



**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

[3 July 2026 – Hong Kong]

**2025/2026 Training and Development Needs Survey  
Average Training Hours per Employee Reach 14-Year High  
Corporate Training Transformation Accelerates  
Dual Emphasis on AI and Soft Skills**

**Highlights**

- 1. Average Training Hours per Employee Reach a 14-Year High**
- 2. Corporate Role Transformed: From Applying AI to Leading Changes**
- 3. Supplementary Quick Poll: Focusing on Digital Literacy, Expanding a New Dimension of AI Training**
- 4. 2026 Outlook: Training Priorities Redeployed, Dual Emphasis on AI and Soft Skills**

**The Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (HKIHRM)** today (3 July 2026) released the findings of the 2025/2026 Training and Development Needs Survey.

The survey indicates that local businesses are transitioning from the stage of basic AI application towards a new phase of leading AI-driven transformation, reflecting that the strategic deployment of training priorities will become a critical factor in determining future competitiveness.

The 2025/2026 Training and Development Needs Survey was conducted from 10 February to 30 April 2026, collecting 127 valid responses from companies across 18 different industries and of varying sizes, involving nearly 80,000 full-time employees in total.

This annual survey aims to understand the overall training and development needs of Hong Kong's workforce, companies' investment in training resources, and the learning and development priorities for the coming year.

**Key Findings of the Survey:**

**1. Average Training Hours per Employee Reach a 14-Year High**

In 2025, the average number of training hours per employee among surveyed companies reached 19.4 hours, an increase of 6.8% from 18.1 hours in 2024. This marks the second consecutive year of growth, and the highest level recorded since 2011 (19.9 hours).



Compared with 2020, training hours increased significantly from 12.9 hours to 19.4 hours in 2025, representing an overall growth of nearly 50% and underscoring companies' continued commitment and investment in talent development and capability building.

Companies maintained or even increased their volume of training through online learning (adopted by 92% of companies) and digital tools, up from 90% last year. This reflects that companies' commitment to employee learning and development has not diminished and the learning culture is continuing to deepen.

Among digital learning tools, webinars/virtual classrooms (75%), training videos (63%), and digital learning portals/e-learning libraries (53%) held the top three positions.

The usage of AI learning tools surged from 16% in 2024 to 40%, jumping from seventh place last year to fourth place, and rapidly becoming an important component of corporate training.

## **2. Corporate Role Transformed: From Applying AI to Leading Changes**

The survey results indicate that 73% of surveyed companies had a budget for employee training and development in 2025, with actual spending accounting for 2.5% of total annual base salary.

Companies' attitudes towards building AI capabilities have turned noticeably more proactive. 82% of surveyed companies indicated they allow employees to use generative AI tools at work, a significant increase of 9 percentage points from 73% in 2024. The proportion banning AI use declined from 7% to 4%, while those with uncertainty decreased from 20% to 14%, reflecting a shift from a wait-and-see approach to the normalised use of AI.

AI technology emerged for the first time as the top training area identified as important by the largest number of surveyed companies across all three staff levels, demonstrating that AI capabilities have now permeated across different levels of management.

Middle Management recorded the highest level of attention (61%), followed by Senior Management (58%) and Individual Contributors/Junior Staff (54%), reflecting that companies are simultaneously advancing AI capability building from the strategic to the operational level.

Dr. Chester Tsang, HKIHRM's Executive Council Member and Co-chairperson of the Learning and Development Committee, stated, "The survey data this year shows that Hong Kong businesses are at a turning point in training and development. Companies are no longer passively responding to AI — they are beginning to actively lead AI-driven change. The continuous rise in training hours reflects a deepening learning culture, and the priority of training content is being reconfigured. On the budget front,



more and more companies are adopting online learning platforms and AI-assisted learning tools to effectively manage costs and enhance training effectiveness and flexibility."

3. **Supplementary Quick Poll: Focusing on Digital Literacy, Expanding a New Dimension of AI Training**

To further supplement the main survey findings and gain deeper insights into companies' actual deployment of AI training budgets and training content priorities, the Institute conducted a supplementary Quick Poll from 27 April to 8 May 2026, surveying 96 Hong Kong employers.

The Quick Poll provides more specific and operational-level information, offering a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional view of the overall results.

The Quick Poll results showed that 29% of surveyed companies have already integrated AI-assisted tools into their employee training systems; a further 14% plan to do so within 2026, and 24% indicated they will implement this by 2027. This reflects that AI-enabled learning is steadily expanding and becoming a key direction in corporate talent development. Companies with no plans to introduce AI training accounted for 32%.

In terms of resource allocation, companies continue to adopt a flexible integration approach. Among companies that have already introduced or plan to introduce AI training by 2027, 57% incorporate AI training expenditure within their overall learning and development budget, 37% adopt a project-by-project funding approach, and only 6% have established a dedicated AI training budget.

The findings suggest that while organisations broadly recognise the strategic importance of AI training and digital literacy development, a standalone, long-term AI training investment framework has yet to be fully established.

4. **2026 Outlook: Training Priorities Redeployed, Dual Emphasis on AI and Soft Skills**

As for the learning and development priorities for 2026, leadership development continues to be the top priority at 50%; while mastering generative AI for learning surged dramatically from 23% in 2025 to 49%, rising from sixth place to second place.

However, the rise in the importance of AI does not mean conventional skills and capabilities are being sidelined. On the contrary, companies are increasingly aware of the unique human value in judgement, communication, and collaboration, and are simultaneously strengthening soft skills training to ensure that technology and human capabilities are mutually complementary.



In 2025, in addition to AI technology training being identified as an important training area, other "soft skills" such as data analytics, problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills also remained consistently near the top of the rankings.

Differences in training priorities are also evident across staff levels. Senior Management places emphasis on Change Management (51%), Strategic Thinking (50%), and Business Innovation (44%).

Middle Management focuses on Coaching/ Mentoring and Managing performance (44%), Problem Solving, and Communication/Interpersonal Skills (43%), highlighting team execution and coordination capabilities.

For Individual Contributors/Junior Staff, Communication/Interpersonal Skills (50%) is the primary concern, followed by Customer Service and Health & Safety (43%), reflecting the practical needs of their day-to-day operational and front-line service roles.

Looking ahead to 2026, the overall training budget outlook remains stable: 61% of surveyed companies indicated they would maintain 2025 levels, 20% indicated they would increase their budgets, and 19% indicated a decrease — largely in line with last year's trend.

Mr. Charles Ho, Co-chairperson of the HKIHRM Learning and Development Committee, said, "Corporate training has entered a new phase characterised by a dual emphasis on AI and soft skills. Digital learning is not intended to replace face-to-face training. In areas that require a high level of interaction, immediate feedback and hands-on practice — such as leadership development, team collaboration and change management — in-person training remains irreplaceable.

"AI is not about reducing headcount, but about upskilling and reskilling employees so they can move into higher value-added roles. Organisations should also develop in-house expertise with governance and risk management capabilities to ensure applications are safe, compliant and able to deliver maximum value."

Dr. Chester Tsang, HKIHRM's Executive Council Member and Co-chairperson of the Learning and Development Committee, concluded, "Employee training should not focus solely on technical proficiency, but also encompass integrity, a strong sense of responsibility, and compliance awareness, ensuring that technology adoption advances within an ethical and well-governed framework. Future competitiveness is not merely a contest of technology, but of talent quality, governance capability, and learning culture."

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Please click [here](#) for the photos of the media briefing.

### Summary of Findings 重點概要



#### TRENDS IN ADOPTING DIGITAL LEARNING TECHNOLOGY AT COMPANIES 企業採用網上學習科技培訓趨勢

##### Top 3 Digital Learning Tools 首3位網上學習工具



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### Summary of Findings 重點概要



#### Corporate Role Transformed: From Applying AI to Leading Change 企業角色顯著轉型: 從應用 AI到主導變革

#### COMPANIES' INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 企業在僱員培訓及發展的資源投放

% of companies budgeted for training  
提供培訓預算的企業比率

73%

Average Actual Spending on training & development budget  
as a % of total annual base salary  
培訓及發展實際開支佔員工全年整體基本薪酬的百分比

2.5%

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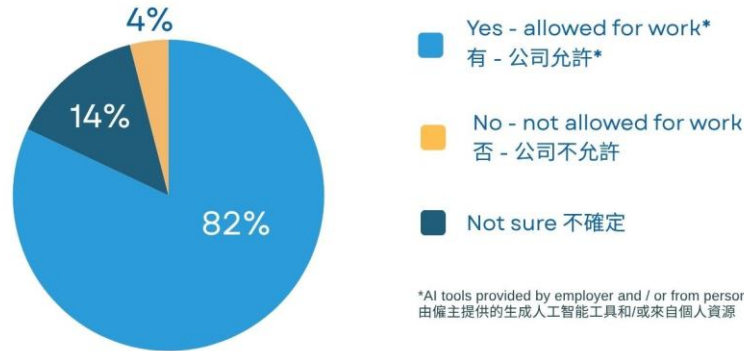
2025/26

### Summary of Findings 重點概要



#### Corporate Role Transformed: From Applying AI to Leading Change 企業角色顯著轉型: 從應用 AI到主導變革

##### USE GENERATIVE AI FOR WORK 利用生成式AI工作



\*AI tools provided by employer and / or from personal resources  
由僱主提供的生成式人工智能工具和/或來自個人資源

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2025/26

### Summary of Findings 重點概要



#### Corporate Role Transformed: From Applying AI to Leading Change 企業角色顯著轉型: 從應用 AI到主導變革

##### MAJOR TRAINING AREAS FOR EMPLOYEES AT DIFFERENT STAFF LEVELS 不同級別僱員的主要培訓範疇



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2025/26

### Summary of Findings 重點概要



**Outlook : Training Priorities Redeployed, Dual Emphasis on AI and Soft Skills**  
**展望2026年 培訓優次重新部署 : AI與軟技能並重2026**

TOP 3 2026 Learning & Development Priorities  
首3位2026年培訓及發展重點



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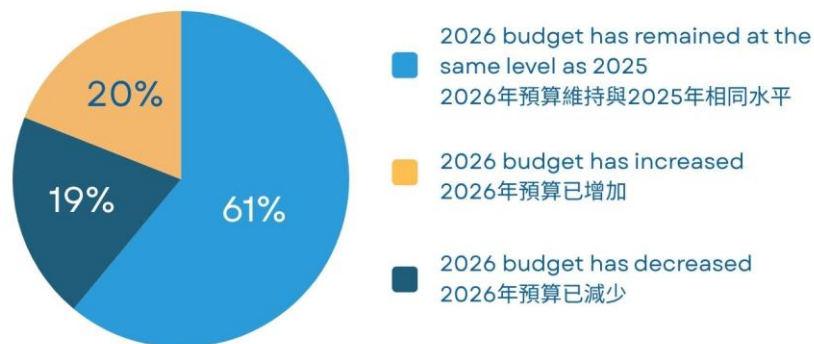
2025/26

### Summary of Findings 重點概要



**Outlook : Training Priorities Redeployed, Dual Emphasis on AI and Soft Skills**  
**展望2026年 培訓優次重新部署 : AI與軟技能並重2026**

**2026 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT BUDGET**  
**2026年培訓及發展預算**



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香港人力資源管理學會

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### **About Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management**

As the most representative HR professional body in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (HKIHRM) has a membership close to 5,000, of which around 500 are corporate members. Founded in 1977, the HKIHRM aims at enhancing HR professional standards, and increasing the HR profession's influence. Serving HR practitioners, corporations and SMEs, the Institute organises a wide range of professional programmes, including annual conference, seminars, awards programme, and multi-level training. It also provides various membership services, surveys, and an online journal. The HKIHRM is a member of the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management. <http://www.hkihrm.org>