

# OECD Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning News

## July 2018

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to colleagues who may be interested in learning about our work

In this newsletter, we focus on the work of the OECD VET team over the last six months and highlight what can be expected over the coming months.

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### Published so far in 2018

[Working it Out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement](#). With young people staying in education longer than ever before, they face ever greater decisions about what education and training to pursue in relation to their developing career aspirations. In this new working paper, Pauline Musset and Lucia Mytna Kuretova review the case for careers guidance, what makes for effective practice and why it is so important to engage employers and people in work in its delivery. Using new analysis of PISA data, they argue that career guidance can help to challenge patterns of social reproduction.

Watch Anthony Mann, Head of the VET and Adult Learning team, introduce the new paper. Click on the image below to watch the video.



The publication of the new paper was accompanied by blogs at:

- [Skills Development Scotland](#)
- [Education & Employers](#)
- [OECD](#)

[Apprenticeship in England, United Kingdom](#). England is embarked on a reform programme to encourage more substantive apprenticeship programmes and put in place a stronger funding framework. Despite these strengths, there is still some way to go to establish an apprenticeship system in England to match those of the strongest countries. This new report suggests ways in which reforms might be adapted to achieve better outcomes. The report argues that England should consider introducing regulations and standards to ensure that all apprenticeship programmes include excellent work-based learning alongside challenging general education. In an [OECD blog](#) to accompany the publication, Malgorzata Kuczera focuses on the importance of general education in apprenticeship and compares provision in England and other European countries.

[Apprenticeship and Vocational Education and Training in Israel](#). Against a background of strong economic growth, labour shortages in many sectors and growing disadvantage for minority populations, opportunity exists in Israel to expand and integrate apprenticeship programmes into the mainstream upper secondary system and develop systematic work-based learning placements in selected school-based vocational programmes. With vocational education and training currently fragmented in Israel, students and employers often find it difficult to navigate the system. To address this challenge, this new report recommends creating a single strategic body to guide policy development and champion it within government.

Directorate for Education and Skills blog



[Shaping, not Predicting, the Future of Students](#). A blog exploring the capacity of teenage work-related indicators of adult economic success to help target the work of schools in preparing young people for their working lives. By Anthony Mann.

## Looking ahead. New publications, due out over the next six months...

### **Seven Questions about Apprenticeship: Answers from International Evidence**

The culmination of a multi-year, multi-project enquiry, this new report synthesises insights from [six studies](#) on different aspects of work-based learning. It addresses the essential questions that shape the demand of any apprenticeship system: How to engage employers? How long should an apprenticeship last? How much should apprentices be paid? How can apprenticeships be made to work for all learners?

### **Making Skills Transparent: Recognising Vocational Skills Acquired through Work-based Learning**

The final paper in our work-based learning project, this study asks: With growing numbers of adults enrolling in vocational education and training, how can systems best recognise the skills they bring with them? The [new paper](#) will argue that a strong process for skill recognitions for adults is an essential characteristic of a high performing VET system. It sets out mechanisms through which vocational skills can be recognised and reflected in qualifications; and identifies potential barriers, and the effective policy tools which address them.

To stay in touch with our work, follow Project Lead Anthony Mann on Twitter - [@AnthonyMannOECD](#)

## Country reviews

The OECD VET and Adult Learning team is currently engaged on reviews with four countries for publication in 2019. Our work in Sweden and Estonia looks at the effectiveness of VET systems. In Bulgaria, analysis focuses particularly on the governance and financing of VET systems. By contrast, in England the emphasis our study is on basic skills and what works in terms of improving the literacy, numeracy and digital skills of people in work.

## Summer reading

OECD analysts are a serious bunch. Here, they pick out some recommendations for what to take to the beach if you are holidaying over the next few weeks:

[The Finances of Dual VET in Germany](#) by Normann Müller, Felix Wenzelmann and Anika Jansen

Germany offers a fascinating basis for investigating VET from an international perspective. The country has a large

population, prosperous economic situation and a dual VET system with a proven ability to prepare young students for employment. In this article, researchers from the Federal institute for VET (BIBB) discuss the costs associated with the system. They show how the costs of VET are shared between companies, the public authorities and the apprentices and divided into three relatively equal parts. While the costs are substantial, the long term benefit for all three parties typically makes the investment worthwhile. This article walks offers a quick glance into the cost benefit analysis which underpins all successful VET systems.

[How Firms' Participation in Apprenticeship Training Foster Knowledge Diffusion and Innovation](#) by Christian Rupiotta and Uschi Backes-Gellner

The study focuses on the institutional framework for social partners' involvement in VET and innovations in firm. In countries such as Germany and Switzerland, firms cooperate to define the content of apprenticeship programmes. Firms collectively update the skills and knowledge that should be developed on the programme. In this process, they reflect upon new technologies, production and training methods introduced in the sector. Drawing on Swiss data the study confirms that collectively organised involvement of social partners in VET has a positive impact on innovation in firms. The effect is stronger for small firms, implying there is a transition of knowledge and innovation from larger companies to smaller ones.

[Biased Aspirations and Social Inequality at School: Evidence from French Teenagers](#) by Nina Guyon and Elise Huillery

The consequences of inequality are multiple. New empirical evidence finds that socio-economic background affects an individual's ability to set goals in line with their academic potential. Guyon and Huillery look at French teenagers' educational and professional aspirations at the end of junior high school. Among classmates who perform equally well academically, disadvantaged students are 4 percentage points less likely to aspire to university studies. They also find that disadvantaged students underestimate their current academic ability compared to their more advantaged classmates. This leads to those students having a more limited set of options when they think of the future, and to a waste of potential. The authors talk about an "aspiration-based poverty trap". This is a very strong argument for [more and better career guidance](#).

[The Native-Migrant Gap in the Progression into and through Upper-Secondary Education](#) by Stefan Wolter and Maria Zumbuehl

Migrants today represent a considerable share of the workforce in many OECD countries. However, their pathways through education and into the labour market are not always smooth. For instance, Wolter and Zumbuehl show that migrants in Switzerland have more difficulties to enter the upper secondary level. While competencies explain much of these difficulties, differences in aspirations and incomplete or inaccurate information about the education system appear to be important factors. This suggests that improving preparatory education for migrants and enhancing career guidance towards an increasing diversity can help to [unlock the potential of migrants](#).

[Guttman Community College Puts "Work" at the Center of Learning: An Approach to Student Economic Mobility](#) by Nancy Hoffman

Long-standing OECD collaborator, Nancy Hoffman, describes a new approach to preparing students for employment by helping them to become critical thinkers about how the world of work operates. Students at New York's Guttman Community College take a compulsory course on the [Ethnographies of Work](#). Aimed at helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to develop the cultural insights and social connections that their more privileged peers might take for granted, the course draws on sociological and anthropological approaches to make sense of modern workplaces. With links to careers guidance and structured around episodes of work experience, the course concludes with an ethnographic and quantitative investigation of an occupations of interest to students. Nancy Hoffman describes the course in more detail [here](#).

[Adult Learning and Inequalities: What Questions to Ask when Designing Upskilling Pathways?](#) by Simon Broek

It is well known that those adults in greatest need of education and training participate the least – reaching out to this target group and enabling them to engage in sustainable learning pathways is the most difficult task in adult education. In this new paper from Simon Broek at EPALE addresses the need to challenge policies not to settle for harvesting only the low-hanging fruit, but also to reach out a bit further to establish systems in which adult learning is indeed the solution for inequalities. Policy makers, he argues, need to ask key questions on accessibility, motivation, outreach of adult education to implement effective adult learning.

To stay in touch with our work, download our regular newsletters and/or follow Project Lead Anthony Mann on Twitter: [@AnthonyMannOECD](#)

## Stay in touch

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You can find more information on our [website](#).



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