



## Learning for Jobs: tools to support vocational programmes Pointers for policy development

### ENGAGE EMPLOYERS AND UNIONS

- Engage employers, unions and other stakeholders to strengthen links between vocational programmes and labour market needs.
- Draw on employers' perspectives and capacity to:
  - assess whether the content of curricula and qualifications meet current labour market needs
  - guide their adaptation to emerging requirements
  - develop qualifications and workplace training arrangements
- Establish appropriate bodies for engaging employers and unions in vocational programmes at national level, regionally, according to industrial sectors, or at the level of the individual institution. Taking account of the broader country context, they may have an advisory role or a decision-making one.
- Ensure that institutions and mechanisms to engage employers with the VET system represent the diverse perspectives and opinions found within employers' groups.
- Recognise that employers and unions have mixed incentives:
  - Employers as a whole have very strong interest in general transferable skills, while individual employers and sectoral groupings often have narrower interests.
  - Trade unions can voice the student and employee interest in transferable as well as firm-specific skills. They have incentives to ensure that existing workers have access to good-quality training and have transferable skills but also have incentives to limit access to occupations.
- Find the appropriate role for government that supports the interests of students and balances the perspectives of employers and unions.

### MAKE CAREFUL USE OF QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS

- Design qualifications frameworks to meet clear goals:
  - Unify the vocational education and training system by locating diverse qualifications within a common framework
  - Increase transparency, so that the value of different qualifications can be more clearly recognised by students, employers and other stakeholders
  - Facilitate lifelong learning, and improve access to higher-level education for all, by clarifying access requirements in terms of a 'level' in the qualifications framework
- Recognise the key elements required for qualifications frameworks to be effective. They need to be:
  - underpinned by a strong methodology for allocating qualifications to levels
  - supported by key stakeholders
  - backed by complementary measures to unify the education and training system and improve transitions
- Embed the qualifications framework within a wider approach to ensuring quality and coherence.

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## ADOPT STANDARDISED NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS

- Provide a systematic means of ensuring that all those seeking the same qualification are assessed against the same standards and criteria through a standardised national assessment framework that:
  - ensures consistency in the mix and level of competences acquired
  - allows competences to be acquired in diverse ways, and encourages innovation and efficiency in the acquisition of skills
  - provides a clear basis for recognition of prior learning

## STRENGTHEN DATA AND THE CAPACITY TO USE DATA

- Ensure that good data on the labour market outcomes of vocational programmes is available to:
  - underpin evaluations of whether programmes meet labour market needs
  - inform student career choice
  - adjust provision in vocational programmes and government funding priorities
- Develop data sources such as:
  - Systematic surveys of those who have recently left vocational programmes
  - Census and survey data relating labour market information to vocational qualifications
  - Sample longitudinal surveys, that follow a cohort of young people through vocational programmes and later transitions
  - Full longitudinal datasets that link vocational programme administrative records to later experience, including employment experience through an individual reference number
- Establish research centres to support policy development on vocational programmes through better data, research and analysis.

## FURTHER READING

The OECD's policy review of vocational education and training (VET), *Learning for Jobs*, comprises a programme of analytical work and individual country reviews and is designed to help countries make their VET systems more responsive to labour market needs.

Further information about the policy review and reports on VET systems in countries is available on the OECD website [www.oecd.org/edu/learningforjobs](http://www.oecd.org/edu/learningforjobs).