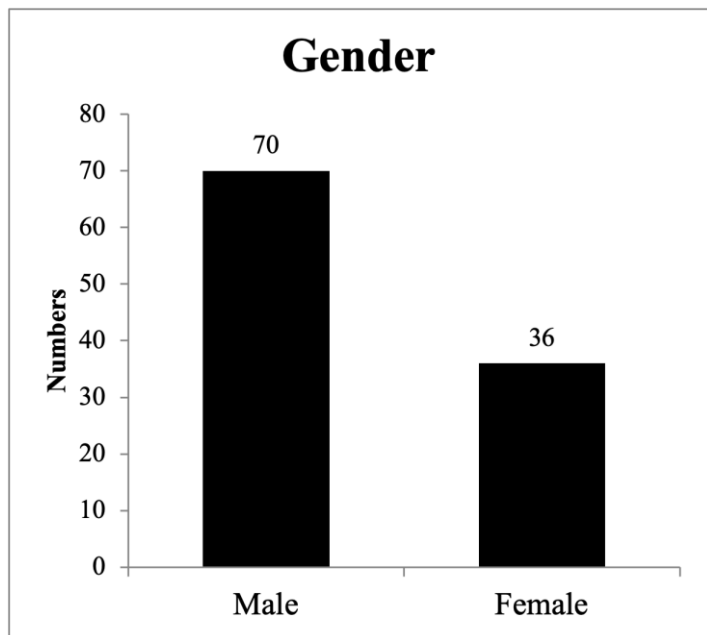
[r.nassehi@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:r.nassehi@ucl.ac.uk)

# Outline

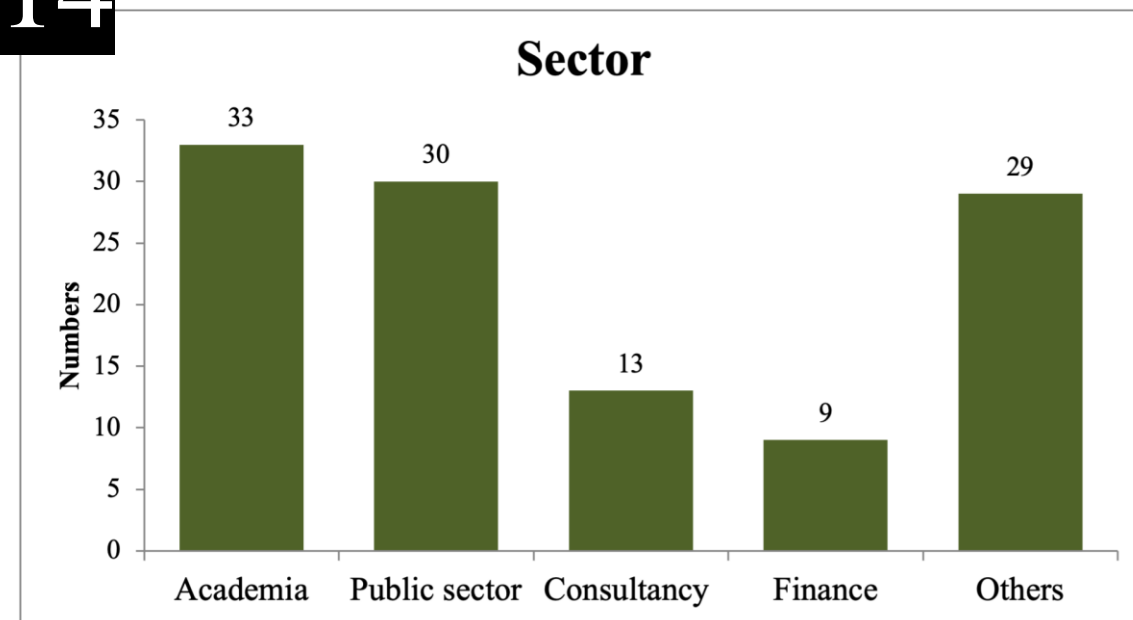
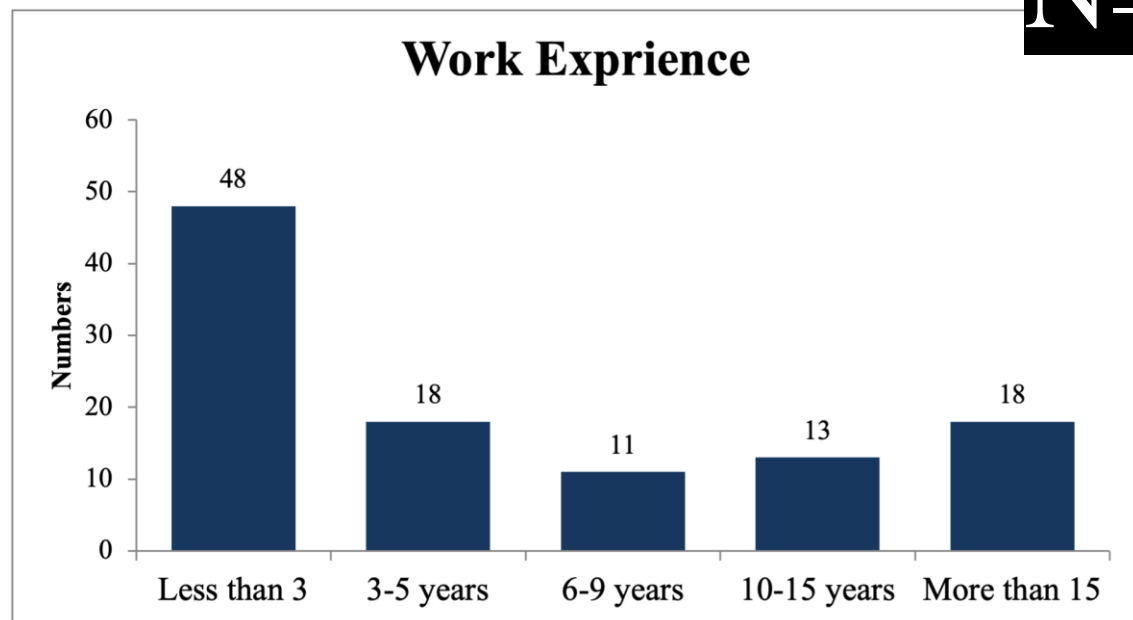
- Our respondents
- AI tools economists use and their institutional policy
- How economists use AI
- Essential employability skills for new graduates
- Challenges facing economists when using AI
- Survey questions

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- **Our respondents**
- AI tools economists use and their institutional policy
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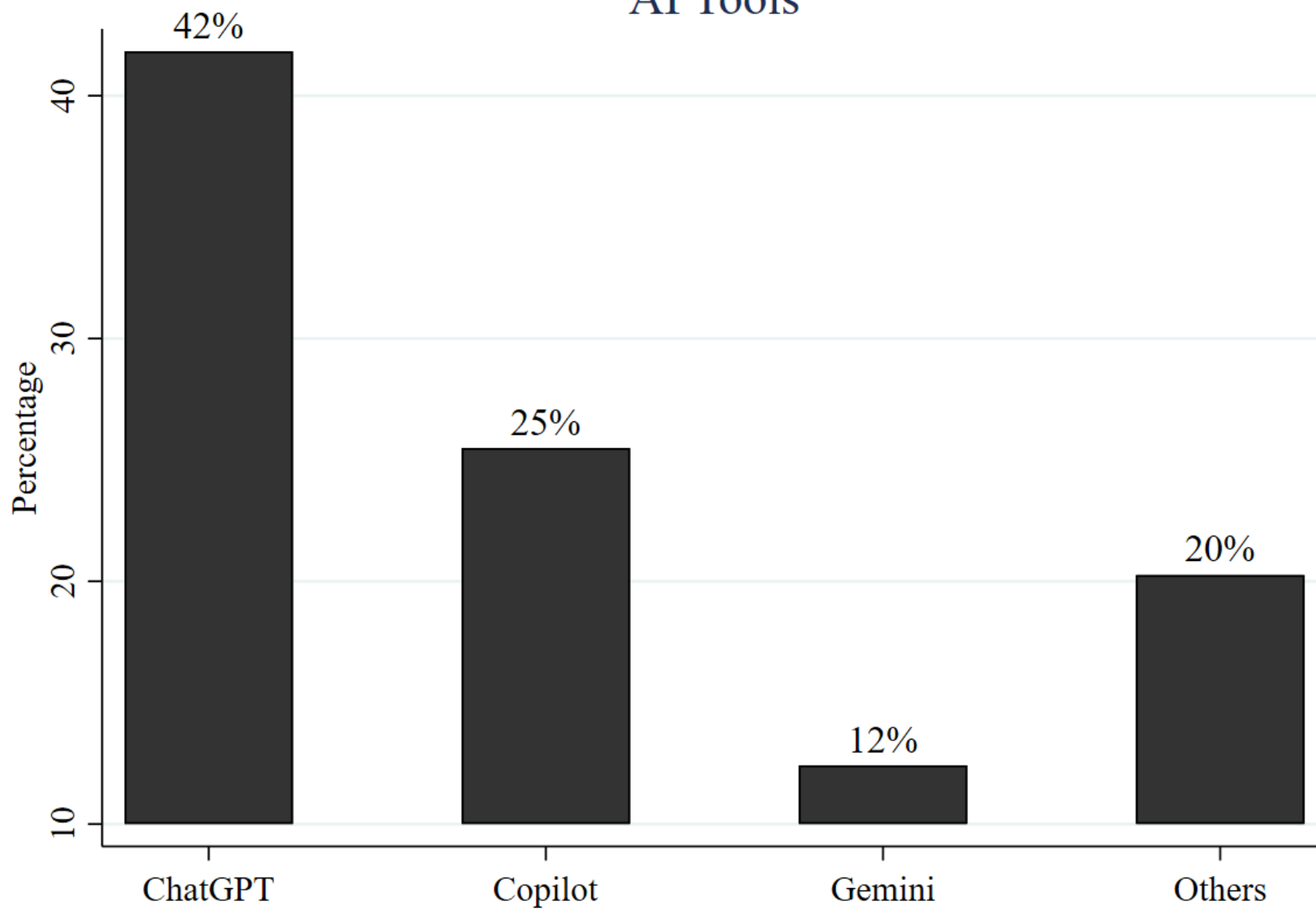
**N= 114**



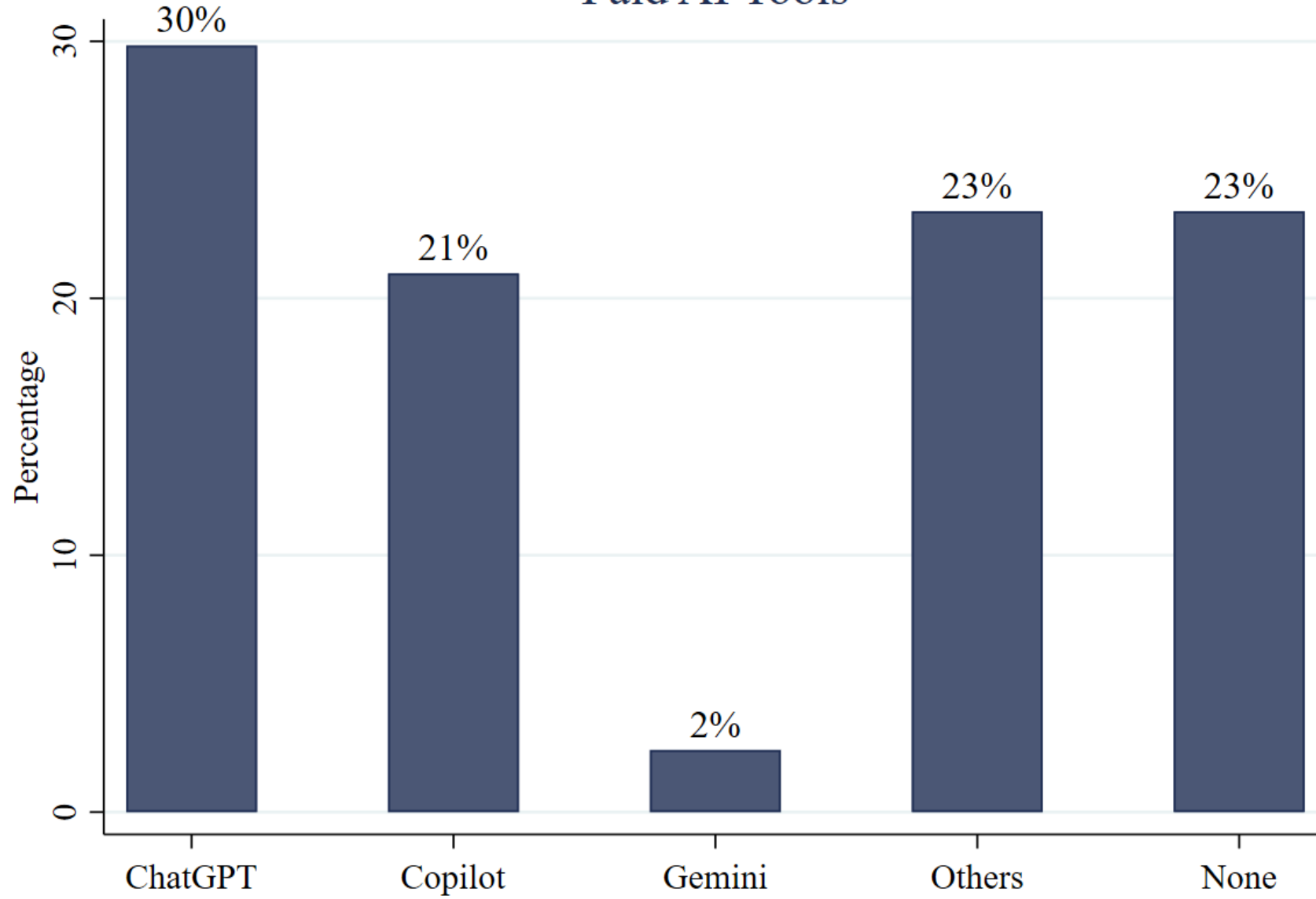
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## AI Tools



## Paid AI Tools



Organisational AI-usage guidelines

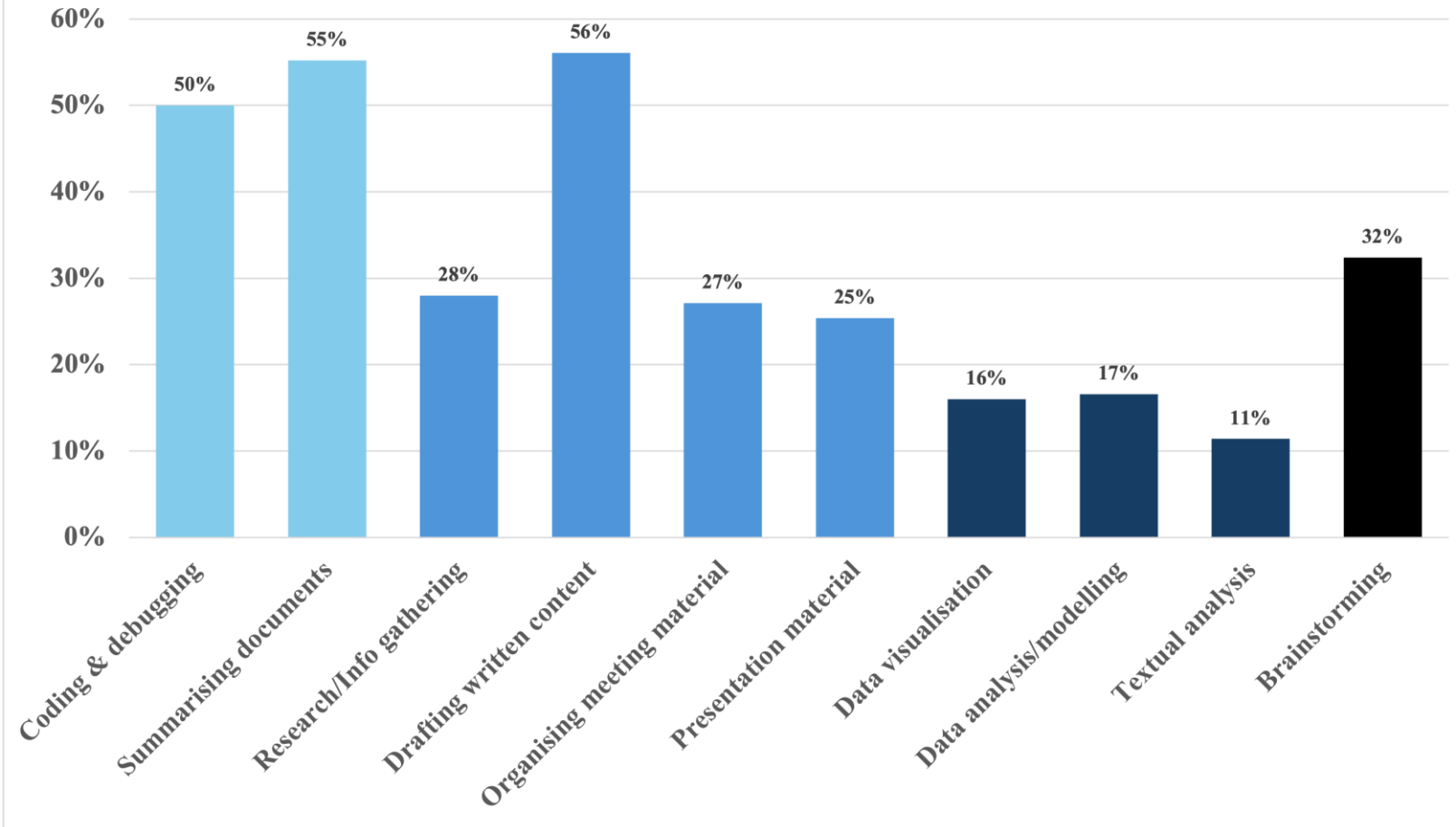
Guideline	Percentage
No official guidelines have been established by the organisation yet	25 %
Only approved AI tools can be used	31 %
AI can be used for some sensitive activities (eg, emails) but not to produce content	9 %
AI can be used to produce content but must be reviewed by a human before use	17 %
AI tools are banned entirely in the workplace	1 %
Other	8 %



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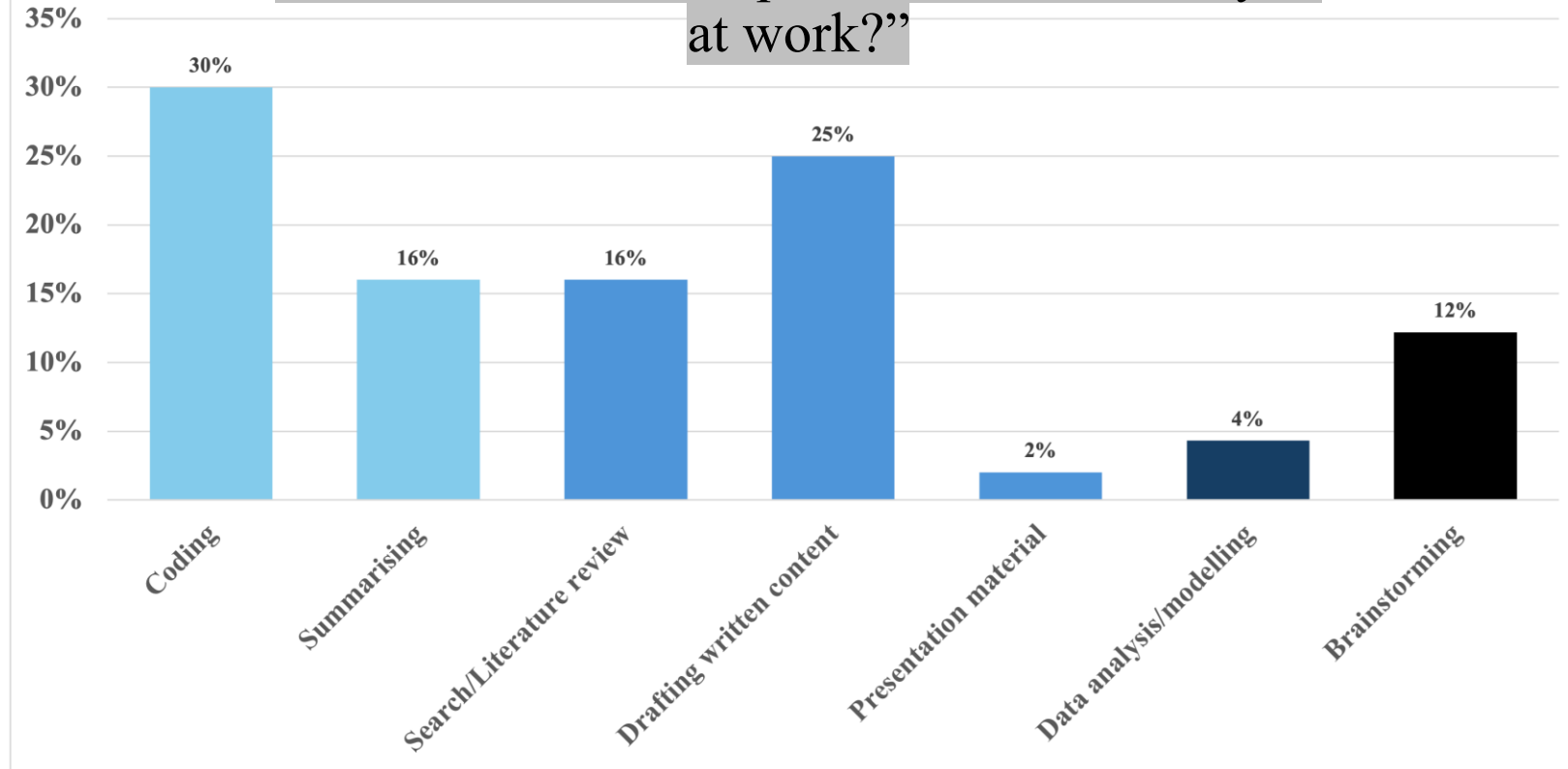
## “How do you use AI in your work?”



Analytically narrow  
(Well defined)

Analytically broad  
(Open ended)

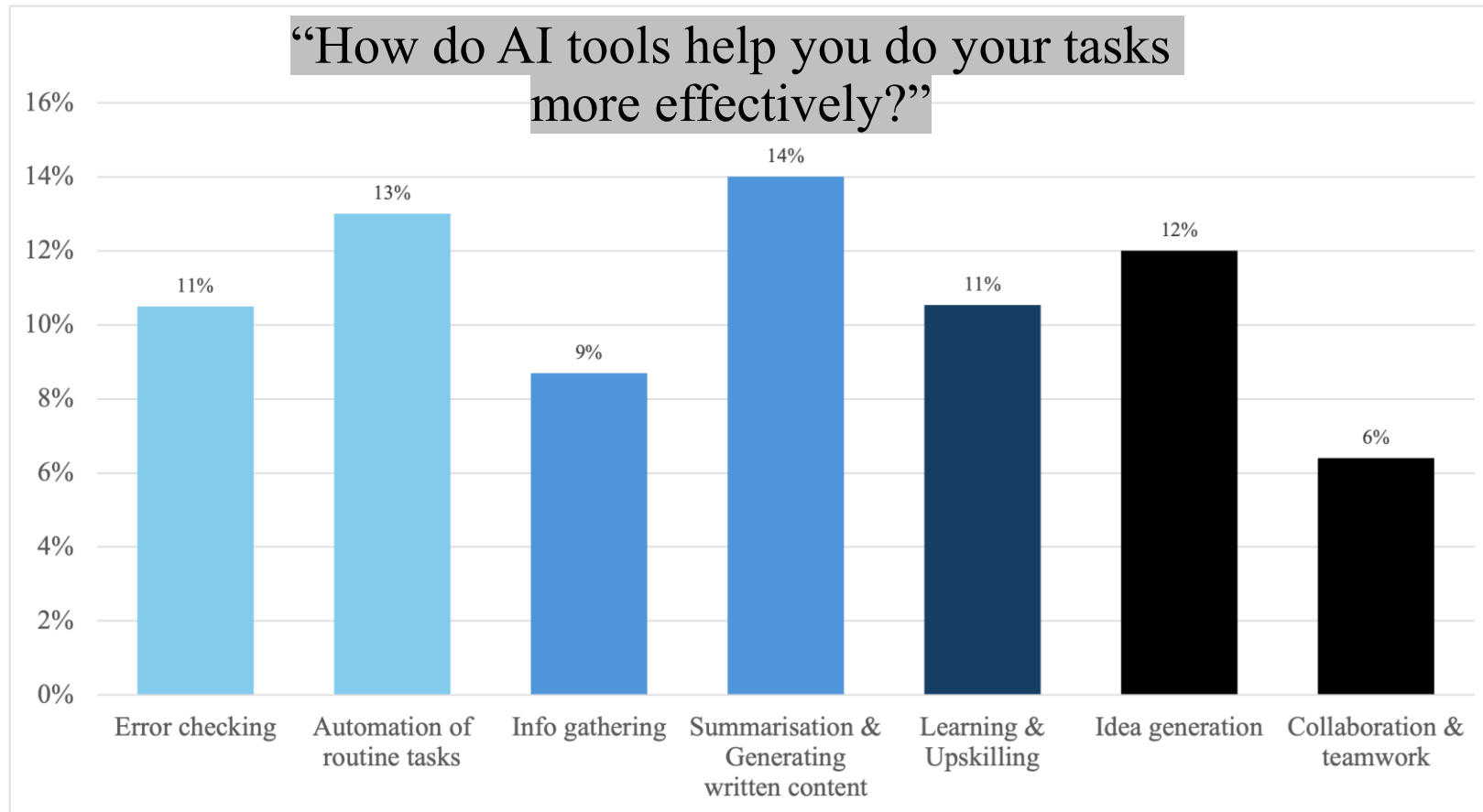
“What is the most important use of AI for you at work?”



Analytically narrow  
(Well defined)

Analytically broad  
(Open ended)

“How do AI tools help you do your tasks more effectively?”



Analytically narrow  
(Well defined)

Analytically broad  
(Open ended)

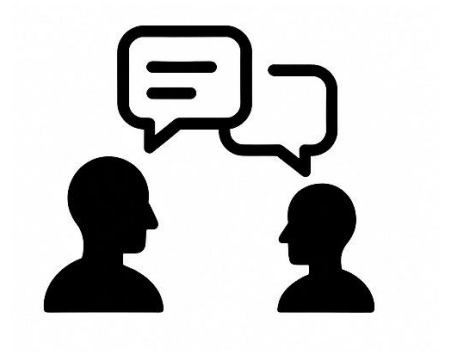
# Finding 1: Economists are using AI



As a Tool



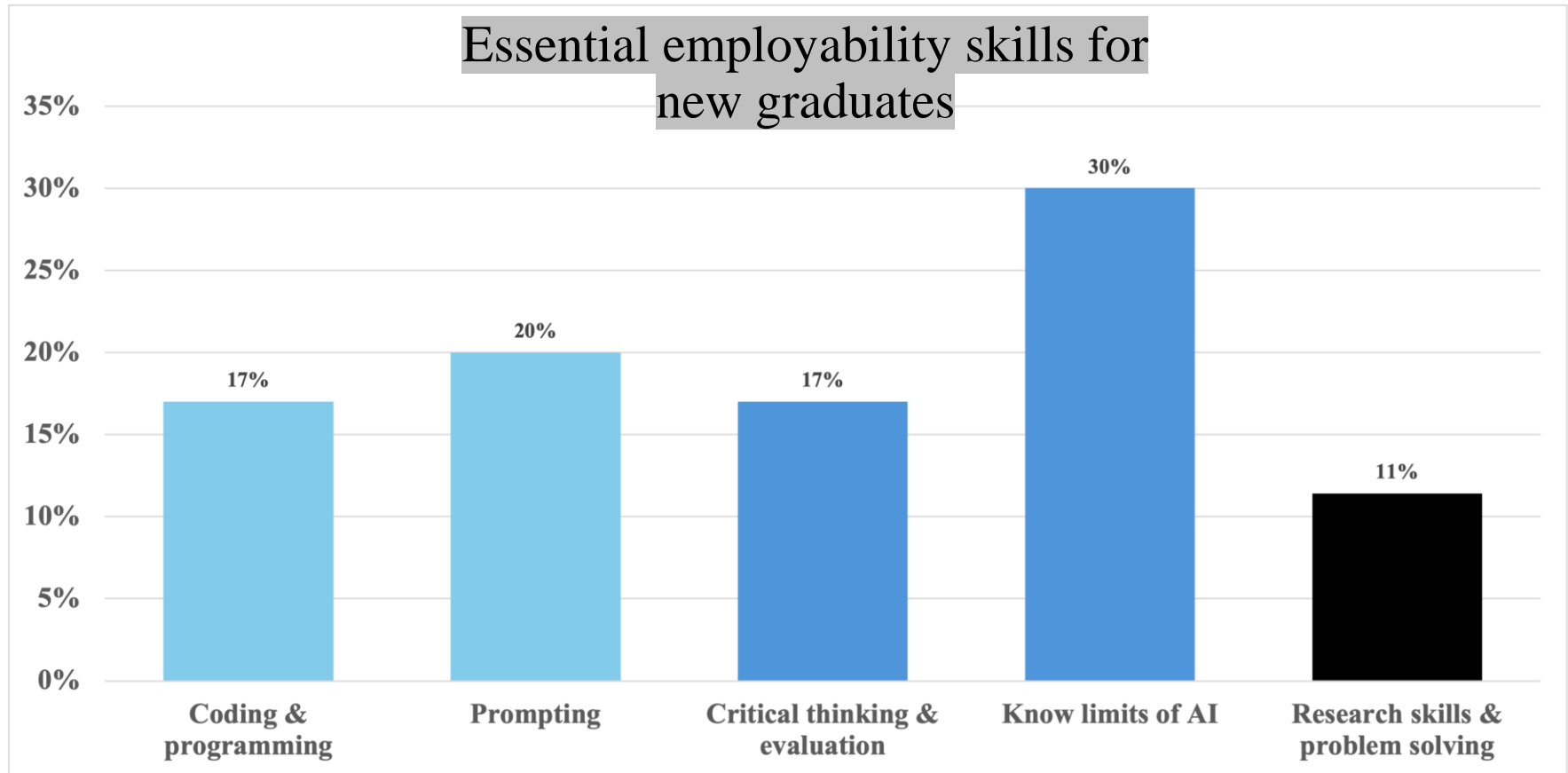
As a Research assistant/  
Executive assistant/  
Comms manager



As a Co-problem  
Solver

# Outline

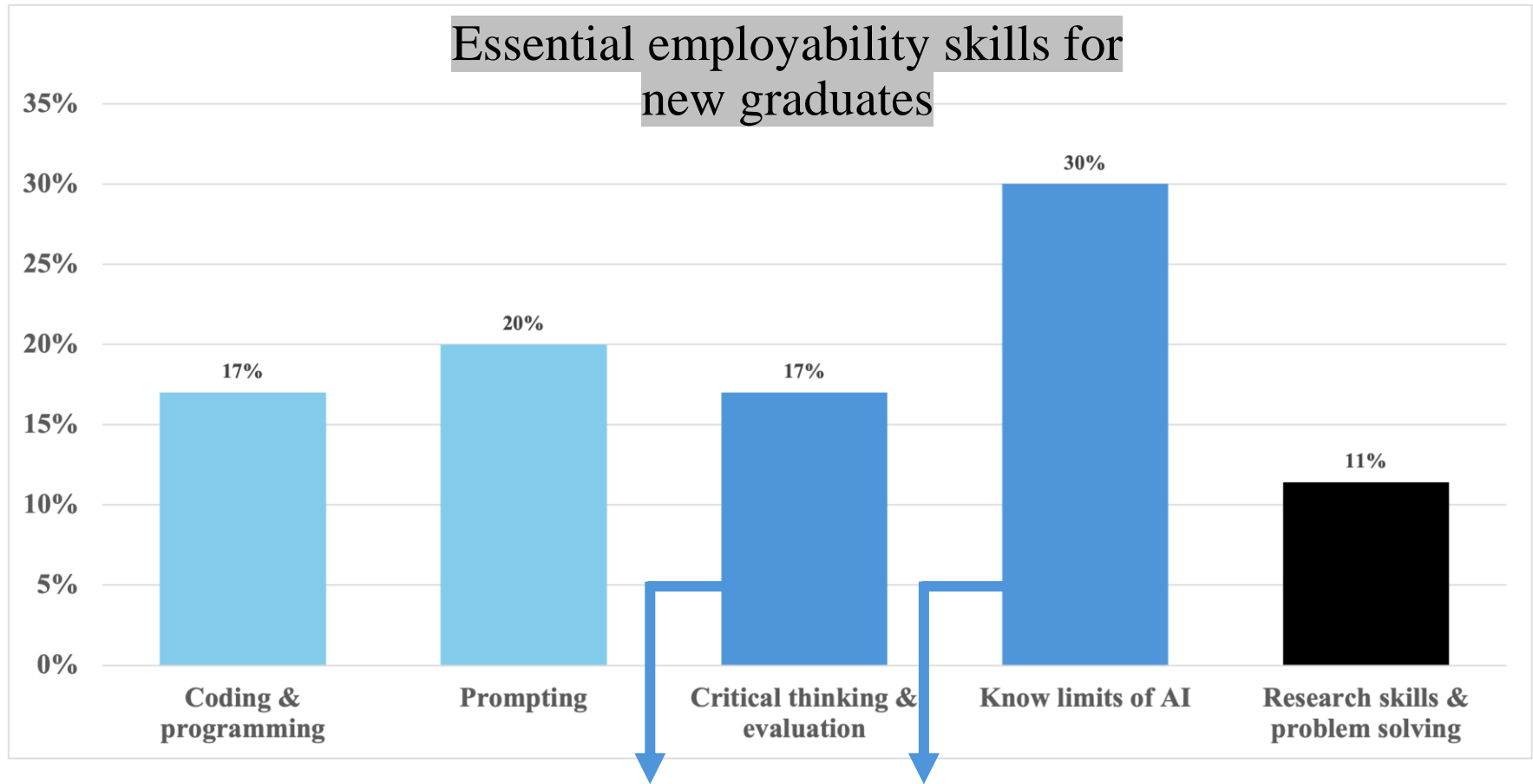
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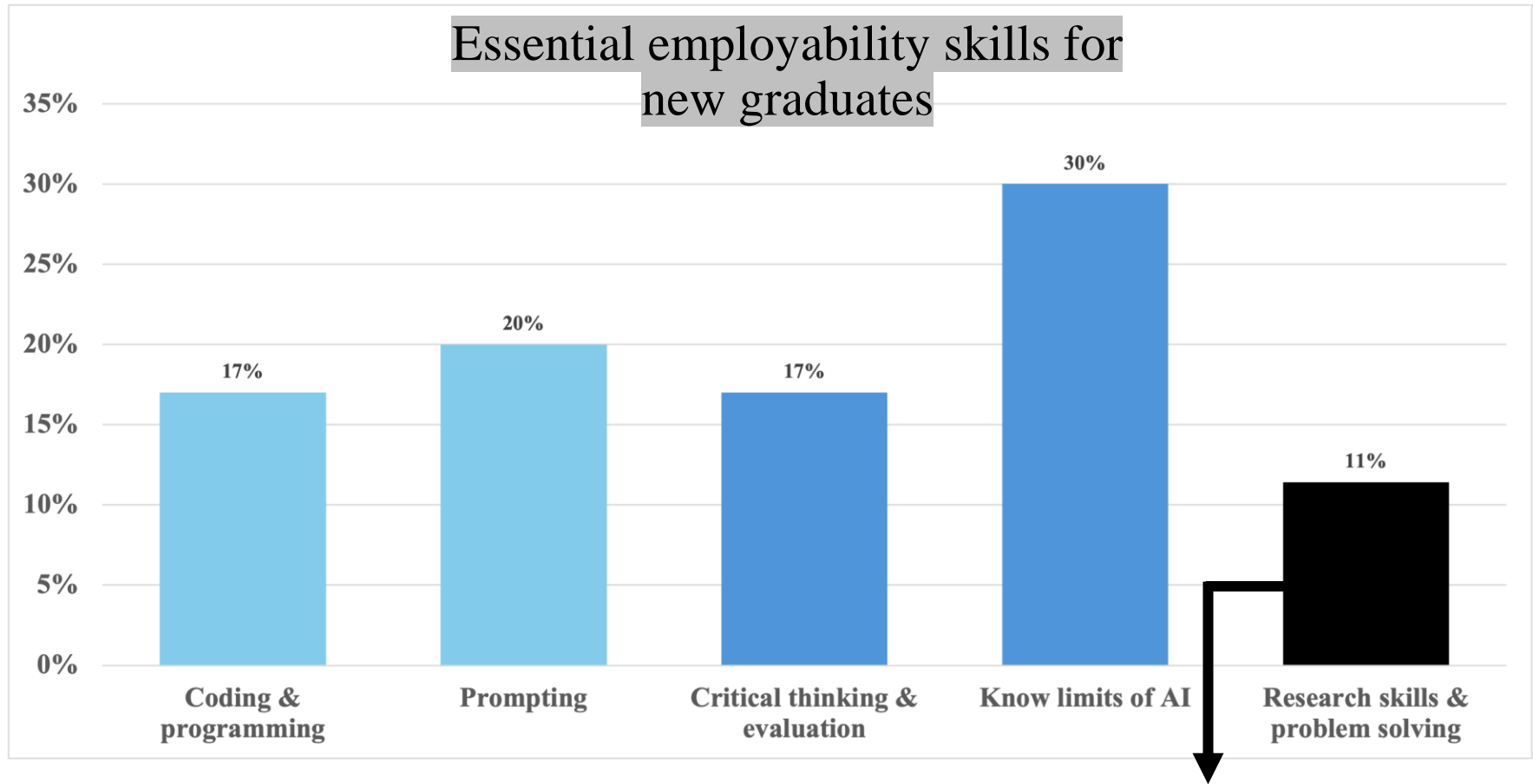
Analytically narrow  
(Well defined)

Analytically broad  
(Open ended)



“Know how to use AI as an assistant tool, without excessively relying on that (still be able to double check, have a critical attitude on the outcome proposed)”





“Ability to figure out how to solve problems themselves. Especially related to data and modelling”.

# Finding 1: Economists are using AI

## Employability skills



As a Tool

Coding &  
programming



As a Research assistant/  
Executive assistant/  
Comms manager

Critical  
thinking



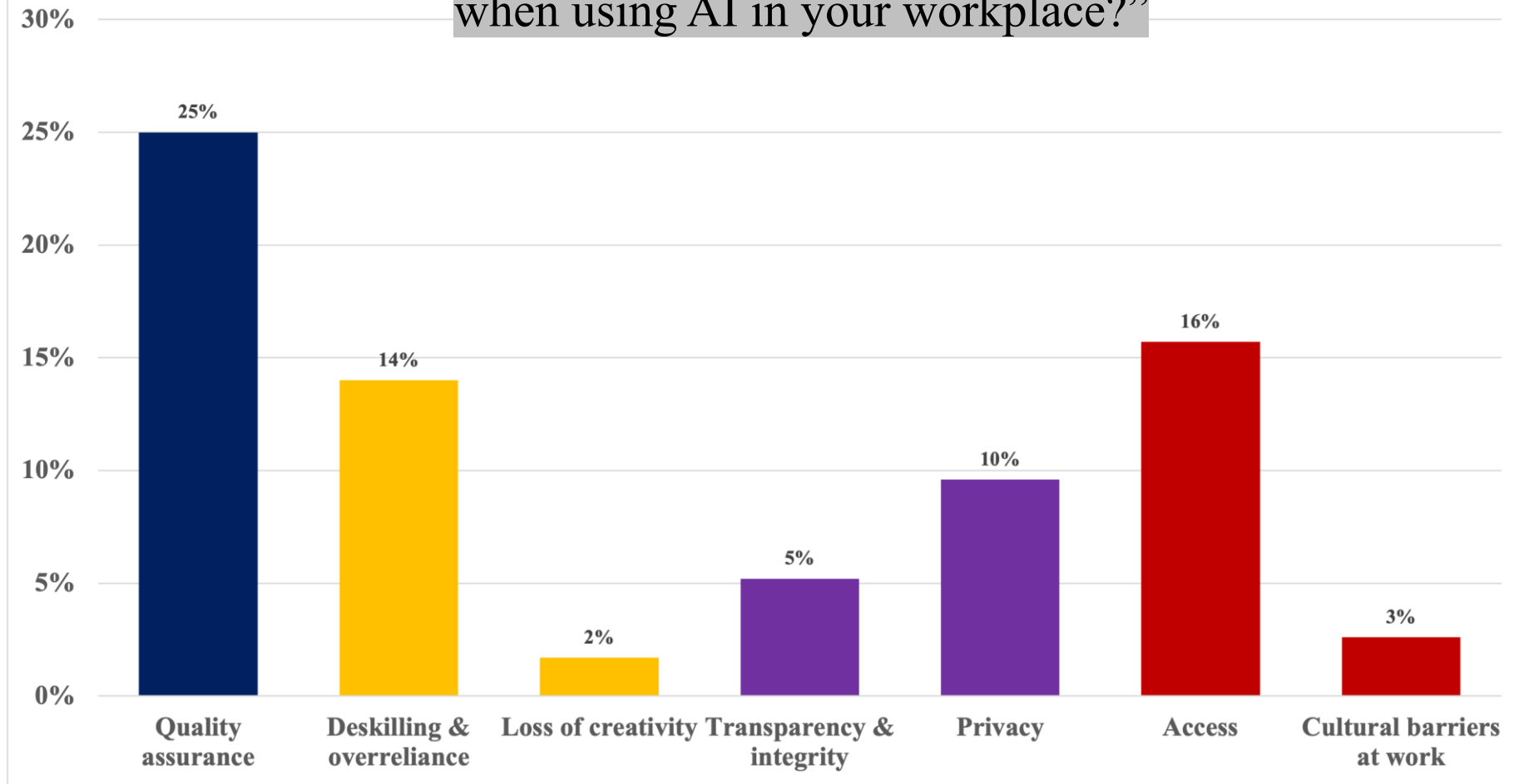
As a Co-problem  
Solver

Research  
skills

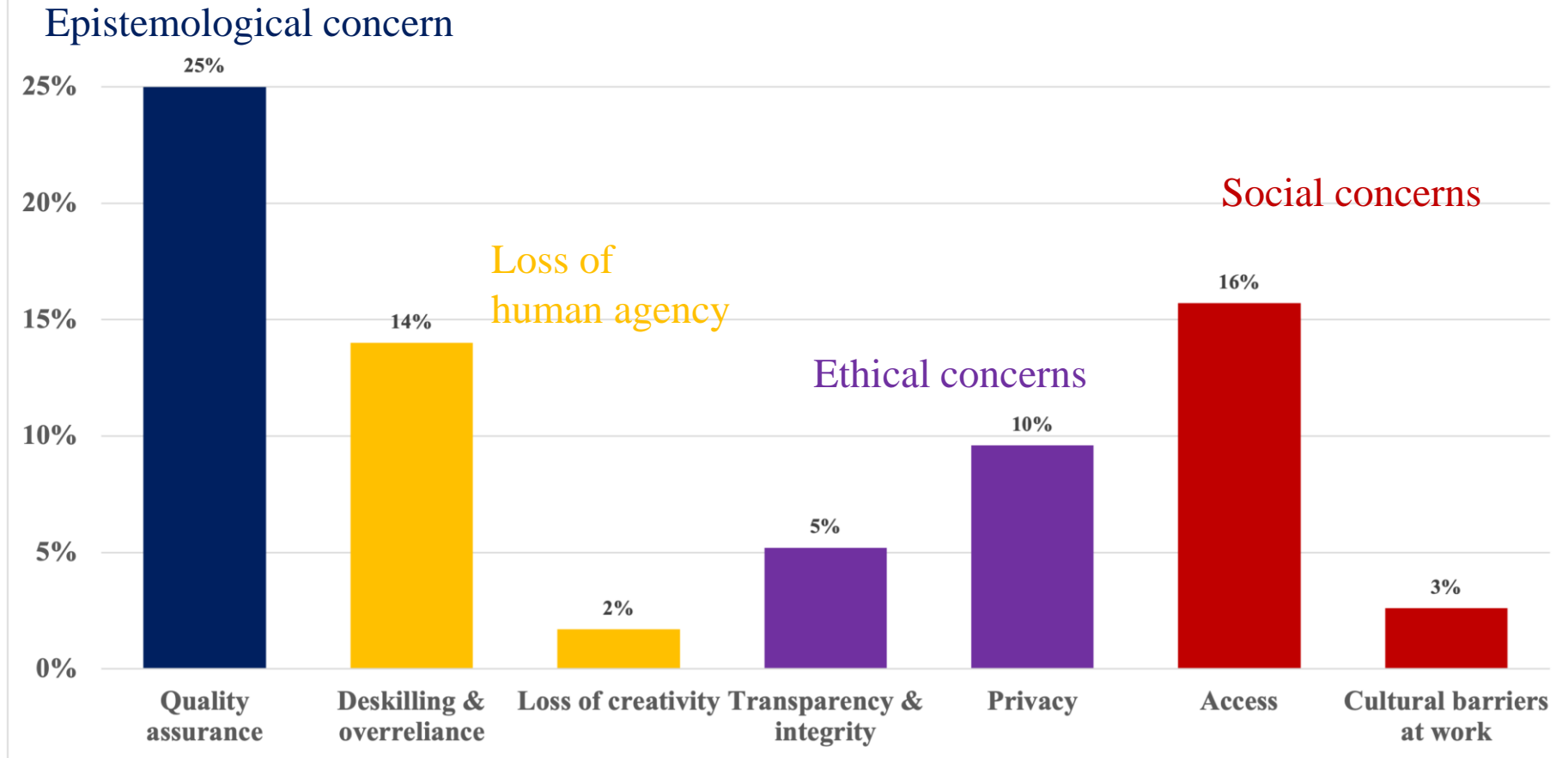
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“What challenges do you or your colleagues face when using AI in your workplace?”



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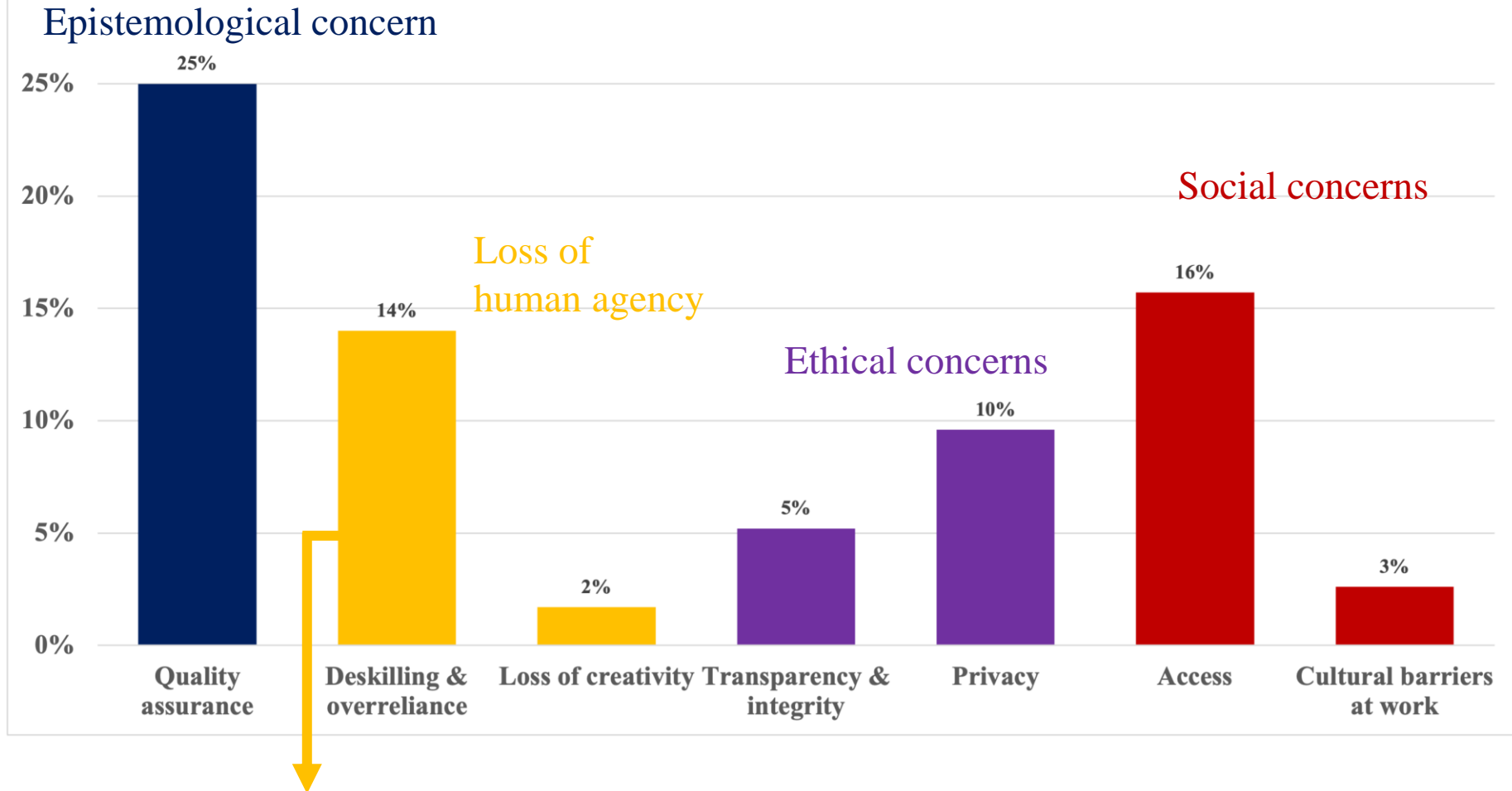


“What challenges do you or your colleagues face when using AI in your workplace?”



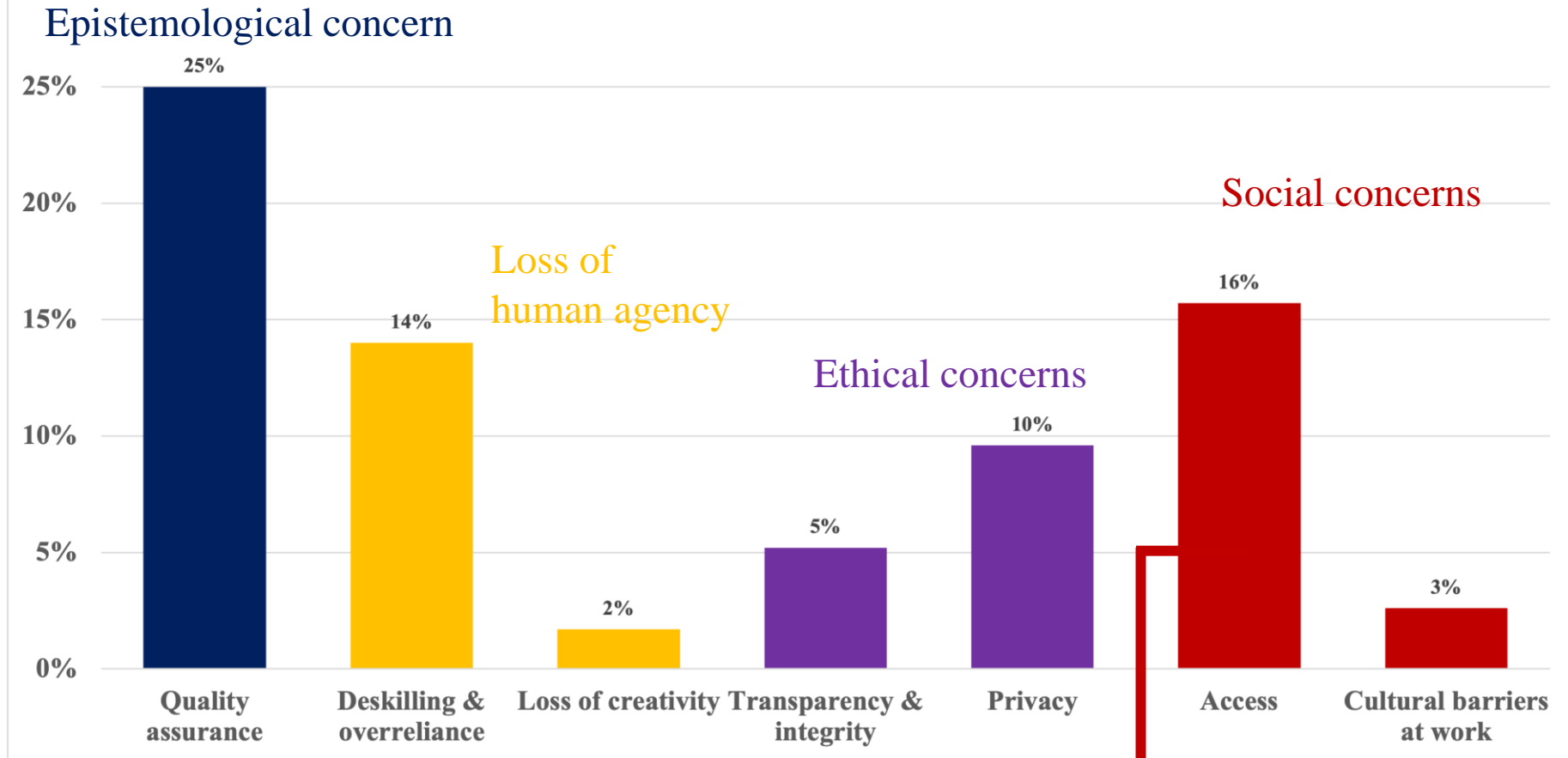
“Hallucinations and inaccurate information”

“What challenges do you or your colleagues face when using AI in your workplace?”



“It’s important to know when it’s appropriate to use and when it’s not. Not everyone understands where this line is drawn and that can be difficult to navigate”.

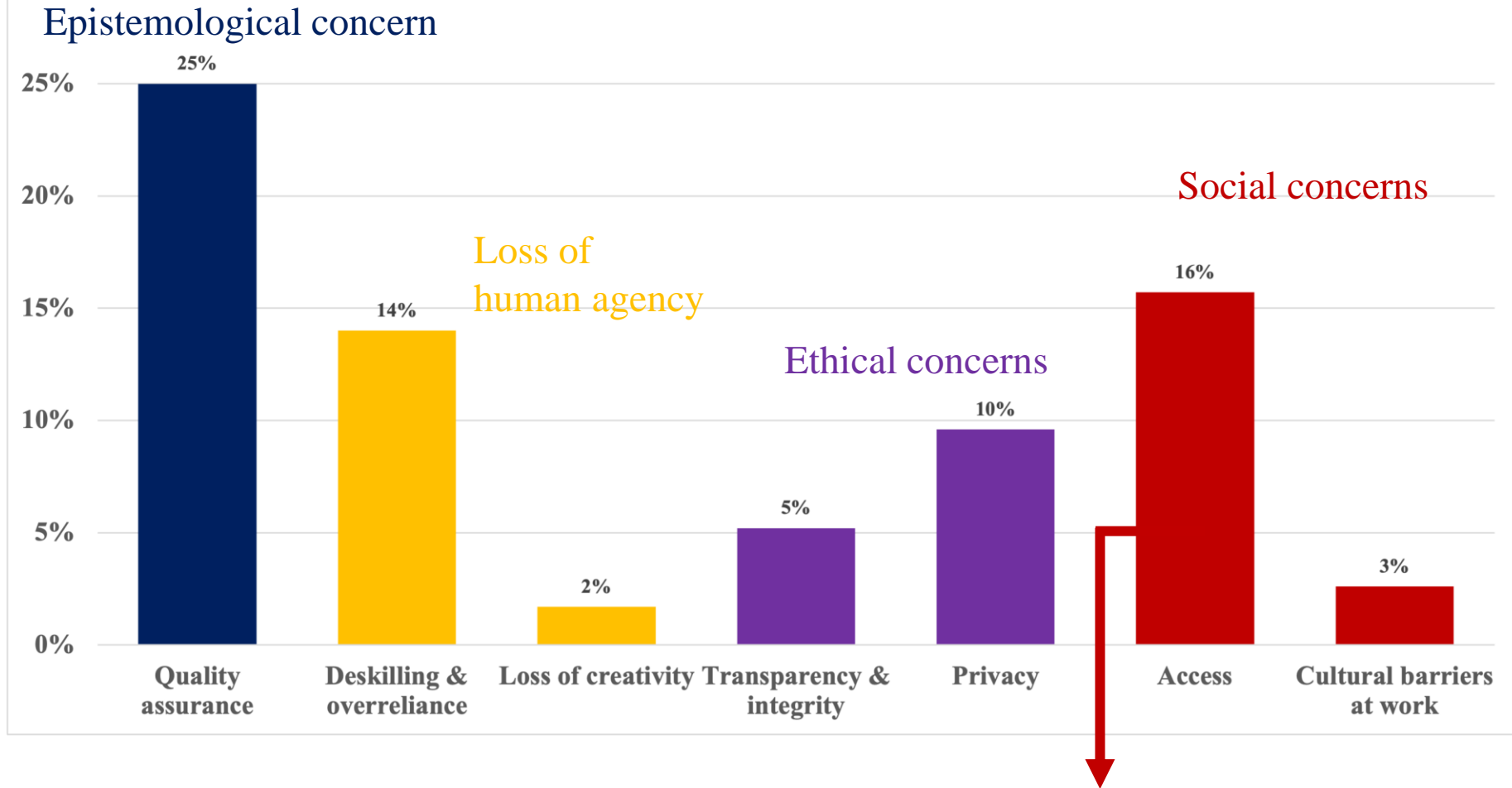
“What challenges do you or your colleagues face when using AI in your workplace?”



“Not having access to the latest models with the most advanced features”



“What challenges do you or your colleagues face when using AI in your workplace?”



“Government is slow to roll out the use of it.”

## Finding 2: Challenges when using AI

- Epistemological (Quality assurance)
- Loss of human agency (Deskilling, No creativity)
- Ethical (Transparency, Privacy)
- Social (Access, Cultural barriers)

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- **Survey questions**

# How are professional economists using AI at work?

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What is the purpose of this survey?

We are exploring how professional economists use AI tools in their work, with a focus on practical applications. The insights we gather will help us identify trends and opportunities to better integrate AI into the teaching of economics at universities. This anonymous survey has 20 questions and takes around 5 minutes to complete.

Who should take this survey?

We are looking for economics graduates who are currently working. Whether you work in the public or private sector, in policy, finance, research, or consulting, we want to hear about your experiences using AI in your role.

Who are we?

We are researchers at the Centre for Teaching and Learning Economics (CTaLE), a centre dedicated to innovation in economics education. Our goal is to understand how AI is shaping the work of economists to ensure that economics degrees are adapted to equip economics graduates with the right skills for the evolving job market.

How will your data be used?

Your anonymous responses will be used for research purposes only, including potential publication, and will help inform recommendations on how economics education can better prepare students for AI-driven workplaces. No personally identifiable information will be shared. Data will be anonymised and stored securely in accordance with UCL's data protection policies. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/sites/legal-services/files/data-protection-policy.pdf>

Your rights:

Participation in this survey is voluntary. You can stop the survey at any time without giving a reason. Considering the anonymous nature of the survey, once submitted, we are unable to withdraw data from the study.

For any questions or concerns, please contact: Dr Ramin Nassehi (UCL Economics, CTaLE).  
Email: [r.nassehi@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:r.nassehi@ucl.ac.uk)

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Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- 

The highest degree you have completed:

- ☐ Economics undergraduate degree
- ☐ Joint economics undergraduate degree
- ☐ Economics taught masters degree
- ☐ Joint economics taught masters degree
- ☐ Economics PhD
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Years of Work Experience:

- ☐ Less than 3 years
- ☐ 3 to 5 years
- ☐ 6 to 9 years
- ☐ 10 to 15 years
- ☐ More than 15 years
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Current Job Title:

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In which country is your job based?

☐ UK

☐ Non-UK 

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Which sector do you work in? (Select one)

☐ Financial Services (banking, investment, insurance, accounting)

☐ Consultancy (management, economic, or strategy)

☐ Public Sector (including central government, regulatory bodies, BoE)

☐ International & Policy Organisations (IMF, World Bank, UN, think tanks)

☐ Academia & Higher Education

☐ Tech & AI Tech (including AI, Data Science, and Fintech)

☐ Media & Journalism

☐ Legal & Compliance

☐ Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals

☐ Energy & Utilities

☐ Retail & Consumer Goods

☐ Other 

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Which tasks do you regularly perform as part of your job? (Select all that apply)

☐

Project Management

☐

Team management

☐

Organising and hosting meetings

☐

Idea generation for new projects

☐

Data Collection

☐

Data Analysis

☐

Financial/Economic Modelling

☐

Reviews of literature (including industry-specific documents)

☐

Preparing materials for policy or strategy decisions (e.g., policy briefings, internal corporate strategy documents)

☐

Writing reports for internal and external stakeholders

☐

Giving presentations to clients or stakeholders

☐

Financial Analysis & Budgeting

☐

Other 

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Does your organisation have any restrictions on the use of AI tools? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ AI tools are banned entirely in the workplace
  - ☐ Only approved AI tools can be used (e.g., in-house AI systems or vetted third-party platforms)
  - ☐ AI tools can be used for some sensitive activities (eg, writing emails, taking minutes of meetings) but not to produce content
  - ☐ AI tools can be used to produce content but the content must be reviewed by a human before external or internal use
  - ☐ No official guidelines have been established by the organisation yet
  - ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Please list the AI tools you regularly use in your work

- ☐ ChatGPT (OpenAI)
  - ☐ Microsoft Copilot (integrated into Office apps like Word, Excel, etc.)
  - ☐ Gemini and Bard (Google)
  - ☐ GitHub Copilot (AI coding assistant)
  - ☐ Claude (Anthropic)
  - ☐ Tableau AI (data visualization and analytics)
  - ☐ Power BI AI (Microsoft's AI-driven business intelligence)
  - ☐ Bespoke Organisation AI
  - ☐ Salesforce Einstein (AI for CRM and analytics)
  - ☐ Notion AI (AI for productivity and note-taking)
  - ☐ Jasper AI (content and marketing copy generation)
  - ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
-

Do you use a paid (premium, pro, or enterprise) version of any of the following AI tools in your work? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ ChatGPT (OpenAI)
  - ☐ Microsoft Copilot (integrated into Office apps like Word, Excel, etc.)
  - ☐ Gemini (Google)
  - ☐ Bard (Google – if used as distinct from Gemini)
  - ☐ GitHub Copilot (AI coding assistant)
  - ☐ Claude (Anthropic)
  - ☐ Tableau AI (data visualization and analytics)
  - ☐ Power BI AI (Microsoft's AI-driven business intelligence)
  - ☐ Bespoke Organisation AI
  - ☐ Salesforce Einstein (AI for CRM and analytics)
  - ☐ Notion AI (AI for productivity and note-taking)
  - ☐ Jasper AI (content and marketing copy generation)
  - ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

How do you use AI in your work? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Drafting and editing written content (e.g., emails, reports, articles, or policy briefs)
  - ☐ Summarising documents (e.g., reports, articles, research papers, meeting notes)
  - ☐ Writing and organizing meeting materials (e.g., agendas, minutes, action points)
  - ☐ Generating presentation materials (e.g., slides, visual summaries, talking points)
  - ☐ Assisting with coding or debugging (e.g., Python, R, Stata)
  - ☐ Conducting data analysis or modelling (e.g., running regressions, forecasting, trend analysis)
  - ☐ Performing sentiment, textual, or qualitative analysis (e.g., social media analysis, customer feedback)
  - ☐ Creating data visualisations or charts (e.g., dashboards, infographics)
  - ☐ Conducting research or information gathering (e.g., market research, literature reviews)
  - ☐ Developing AI-powered tools (e.g., chatbots)
  - ☐ Brainstorming (e.g., generating ideas for campaigns, strategies, or problem-solving)
  - ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
-

What is the most important use of AI for you at work?

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How do AI tools help you do your tasks more effectively?

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What AI-related skills or experiences would you hope new economics graduates would have entering the workforce?

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What challenges do you or your colleagues face when using AI in your workplace?

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What concerns do you have about the use of AI in your workplace?

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Do you consent to your anonymised responses being used for academic research and potential publication?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Email (optional): If you would like to be invited to our CTaLE Workshop on GenAI and Assessment in Economics Degrees on June 10th or to participate in a follow-up focus group on this topic please provide your email.

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End of Block:

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