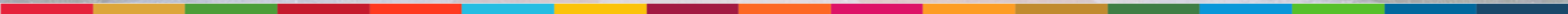




Strengthening Your Adaptability Muscles

AQ: The Adaptability Quotient



Today's facilitators



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Zoom Support Team



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House Keeping Rules

You are muted by default. The chat function is disabled.

If you have any questions, please submit them through **Zoom Q&A button**.

The session will be **recorded**. The recording and presentation will be available on: [Inter-Agency Career Week 2026 webpage](#)



The Workshop

Objective:

- Define adaptability
- Identify and review elements of adaptability
- Identify and review ways of strengthening adaptability



Change at the micro/individual level

1. In the past five years, how many major professional or personal changes have you experienced?
2. What was the nature of these changes?
3. What skills or abilities helped you through these changes?
4. Do you think your job will look different in 5 years?

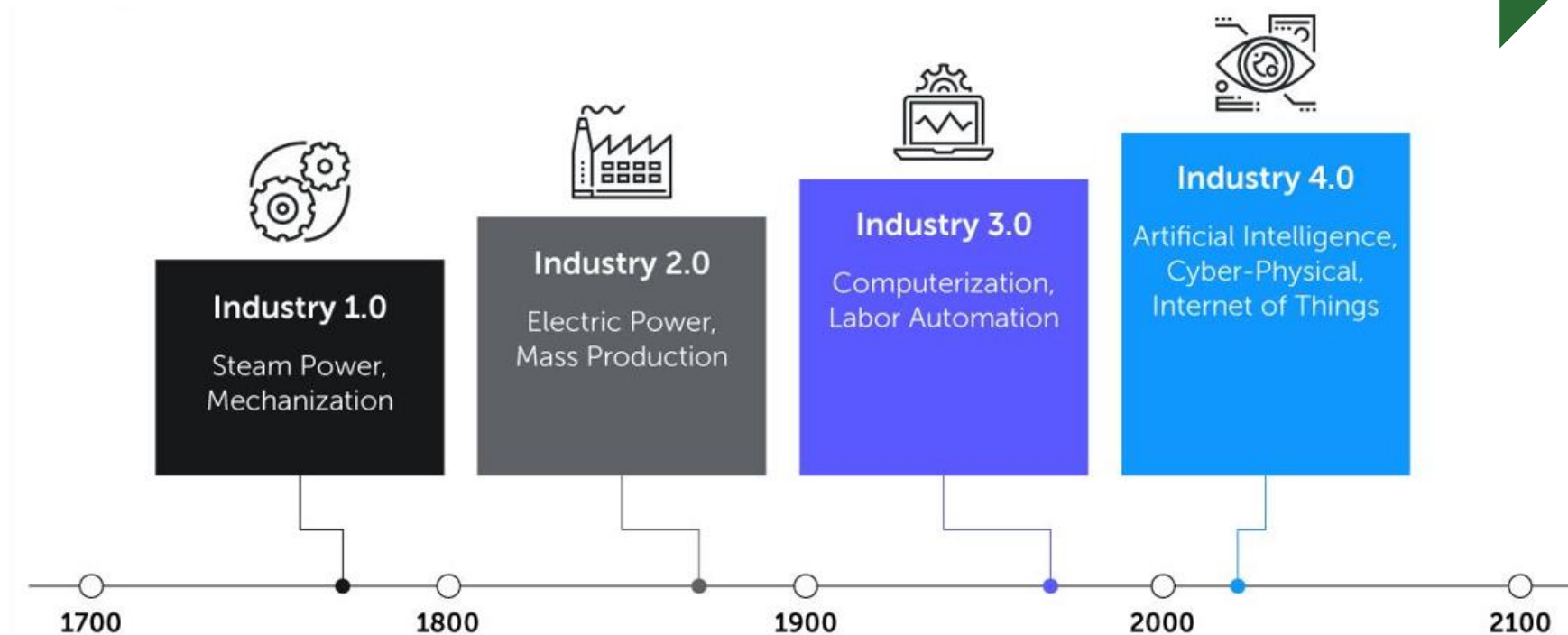


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Change at the macro/collective humanity level

Study > Jobs > Promotion > Retirement

- > Continuous learning
- > Multiple career shifts
- > New industries and roles emerging

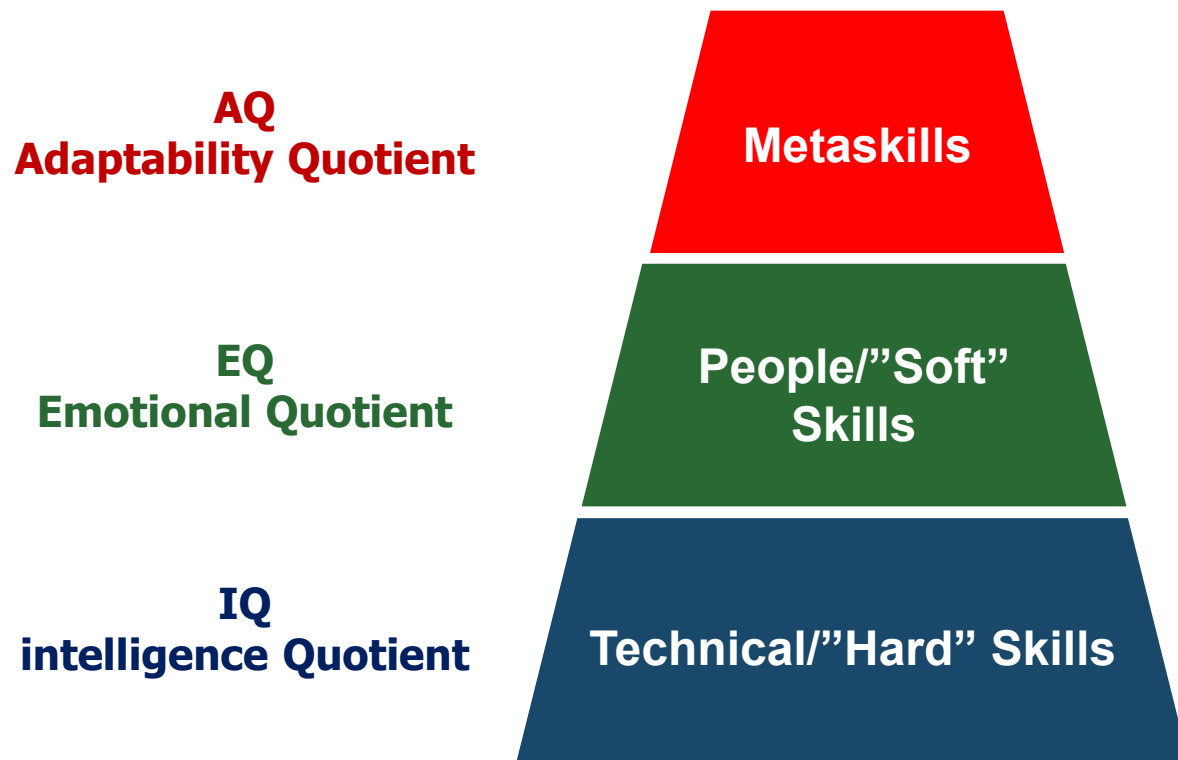


Change at the macro/collective humanity level

From Career Ladder to Squiggly Career and Career Portfolios



From IQ to AQ – The Evolution of Skills



Examples	Market Demand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lifelong learning/growth mindset ▪ Comfort with change and uncertainty ▪ Self-awareness and self-reflection ▪ Creativity and innovation ▪ Critical thinking and problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased demand in the VUCA/BANI world (VUCA =Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous; BANI= Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, Incomprehensible)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active listening ▪ Empathy ▪ Communication ▪ Conflict resolution ▪ Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Somewhat job-specific, but critical in client-facing jobs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Software development ▪ Design ▪ Product management ▪ Data analysis ▪ Agile methodologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific skills needed will change several times within a career

*Adopted from Matt Thomas, McKinsey, 2018

What is Adaptability Quotient? And why does it matter?

A definition: adaptability is the capacity to change and adjust in dynamic environments.

Why does it matter?

- **Countering Rapid Skill Obsolescence:** 39%–44% of core job skills are expected to be disrupted by 2027–2030.
- **Surviving Structural Job Change:** 92 million roles are projected to be displaced by 2030, and 170 million new ones will emerge.
- **Maximising AI Application:** 86% of employers expect AI to transform their business models and transition employees from performing tasks to managing AI agents.
- **Navigating the Changing Career Paths:** Professionals today are on track to hold twice as many jobs as they did 15 years ago.
- **Closing the Personal Training Gap:** while 59% of workers need significant upskilling by 2030, many will not receive it from their employers.

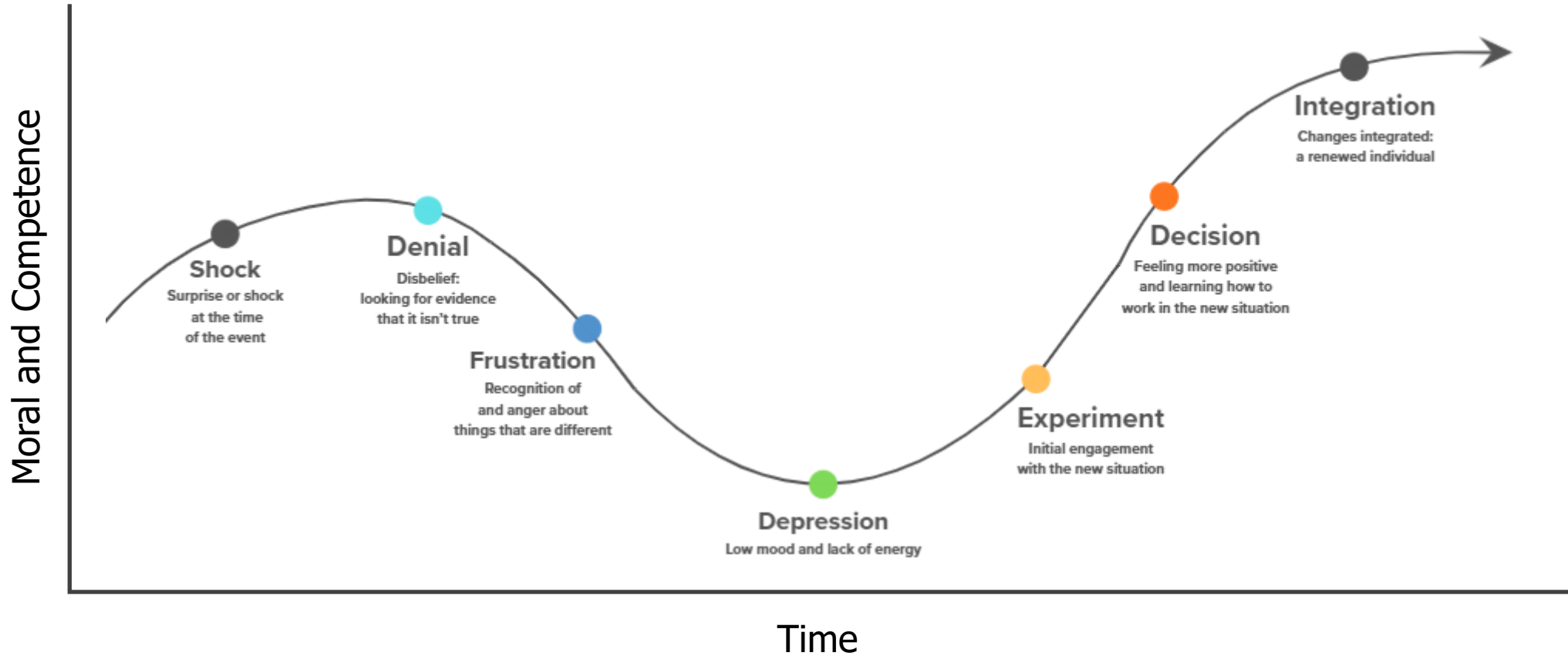
Key Elements of Adaptability

- **Cognitive Flexibility:** The capacity to think differently, challenge assumptions, and handle multiple concepts simultaneously.
- **Emotional Flexibility:** Remaining positive and resilient, managing emotions under stress, and empathising with others' perspectives.
- **Behavioural Flexibility:** Maintaining a positive outlook (optimism) and being willing to change habits and actions to align with new circumstances.
- **Interpersonal Flexibility:** Communicating effectively and working collaboratively with diverse groups, adjusting your approach to fit the situation.

Do I have a high AQ?

- Am I comfortable juggling several ideas or priorities at once without feeling stuck or overwhelmed?
- When things do not go as planned, can I manage my emotions and quickly refocus on constructive next steps?
- Under stress or pressure, do I usually try to understand others' perspectives rather than reacting defensively?
- If circumstances change, am I genuinely willing to adjust my habits, routines, or approach to fit the new reality?
- Do I adapt my communication style when working with different people, cultures, or situations to collaborate effectively?

The emotional stages of change – It's not easy!



How to strengthen adaptability?

Cognitive Flexibility: Thinking differently, challenging assumptions, handling multiple ideas

Scenario: Conflicting instructions on a routine task

When cognitive flexibility is LOW	When cognitive flexibility is HIGH
<p>An HR colleague receives two emails about onboarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One says documents must be uploaded to the new platform, and another (older SOP) says they should be emailed as PDFs• They stick rigidly to the SOP and ignore the platform, thinking: "If it's not clearly updated, I'll just follow the old rules."• Later, the onboarding is delayed and has to be redone.	<p>The HR colleague notices the inconsistency and pauses instead of defaulting to habit.</p> <p>They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise that the SOP may be outdated• Ask a clarifying question on Teams• Temporarily prepare both options in parallel• The onboarding proceeds smoothly with minimal rework.

How this strengthens AQ:

- Questioning assumptions instead of autopilot
- Holding ambiguity without freezing

How to strengthen adaptability?

Emotional Flexibility: Managing emotions under stress, staying resilient, empathising

Scenario: Last-minute task added before a deadline

When emotional flexibility is LOW	When emotional flexibility is HIGH
<p>A Programme Support Officer receives a late request for additional data just before COB.</p> <p>They feel irritated and reply sharply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “This should have been requested earlier. I’m already overloaded.”• The exchange escalates and creates tension within the team.	<p>The same officer notices their frustration but doesn’t act on it immediately.</p> <p>They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a moment before responding• Acknowledge the pressure on both sides• Propose a realistic partial solution• “I can deliver X today and the rest tomorrow morning.”

How this strengthens AQ:

- Regulating emotional reactions
- Responding deliberately instead of reactively

How to strengthen adaptability?

Behavioural Flexibility: Adjusting habits, routines, and ways of working

Scenario: New team working norms (hybrid/async work)

When behavioural flexibility is LOW	When behavioural flexibility is HIGH
<p>A team member insists on working exactly as before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoids shared documents• Waits for meetings instead of using async updates• Says, "This worked fine when we were all in the office." <p>Collaboration slows, and others have to compensate.</p>	<p>The team member feels uncomfortable but experiments with new behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Posts brief updates in shared channels• Learns to comment directly in documents• Adjusts their routine to align with team norms <p>Within weeks, coordination improves.</p>

How this strengthens AQ:

- Letting go of "my way" in favour of "what works now"
- Practising small behaviour changes consistently

How to strengthen adaptability?

Interpersonal Flexibility: Adapting communication style and collaboration approach

Scenario: Working with colleagues from different units and cultures

When interpersonal flexibility is LOW	When interpersonal flexibility is HIGH
<p>A team member communicates the same way with everyone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very direct in emails• Minimal context• No adjustment for time zones or language differences <p>Colleagues misinterpret the tone as abrupt or dismissive.</p>	<p>The same team member adapts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adds brief context and purpose in emails• Softens tone when needed• Checks understanding rather than assuming it <p>Collaboration becomes smoother, and misunderstandings decrease.</p>

How this strengthens AQ:

- Adjusting style without losing clarity
- Prioritising shared understanding over personal preference

How to strengthen adaptability?

- Do something small and new every week/every two weeks, e.g. start with noticing your communication style, your reactions, your preferences.
- Take small, calculated risks, e.g. offer help to a colleague with a task you are interested in.
- Read a news article to learn about a topic you are interested in.

Other ideas?



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Key Takeaways

"We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails."

Dolly Parton

"The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do."

Steve Jobs

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

Mother Teresa

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one that is most adaptable to change."

Charles Darwin

"Action and adaptability create opportunity."

Garrison Wynn

Questions?



Inter- Agency Career Week 2026 Agenda

04 - 08 May

	Monday, 04 May	Tuesday, 05 May	Wednesday, 06 May	Thursday, 07 May	Friday, 08 May
03:00-04:00 (New York) 09:00-10:00 (Europe) 10:00-11:00 (Nairobi) 14:00-15:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - From the UN to the Private Sector: Skills that enable Career Transition	Pres (E) Thriving in Uncertainty	Pres (E) - Career Trend Coaching: Preparing for What's Next	Pres (E) - Habits under Pressure: working more intentionally	Pres (E) Behavioural Science for Career Development: Evidence-Based Steps for Action
04:30-05:30 (New York) 10:30-11:30 (Europe) 11:30-12:30 (Nairobi) 15:30-16:30 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Inside the Recruiter's Mind: How Hiring Really Works in the UN and Beyond	Pres (E) - From Sat Nav to Compass: Navigating Your Career in a Changing UN System	Pres (E) - Upskilling for the Future: How to Stay Marketable Inside and Beyond the UN	Pres (E) - Becoming a UN Volunteer; What is in it for you? The Hidden Benefits of Volunteering.	PD (E) - Beyond the UN Blue: Navigating Your Career Transition to Other IGOs
06:00-07:00 (New York) 12:00-13:00 (Europe) 13:00-14:00 (Nairobi) 17:00-18:00 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Talent on the Move: Growing your career through mobility	Clinic (F) - Recherche d'emploi optimisée par l'IA : éthique, sécurisée et tournée vers l'avenir	Clinic (E) - AI for Your Career: Practical Tools and Prompts for Career Management	Pres (E) - Leading from Within	Pres (F) - Réussir les entretiens basés sur les compétences : un guide avec des conseils pratiques pour se préparer
07:30-08:30 (New York) 13:30-14:30 (Europe) 14:30-15:30 (Nairobi) 18:30-19:30 (Bangkok)	Clinic (E) - Mapping Your Motivators for Career Choices	Pres (E) - Mapping Professional Achievements to Job Application and Interview	Pres (E) - Breaking Down Job Descriptions	Pres (E) - What remains when everything changes: A Counselling Framework for global nomad staff facing adversity and transition	Pres (E) - The skills shift: What skills-based hiring and AI agents might mean for a UN career
09:00-10:00 (New York) 15:00-16:00 (Europe) 16:00-17:00 (Nairobi) 20:00-21:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Your Career, Your Conversation	Pres (E) - Strengthening Your Adaptability Muscles - AQ: The Adaptability Quotient	Pres (E) - Managing Your Saboteurs: Removing Barriers to Your Career Growth	Pres (E) - Use Your Strengths to Boost Your Career	Pres (E) - Activating Inner Resources in Uncertain Times
10:30-11:30 (New York) 16:30-17:30 (Europe) 17:30-18:30 (Nairobi) 21:30-22:30 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - A Mind-Blowing Tour of AI Tools to Accelerate Your Career	Pres (E) - From Sat Nav to Compass: Navigating Your Career in a Changing UN System	Pres (S) - Construye tu Asistente de Carrera con IA	Pres (E) - Building a winning profile from application to interview	Pres (E) - Mentoring 2.0: From Top-Down to All-Around
13:00-14:00 (New York) 19:00-20:00 (Europe) 20:00-21:00 (Nairobi) 00:00-01:00 ¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (F) - Opportunités de carrière aux Nations Unies pour les jeunes professionnels et conseils pour réussir sa candidature.	PD (E) - Thriving Globally - The human side of relocation	Pres (E) - Career Development: How you can turn a Psychosocial Hazard into a Thriving Strategy	Pres (E) - Youth Engagement: Put in Practice! (Young Talents in the UN System)	Pres (E) - Working for Justice
14:30-15:30 (New York) 20:30-21:30 (Europe) 21:30-22:30 (Nairobi) 01:30 ¹ -02:30 ¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Navigating Competency-Based Interviews: A Practical Preparation Guide	Pres (S) - Entrevistas basadas en competencias: guía práctica de preparación	Clinic (S) - Desarrollo de habilidades y redes profesionales a través de la mentoría		



THANK YOU!

The presentation, recording and other resources will be shared on our dedicated [Inter-Agency Career Week Page](#).

Please fill out the [Evaluation Survey](#). Your feedback matters to us!

If you have any questions, please reach out to Orsolya Kekko at okekko@icao.int