

JobRadar 2040

New Work. New Skills.

RESEARCH PROJECT · RESEARCH STATUS: AUGUST 2026

Ten reasoned future roles - and the abilities people need to perform them responsibly.

Future Skills Institut

Research for human agency

English translation of the supplied German edition. Source research status and assessments retained.

Why we need to understand the jobs of the future

CONTEXT

Future Skills cannot meaningfully be defined in a vacuum. To understand which abilities people will need, we must investigate the tasks, responsibilities and forms of work emerging through AI, robotics, demographic change, climate adaptation, regulation and new business models.

JobRadar 2040 therefore investigates more than new job titles. Its focus is on new roles involving responsibility: where must people integrate systems, judge outcomes, bridge specialist fields, set boundaries and take responsibility?

Purpose: to make visible the abilities that can help people become capable and job-ready across several plausible future roles, rather than preparing them for a single predicted occupation.

Two research strands - one shared question

JobRadar 2040: what new work is emerging, which responsibilities remain human, and which Future Skills make these roles more accessible?

Lebensfähig 2040: what sustains a good life when regular paid work is insufficiently available despite good preparation, or loses its role in structuring life?

These perspectives are complementary. The Future Skills Institut wants to help people remain professionally adaptable without making a dishonest promise: even excellent abilities guarantee neither a particular job nor enough paid work for everyone. Human agency therefore requires us to consider career development and the capacity to live well together.

What this publication is - and is not

- An exploratory, source-based futures analysis, not a labour market forecast.
- A selection of plausible combinations of responsibilities, not a guarantee of future job titles.
- A bridge between technology trends, human responsibility and Future Skills.
- Ongoing research intended for further examination through expert interviews, case studies and market observation.

How the top 10 were selected

METHOD

The ranking does not assess expected employment numbers. It prioritises roles according to the combined strength of several credible drivers and the clarity of an emerging human responsibility.

Structural need: does the role arise from a longer-term technological, demographic, environmental or regulatory driver?

Human responsibility: do judgement, relationships, legitimacy, translation between fields or accountability remain central?

Breadth across sectors: could the role exist in several application areas?

Economic viability: is there a plausible benefit or a viable service model?

Distinctiveness: is this more than a new name for an unchanged activity?

Note: none of these job titles is certain. Some tasks already exist in niches or within established occupations. What is new is often their combination, scale or responsibility, rather than every individual activity.

The top 10 at a glance

01 Robotics Integration and Fleet Manager - Robot Fleet & Service Manager

02 AI Operations Manager - AI Agent Orchestrator

03 AI Oversight and Trustworthiness Manager - AI Assurance & Human Oversight Manager

04 Care Technology and Assistive Robotics Integrator - Care Technology Integration Lead

05 Climate Resilience Designer - Climate Adaptation Manager

06 Local Energy Orchestrator - Energy Flexibility Manager

07 Product Passport and Circularity Manager - Circular Product Passport Manager

08 Cyber-Physical Resilience Manager

09 Regenerative Destination and Visitor Flow Designer

10 Skill Portfolio and Transition Architect - Future Skills Navigator

Robotics Integration and Fleet Manager

FUTURE ROLE 01 • PLAUSIBILITY: VERY HIGH

Robot Fleet & Service Manager

Why this role emerges: each additional robot fleet increases the need for people who translate manufacturers' technology into real operational workflows. The role is particularly plausible where robots are provided as an ongoing service rather than purchased outright: Robotics as a Service (RaaS).

What this person does

- Evaluates use cases and commercial viability.
- Selects manufacturers, systems and financing models.
- Configures and commissions robots and trains employees.
- Coordinates fleet performance, maintenance, spare parts and safety rules.
- Mediates between operators, users and international manufacturers.

What remains a human responsibility

Responsibility for the specific context of use. A technically functioning robot is not yet a functioning solution. People must bring together usefulness, safety, acceptance and edge cases.

Key Future Skills: systems thinking; technical understanding; problem-solving; communication; entrepreneurial thinking; learning ability; decision-making under uncertainty.

Possible entry pathways

Mechatronics, electrical engineering, facilities management, medical technology, logistics, technical sales or service management, supplemented by skills in robotics, processes and safety.

Evidence status: very high. Professional service robotics and industrial robotics are already growing, although the specific occupational profile has not yet been standardised.

Sources: [2] [3]

AI Operations Manager

FUTURE ROLE 02 • PLAUSIBILITY: VERY HIGH

AI Agent Orchestrator

Why this role emerges: organisations increasingly work with connected agents, assistance systems and automated decisions, rather than only individual AI tools. These systems require operational leadership, quality control and clear escalation routes.

What this person does

- Allocates tasks between people and AI agents.
- Defines objectives, priorities, boundaries and escalation rules.
- Investigates contradictory or implausible results.
- Documents agent performance and improves workflows.
- Intervenes in a controlled way during disruptions and takes responsibility.

What remains a human responsibility

Judgement in situations without a clear answer. The role determines what is responsible and useful in a particular operation, not merely what is technically possible.

Key Future Skills: understanding AI as part of a system; analytical thinking; orchestration; judgement; self-management; digital ethics; communication; continuous learning.

Possible entry pathways

Industry, business information systems, operations, process management, quality management or specialist occupations with deep process knowledge, supplemented by AI and agent expertise.

Evidence status: very high. AI and data literacy are among the fastest-growing skill areas; the specific operational role is still emerging.

Sources: [1] [4]

AI Oversight and Trustworthiness Manager

FUTURE ROLE 03 · PLAUSIBILITY: VERY HIGH

AI Assurance & Human Oversight Manager

Why this role emerges: as AI plays a greater part in sensitive decisions, the need for human oversight, traceability, risk assessment and documented controls grows.

What this person does

- Assesses the risks and operating limits of AI applications.
- Defines points for human control and approval.
- Investigates bias, incorrect decisions and unexpected effects.
- Documents AI incidents and initiates improvements.
- Mediates between legal, technical and management teams and people affected.

What remains a human responsibility

Normative responsibility. AI can calculate risks but cannot legitimately decide which effects an organisation may impose on people.

Key Future Skills: ethical judgement; critical thinking; risk literacy; bridging law and technology; constructive conflict; documentation; taking responsibility.

Possible entry pathways

Compliance, data protection, law, quality management, audit, IT security or data science, supplemented by AI governance and human oversight.

Evidence status: very high. For high-risk systems, the EU AI Act requires measures including human oversight, monitoring, documentation and robustness.

Sources: [4] [5]

Care Technology and Assistive Robotics Integrator

FUTURE ROLE 04 • PLAUSIBILITY: HIGH

Care Technology Integration Lead

Why this role emerges: ageing societies, workforce shortages and new assistive technologies create a gap between care practice and available technology. This gap needs to be addressed professionally, humanely and organisationally.

What this person does

- Translates care and support needs into technical requirements.
- Selects suitable assistance systems and tests them in everyday use.
- Involves care staff, residents and relatives.
- Safeguards privacy, dignity, safety and operating boundaries.
- Checks whether technology genuinely reduces workload or creates additional work.

What remains a human responsibility

Dignity, relationships and appropriateness to the situation. Not everything that can be automated should be automated when people are vulnerable.

Key Future Skills: empathy; user orientation; process understanding; explaining technology across disciplines; ethical sensitivity; facilitation; ability to support change.

Possible entry pathways

Nursing, occupational therapy, health management, medical technology, social work or process consulting, supplemented by digital assistance systems and change skills.

Evidence status: high. Demographic change and staff shortages are well documented; the pace and acceptance of robotic support remain uncertain.

Sources: [6] [7]

Climate Resilience Designer

FUTURE ROLE 05 • PLAUSIBILITY: HIGH

Climate Adaptation Manager

Why this role emerges: heat, heavy rainfall, water scarcity and other climate impacts make adaptation an ongoing design challenge for municipalities, businesses, residential developments and tourism regions.

What this person does

- Analyses local hazards, exposure and vulnerability.
- Prioritises adaptation measures and makes them financially feasible.
- Develops heat-protection, heavy-rainfall and emergency plans.
- Considers infrastructure, health and social effects together.
- Coordinates public authorities, businesses and residents.

What remains a human responsibility

Setting priorities where objectives conflict. Protective measures affect money, space, health and distribution, and require democratic and social deliberation.

Key Future Skills: systems thinking; scenario literacy; data interpretation; prioritisation; stakeholder management; crisis communication; long-term thinking.

Possible entry pathways

Urban and spatial planning, construction, environmental science, civil protection, health or public administration, supplemented by climate-risk and participation skills.

Evidence status: high. Europe's climate risks are extensively documented; specific roles will be shaped differently across regions and organisations.

Source: [8]

Local Energy Orchestrator

FUTURE ROLE 06 • PLAUSIBILITY: HIGH

Energy Flexibility Manager

Why this role emerges: photovoltaics, storage, heat pumps, electric vehicles and flexible consumers make energy supply more decentralised. This increases the need to coordinate technology, prices, grids and users.

What this person does

- Aligns generation, storage and consumption.
- Prevents local bottlenecks and peak loads.
- Monitors forecasts and automated optimisation.
- Involves households, companies and grid operators.
- Translates technical, commercial and regulatory requirements across disciplines.

What remains a human responsibility

Defining objectives and fair rules. Optimisation must not overlook security of supply, participation or local needs.

Key Future Skills: systems thinking; understanding data and energy; optimisation; negotiation; regulatory understanding; responsible decision-making.

Possible entry pathways

Electrical engineering, the energy sector, building services, municipal utilities, facilities management or data analysis, supplemented by flexibility markets and participation.

Evidence status: high. Employment related to grids, storage and electrification is growing; the orchestration role develops alongside local energy systems.

Sources: [9] [10]

Product Passport and Circularity Manager

FUTURE ROLE 07 · PLAUSIBILITY: HIGH

Circular Product Passport Manager

Why this role emerges: products need greater transparency, repairability and circularity throughout their lifecycle. The Digital Product Passport connects data from development, supply chains, use and recovery.

What this person does

- Brings together product and material data from supply chains.
- Ensures data quality and clear responsibilities.
- Organises repair, reuse and recycling.
- Coordinates suppliers, product development and compliance.
- Develops new circular business models using product data.

What remains a human responsibility

Resolving tensions between costs, data quality, product design and sustainability goals. Data alone does not create a circular economy.

Key Future Skills: connected thinking; data literacy; process understanding; accuracy; supplier communication; sustainability literacy; interpreting regulation for practice.

Possible entry pathways

Product management, supply chains, sustainability, quality, technical documentation or data management, supplemented by ESPR knowledge and circular design.

Evidence status: high. The Digital Product Passport has a regulatory basis; its scope and sector-specific implementation are being developed gradually.

Sources: [11] [12]

Cyber-Physical Resilience Manager

FUTURE ROLE 08 • PLAUSIBILITY: HIGH

Why this role emerges: production equipment, buildings, vehicles, robots and AI agents connect digital and physical risks. Conventional IT security alone does not cover these interactions.

What this person does

- Models digital and physical risks together.
- Simulates attack and failure scenarios.
- Plans safe operating states and manual fallback arrangements.
- Coordinates security, technical and operations teams.
- Organises controlled recovery after incidents.

What remains a human responsibility

Making decisions under uncertainty during crises. Security here means keeping people, equipment and essential services able to function, as well as protecting data.

Key Future Skills: risk and safety thinking; understanding systems; composure under pressure; scenario thinking; collaboration; a constructive approach to errors; responsibility.

Possible entry pathways

IT/OT security, automation, electrical engineering, crisis management, maintenance or safety engineering, supplemented by cyber-physical simulation.

Evidence status: high. The cybersecurity skills shortage is documented; the connection between OT, robotics, AI and resilience is becoming more important.

Source: [13]

Regenerative Destination and Visitor Flow Designer

FUTURE ROLE 09 · PLAUSIBILITY: MEDIUM TO HIGH

Regenerative Destination & Flow Designer

Why this role emerges: tourism must consider visitor experience, local quality of life, nature, infrastructure and economic value together. Real-time data and AI expand the possibilities for managing visitor flows.

What this person does

- Analyses visitor flows and redistributes them across time or space.
- Develops attractive alternatives to overcrowded places.
- Involves local stakeholders and residents.
- Designs accessible and age-appropriate services.
- Measures environmental and social effects.

What remains a human responsibility

Creating meaning, hospitality and local acceptance. An optimal route alone is not a good or responsible travel experience.

Key Future Skills: systems thinking; cultural intelligence; conflict mediation; data interpretation; experience design; empathy; sustainability literacy.

Possible entry pathways

Tourism management, place marketing, cultural studies, mobility planning, UX/service design or local development.

Evidence status: medium to high. Individual tasks already exist; the new element would be combining them into an integrated, data-informed regenerative role.

Sources: [1] [8]

Skill Portfolio and Transition Architect

FUTURE ROLE 10 • PLAUSIBILITY: MEDIUM TO HIGH

Future Skills Navigator

Why this role emerges: when tasks change more rapidly, selecting training from a course catalogue is no longer enough. People and organisations need to recognise which existing abilities are transferable and which next development step will actually help.

What this person does

- Analyses changing tasks and roles.
- Makes existing and transferable competencies visible.
- Designs realistic development and transition pathways.
- Develops learning experiments rather than generic programmes.
- Supports people through career transitions.

What remains a human responsibility

Understanding biography, motivation and life context. Data-based skill matching can reveal possibilities but cannot determine a personally sustainable direction.

Key Future Skills: skilled dialogue; labour market understanding; learning ability; futures thinking; pattern recognition; empathy; prioritisation; a developmental approach.

Possible entry pathways

People development, career guidance, coaching, adult education, organisational development or recruitment, supplemented by skill and labour market analysis.

Evidence status: medium to high. Changing skill requirements are clearly documented; whether this becomes a distinct occupation or an extension of existing roles remains open.

Source: [1]

What the ten roles have in common

SYNTHESIS

The top 10 span very different sectors. Yet a recurring pattern emerges: machines take on more execution, while people take on integration, context, edge cases and responsibility.

Orchestrating: people coordinate several technical and social subsystems rather than operating only one tool.

Translating: they connect manufacturers and users, data and everyday life, law and technology, or specialist knowledge and management.

Judging: they decide where objectives conflict, data is incomplete or consequences affect people differently.

Taking responsibility: they define boundaries, document deviations and stand behind a system's effects.

Learning: they continually develop processes, technical understanding and their own practice.

What job-ready could mean in 2040

Being job-ready does not mean guessing a single future job title today. It means building a robust competency profile that supports transitions between emerging roles. Particularly valuable combinations appear to include digital and technical understanding, systems thinking, judgement, communication, self-management, learning ability and responsible design.

Guiding idea: future jobs are likely to emerge where people take responsibility for complex technical systems and their effects on others.

Next research steps

- Continue interviewing experts in the relevant sectors about tasks, market needs and entry pathways.
- Systematically document early real job advertisements, pilot projects and business models.
- Compare the roles with the institute's 24 Future Skills and 96 subskills.
- Develop realistic daily-life vignettes and competency development pathways for selected roles.
- Update evidence status and rankings at regular intervals.

Selected primary and institutional sources

SOURCES

Alongside the sources, numerous conversations with managers in industry contributed to these initial findings. Research status: August 2026. The sources substantiate underlying drivers. The specific role profiles and their ranking are syntheses and reasoned interpretations by the Future Skills Institut.

We explicitly excluded the following titles from the top 10, although some HR and operations managers described them in conversations. We currently consider them too speculative or short-lived:

- Prompt Engineer as a permanent standalone profession
- Metaverse Architect
- Chief Happiness Officer
- Personal AI Trainer for individual private clients
- Purpose Architect
- Standalone “ethics advisers” without operational responsibility

Prompting will become a component of many occupations. Ethics will matter, but will usually be integrated into roles with authority over operations, risk or decisions. A job does not become viable merely because its title sounds futuristic.

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[6] WHO Europe. Building a sustainable and fit-for-purpose workforce.

<https://www.who.int/europe/health-topics/health-workforce/building-sustainable-and-fit-for-purpose-workforce>

[7] WHO Europe. Strengthening long-term care systems.

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[11] European Commission. Digital Product Passport.

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[13] ENISA. 2024 Report on the State of Cybersecurity in the Union. <https://www.enisa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-11/2024%20Report%20on%20the%20State%20of%20Cybersecurity%20in%20the%20Union%20-%20Condensed%20version.pdf>

Publisher and use

Publisher: Future Skills Institut, Alex Michel, Im Förstergrund 18, 65779 Kelkheim, Germany.

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