CFA Society Australia

PRESS RELEASE

Mind the skills gap: Soft skills the biggest gap amongst finance professionals, ahead of AI skills

[SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA] – November 10, 2026 – Soft skills are the most in demand for finance professionals, even ahead of AI skills, according to research from CFA Institute, while new data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reveals AI had a low impact on hiring in the finance sector.

A global survey of over 1,300 finance sector professionals in management roles found soft skills were identified as the skill that make professionals most employable in the finance industry today (named by 68% of respondents) while AI skills were cited by more than half (52%) of the respondents. When asked about promotions into more senior roles, soft skills (32%) were also identified as **the most important as people advance into leadership roles, nearly three times the weight given to AI skills.**

Separately, new data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on whether AI has replaced jobs in the finance sector and across Australia shows the impact of AI on job hiring was muted in August 2026. Across Australian industries, about 82% of businesses reported that AI did not impact the level of job vacancies in August 2026.[1] In the finance sector, **just 4.7% of businesses reported that AI had reduced the number of job vacancies in August.** That compares to 16.2% in the information, media and telecommunications sector,[2] the ABS said.

Lisa Carroll, CEO of CFA Society Australia, said while AI is replacing some jobs in finance, soft skills remain very important. "While analytical ability, numerical fluency and problem-solving are obvious requirements for a job in finance, that's not enough to necessarily move ahead in your career. Success depends just as much on your ability to communicate findings clearly and work with other individuals in a team and, of course, with your clients," she said.

Still, the CFA Institute research found that in terms of people's career progression once in a job, **AI skills were named by 58% of respondents as the number one skillset finance professionals are actively developing** to step ahead in their careers. "Once already in a job, many financial professionals are focusing on developing their AI skills for career progression and to keep up with others. What is important for any employee is the willingness to learn new skills and undertake ongoing learning, which can open new doors and enhance fast-forward career progression," Carroll said.

Businesses were also asked by the ABS about **the expected impact of AI on the number of job vacancies** over the next 12 months. "While AI has had a limited impact on job hiring in the finance sector so far, the ABS survey reveals the expected impact is much greater; over the next 12 months, 18.7% of finance businesses expect AI to have an impact on job hiring, which suggests that this is a moving story and that AI could have a greater impact on hiring over time," Carroll said.

[1] https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/ai-has-low-impact-job-vacancies-august

[2] https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/jobs/job-vacancies-australia/aug-2026

"Hence, acquiring AI skills makes sense for financial professionals to keep up with labour market developments."

"Recognising this, **CFA Institute on 18 November will release a new member benefit, the Responsible AI in Investment Research course**. Available in the CFA Member Portal, the course responds to member requests for resources that help investment professionals use generative AI responsibly and with greater rigour in investment research," Carroll said.

-Ends-

For further information, please contact: Nicki Bourlioufas, +61 411 786 933, or at nicki@spotoncpr.com

About CFA Institute
As the global association of investment professionals, CFA Institute sets the standard for professional excellence and credentials. We champion ethical behavior in investment markets and serve as the leading source of learning and research for the investment industry. We believe in fostering an environment where investors' interests come first, markets function at their best, and economies grow. With more than 200,000 charterholders worldwide across 160 markets, CFA Institute has 8 offices and 157 local societies. Find us at www.cfainstitute.org or follow us on LinkedIn.

About CFA Society Australia
CFA Society Australia is part of the worldwide network of CFA Institute member societies that lead the investment profession globally by promoting the highest standards of ethics, education and professional excellence for the ultimate benefit of society. CFA Society Australia represents the interests of over 3,500 investment professionals through advocacy, education, events, and professional development. For more information, visit www.cfas.org.au, or follow us on LinkedIn.