



## Webinar: *OECD reviews of postsecondary vocational education and training: key issues*

28 January 2014, 16h00 Paris (France) time

### Food for Thought

#### OECD reviews of vocational education and training

The economies of OECD and other countries need specific occupational skills - in professional, managerial and technical jobs, in expanding fields such as health care, as well as in traditional professions such as electricians. Vocational education and training (VET) systems, which supply these skills, are now under intensive scrutiny to determine if they can deliver the skills required and ensure that the systems adapt to fast-changing needs. The OECD is tackling these challenges through two major thematic reviews – the completed *Learning for Jobs*, which looked at initial VET, often at upper secondary level, and now *Skills Beyond School*, which covers the postsecondary level. Following a series of country reviews of postsecondary VET, a synthesis report is now in preparation to draw together key messages.

#### Postsecondary VET

Between school and university there exists a little understood world of colleges, diplomas, certificates and professional examinations – the world of postsecondary vocational education and training (VET). In fact, this world is exceptionally dynamic, often large and/or rapidly expanding and of great importance to countries' skills systems. This webinar will introduce the OECD reviews of postsecondary VET and outline some of the key findings. Participants will engage with OECD policy analysts and with each other to discuss the OECD findings and individual experiences and perspectives.

#### Definition: Postsecondary VET

“Postsecondary VET” includes programmes beyond upper secondary school level that prepare students for particular occupations or careers. Qualifications may be earned via postsecondary programmes, typically requiring six months to two years of full-time or equivalent preparation or via professional Bachelor's degrees. An additional form of qualification should be recognised in the professional examinations. These professional examinations, found in many different countries, typically involve a test, or examination, organised often by the relevant profession or industry.

#### Key issues: quality and delivery of postsecondary VET

The webinar will focus on one particular issue in postsecondary VET: quality and delivery. In particular, it will discuss challenges and OECD recommendations regarding the training workforce, work-based learning and basic skills.

#### *Keeping the training workforce abreast of industry needs*

The quality of the teaching and training workforce is critical in any type of education or training. Often there are challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers who meet the demanding twin requirements of pedagogical skills and practical professional expertise.

*During the webinar*, participants will discuss challenges regarding the teaching and training workforce. We ask participants to think of specific approaches and examples to share.

Questions to consider:

- How does your institution encourage VET teachers/professors to keep up with changes in the field?
- How do teachers balance their workloads between teaching and keeping up with their areas of specialisation?
- How do teams of VET teachers share their knowledge and different types of skills for the success of the programme and their students?

### ***Making work-based learning systematic***

Workplaces provide a strong learning environment in which to develop both hard and soft skills and allow students and employers to **get to** know each other. There is wide cross-country variation in the use of work-based learning in postsecondary VET programmes. Given the potential benefits, the challenge of ensuring high quality work-based learning is certainly worth taking up.

*During the webinar*, participants will discuss the relevance of work-based learning at their institutions and the challenges they face in this area. We ask participants to think of specific approaches and examples to share.

Questions to consider:

- Do programmes at your institution involve an element of work-based learning?
- If not, do you think an element of work-based learning would be desirable in programmes at your institution? Why?
- What challenges does your institution face in creating or maintaining partnerships with employers?

### ***Ensuring adequate basic skills***

The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are extremely important in the labour market. Yes, many adults appear to have weak basic skills. Postsecondary VET programmes often enrol students who have not pursued academic styles of classroom learning for some years, or where they have a negative past experience of such learning. This creates particular challenges in ensuring that students and graduates have adequate basic skills.

*During the webinar*, participants will discuss the challenges of ensuring basic skills in postsecondary VET. We ask participants to think of specific approaches and examples to share.

Questions to consider:

- Do some students face difficulties due to weak literacy and numeracy skills at your institution / in your country?
- How can postsecondary institutions ensure that their students and graduates have strong basic skills?

## References

- OECD (2008), *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society*, Volume 1 and Volume 2, OECD Publishing, Paris, doi: [10.1787/9789264046535-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264046535-en)
- OECD (2010a), *Learning for Jobs, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training*, OECD Publishing, Paris, doi: [10.1787/9789264087460-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264087460-en)
- OECD (2010b), *Off to a Good Start? Jobs for Youth*, OECD Publishing, Paris, doi: [10.1787/9789264096127-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264096127-en)
- OECD (2012), *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives, A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies*, OECD Publishing, Paris, doi: [10.1787/9789264177338-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264177338-en)
- OECD (2013), *Education at a Glance 2013*, OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, doi: [10.1787/eag-2013-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en)

### Find out more:

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| OECD, Skills Beyond School              | ⇒ | <a href="http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/skillsbeyondschool.htm">www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/skillsbeyondschool.htm</a> |
| OECD Skills Strategy                    | ⇒ | <a href="http://skills.oecd.org/">http://skills.oecd.org/</a>  |
| OECD, Learning for Jobs                 | ⇒ | <a href="http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/learningforjobs.htm">www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/learningforjobs.htm</a>       |
| OECD, Jobs for Youth                    | ⇒ | <a href="http://www.oecd.org/els/offtoagoodstartjobsforyouth.htm">www.oecd.org/els/offtoagoodstartjobsforyouth.htm</a>                         |
| OECD PowerPoint presentations on skills | ⇒ | <a href="http://www.slideshare.net/OECD/EDU/tag/skills">www.slideshare.net/OECD/EDU/tag/skills</a>   |