

# Round Table: “Knowledge or Skills” or “Knowledge and Skills”

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The Scientific Society for Management of Organizations and the Institute for Strategic Studies and Development “Petar Karić” of ALFA BK University organized a round table on May 30<sup>th</sup> of this year with the topic: ‘Knowledge or Skills’ or ‘Knowledge and Skills’. The aim of this round table was to gain as comprehensive an insight as possible into several strategic issues at the micro, macro, and global levels. At the micro level, the question is: “How to conceptualize the purpose and objectives of study programs? Should more attention be paid to acquiring knowledge or developing skills? Or something else?”

Ensuring and controlling the quality of study programs imposes a continuous need to reassess the answers to these questions. A quality study program must have a clear purpose, goals, and outcomes for the study programs and individual subjects within those programs. The purpose, competencies, and goals determine the content of the curricula, the method of teaching, the assessment of outcomes, and the competencies of the teachers. At the macro level, the important question is: “What system and which education processes bring the greatest benefits to the development of society, increase social wealth, and improve the future?” Viewed at the global level, the question posed is: “What is the future place of our country in the global labor market and the global market of scientific knowledge?”

Employers decide whether they need a person with knowledge or a person who has certain skills. A review of published job advertisements on the labor market shows that employers seek creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving ability (as traits based on knowledge), and skills related to the development and use of technology and interpersonal and socio-emotional skills as professional qualifications that are more job-oriented. Deep theoretical knowledge is needed by those who are developing for work in science.

The presentations and discussions of the participants, which included their research, teaching, and professional experiences, generated several starting points for further consideration.

The questions of necessary knowledge and/or skills were discussed using examples from the process of money laundering prevention, the use of artificial intelligence, the application of modern programs in the accounting process, the tasks of a court expert, the role of an internal auditor, the work of a consultant in a large humanitarian aid agency, and more. The development of information technology requires a multidisciplinary approach in many professions, illustrated by the example of an accounting student who designed a program to solve exams using artificial intelligence. Most examples also highlighted the fact that practical experience develops responsibility and respect for others, which is an important foundation for interpersonal skills.

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Participants of the round table "Knowledge or Skills" or "Knowledge and Skills"

Another topic was the competencies of teachers who need to provide students with the required knowledge and skills. Theoretical knowledge and academic skills are not in question. The problem is symbolically expressed through the questions: "What can a professor without practical experience tell a student? What will they be able to teach them?" Several participants shared their experiences in approaching this problem. In the accounting profession, the solution is clear: every teacher in this field must also have some professional qualification.

Higher education plays a key role in society by fostering innovation, increasing economic development and growth, and generally improving the well-being of citizens. On the other hand, professional qualifications are considered more relevant for the labor market. The rapid development of complex and intertwined technological and economic processes indicates that in the coming years, there will be an increased demand for highly educated and highly qualified people who will be able to handle increasingly complex and flexible jobs.

At the beginning of the event, participants were welcomed by the rector of ALFA BK University, Prof. Dr. Jovan Veselinović.

**Participants from academic institutions with predominant experience in teaching and with relevant practice:**

Dr. Jozefina Beke-Trivunac, Professor Emeritus, Institute for Strategic Studies and Development, ALFA BK University, and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.

Dr. Marijana Joksimović, Full Professor, ALFA BK University.

Dr. Larisa Jovanović, Professor Emeritus, ALFA BK University.

- Dr. Snežana Knežević, Full Professor, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Belgrade, and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.
- Dr. Lidija Madžar, Associate Professor, ALFA BK University.
- Dr. Ana Anufrijević, University "Union – Nikola Tesla", Faculty of Economics and Finance, Belgrade.
- Dr. Kosana Vićentijević, Academy of Applied Studies Western Serbia, Department Valjevo.
- Dr. Edin Glogić, College of Finance and Accounting FINra, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Dr. Zorica Đurić, Assistant Professor, ALFA BK University.
- Dr. Gordana Vukelić, Retired Full Professor, and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.
- Dr. Dragan Cvetković, Associate Professor, College of Business Economics and Entrepreneurship, Belgrade, and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.
- Dr. Srećko Devjak, Assistant Professor, Dun & Bradstreet d. o. o. Slovenia and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.
- Dr. Stevanče Nikoloski, University of Novo Mesto, Faculty of Economics and Informatics, Slovenia and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.
- Dr. Drinka Peković, Assistant Professor, ALFA BK University.
- Dr. Malči Grivec, University of Novo Mesto, Faculty of Economics and Informatics, Novo Mesto, Slovenia and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.
- dr Zorica Đurić, docent, ALFA BK Univerzitet.
- Dr. Gordana Mrdak, Associate Professor, ALFA BK University.

**Participants from industry with predominant experience in practice and relevant academic teaching:**

- Mr. Agron Ferati, Executive Director, International Advisory Products and Systems Ltd. (i-APS).
- Dr. Jelena Krpić, Licensed Certified Auditor, Euroaudit Belgrade, and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.
- Dr. Emil Živkov, Internal Auditor, Transnafta a.d. Pančevo, and the Scientific Society for Management of Organizations.
- Dr. Nebojša Jeremić, Senior Internal Auditor for Finance and Accounting, Telekom Srbija.
- Mr. Bojan Stojiljković, Financial Director, Dual-pvc Smederevo.
- Mr. Marko Kihler, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Law, Union University, Secretary of ALFA BK University.

The results of the exchange of experiences at this round table will be published in a special thematic collection.

