



Postsecondary Vocational Education and Training in Israel Strengths and Challenges

STRENGTHS

- The system is diverse, with relatively good labour market outcomes for graduates. Bearing in mind the range of different options, including not only practical engineering and technician training and vocational courses, but also professional certifications, diverse private courses, as well as a range of targeted programmes directed at disadvantaged groups, the system offers options for most of the relevant student groups.
- There is an active framework of government-led reform in the Ministry of Economy and other government ministries and agencies, with plans to put vocational education and training on a statutory basis through legislation. The social partners – both employers and unions – are well organised and are keen to engage more fully in the vocational education and training system. There have been praiseworthy efforts to promote innovation in delivery.
- The certification system provides an effective means of upskilling. Occupational certifications are administered by the Ministry of Economy in more than 100 different professions. Some 70 000 people each year take these examinations, sometimes at the end of an educational programme and sometimes as a stand-alone examination.
- Although data remain a challenge, research and analysis are well-developed by international standards, with a strong capacity for research in universities and research institutes, often with international reputations.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TACKLING THE SKILLS CHALLENGE

Challenge: A number of serious and growing skills challenges threaten the Israeli economy: employers are voicing concern about the inadequacy of vocational skills; a wave of retirements affecting highly-skilled migrants from the former Soviet Union will substantially exacerbate skills shortages; and enhanced vocational provision is necessary to tackle low economic activity rates in the growing Arab, Israeli and Haredi populations. But despite these growing pressures, there is less vocational provision than in many other OECD countries, and funding in the sector is inadequate and sometimes declining.

Recommendation: In the face of serious and growing skills shortages, exacerbated by demographic change, take decisive action, supported by adequate funding, to launch a strategic expansion of high-quality vocational education and training programmes, guided by partnership with industry, and underpinned by legislation. Make the vocational skills learnt during the military service more transparent and transferable.

STRENGTHENING CO-ORDINATION AND SOCIAL PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Challenge: In Israel the different parts of the vocational education and training (VET) system are subject to uncoordinated governance systems. This makes the system difficult to navigate for students, and inhibits social partner engagement.

Recommendation: Establish a national body involving all the key stakeholders, including the ministries, employers and unions to provide strategic guidance on the development of the VET system.

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK OF WORK-BASED LEARNING

Challenge: Despite all the benefits of work-based learning, both as a powerful learning tool and as a means of encouraging partnership with employers, work-based learning is little used in the vocational system.

Recommendation: Integrate work-based learning systematically into postsecondary vocational programmes, as a mandatory, quality-assured and credit-bearing element. Establish a regulatory framework in support of this end.

BUILDING PATHWAYS OF ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

Challenge: Graduates of vocational tracks at the upper secondary level often face obstacles in entering postsecondary programmes, which damages the status of these vocational tracks. Although many graduates of practical engineering programmes enter university programmes, when they do so they often fail to receive adequate recognition for their practical qualifications.

Recommendation: Take steps: *i)* to improve the access of upper secondary VET graduates to further learning opportunities, including postsecondary VET; and *ii)* to enhance access to universities and credit recognition for graduates of practical engineering programmes.

DEVELOPING A DUAL-SKILLED TEACHING WORKFORCE

Challenge: Effective vocational teachers need to meet the demanding “dual requirement” of both pedagogical skills, and practical professional expertise. But rigid and sometimes inconsistent requirements to enter the profession and a capacity to make use of part-time teachers create obstacles to the recruitment of those with significant industry experience. In-service professional development opportunities can be limited, and teacher shortages are likely in the future.

Recommendation: Pursue reforms in vocational teacher policy in the practical engineering and technician programmes to meet the “dual requirement” of industry knowledge and experience alongside teaching skills by:

- Encouraging part-time working arrangements, allowing people with valuable work experience to enter teaching.
- Designing initial teacher education programmes so as to ensure a good mix of pedagogical skills, vocational competence and industry knowledge.
- Converging the entry requirements and training programmes for all teachers of practical engineering programmes to a common standard, under the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Increasingly countries look beyond secondary school to more advanced qualifications to provide the skills needed in many of the fastest growing technical and professional jobs in OECD economies. The OECD study, *Skills beyond School*, is addressing the range of policy questions arising, including funding and governance, matching supply and demand, quality assurance and equity and access. The study will build on the success of the previous OECD study of vocational education and training *Learning for Jobs* which examined policy through 17 country reviews and a comparative report. The study also forms part of the horizontal OECD Skills Strategy.

Full country policy reviews are being conducted in Austria, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Israel, Korea, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (England), and the United States (with case studies of Florida, Maryland and Washington State). Shorter exercises leading to an OECD country commentary will be undertaken in Belgium (Flanders), Canada, Iceland, Romania, Spain, Sweden and in Northern Ireland and Scotland in the United Kingdom. Background reports will be prepared in all these countries, and in France and Hungary.

[A Skills beyond School Review of Israel, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training](#) (Musset, P., M. Kuczera and S. Field, 2014) was published on 29 April 2014.

Further information about the policy review and reports on VET systems in other countries is available on the OECD website: www.oecd.org/education/vet