



# A SKILLS BEYOND SCHOOL REVIEW OF KAZAKHSTAN

Skills beyond School, the OECD Review of Postsecondary  
Vocational Education and Training



## Opportunities / Strengths

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- Good quality can be seen already in some VET colleges. The colleges visited by the OECD team in Astana, Almaty and Pavlodar offer high quality education and training: they count with updated equipment; the levels of motivation of both teachers and school leaders are high; workplace learning is highly appreciated; and they seem to have well-established communication with employers. Although these colleges might not be necessarily representative of the whole system they are strong evidence that Kazakhstan is able to provide, and it is doing so already in some colleges, VET of good quality.



# Opportunities / Strengths

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- Workplace learning is perceived as central to develop VET. By law, all programmes must have a significant amount of workplace learning in Kazakhstan. In principle, this proportion should be at least 40%. This initiative is a positive development as workplace learning offers multiple advantages for all VET stakeholders. Also, enhance workplace learning is one of the central aims of the Kasipkor holding, one of the major governmental initiatives to improve VET in the country.



## Opportunities / Strengths

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- Aspiring to an independent certification system. The implementation of an independent certification system, meant to be led by employers in the future (it is led by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the moment), is an important goal for the authorities. Such a development can be helpful in making the system more coherent and transparent, for both students and employers. Crucially, giving central responsibility to employers in VET certification should be a strong incentive for the system to be used and regularly updated by stakeholders.



## Opportunities / Strengths

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- The development of advisory councils. The private sector requires the right context to participate more actively in the development and establishment of good practices in VET. Efforts linked to the creation on advisory councils at different levels (national, regional and sectorial) in Kazakhstan, where employers are meant to play a central role is a very promising development. It is desirable that the National Council involves more school leaders, SMEs and middle-managers from the public sector rather than confining its membership to heads of ministries and representatives of large companies.



## Opportunities / Strengths

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- Efforts to improve teachers training. Adequate support and development opportunities for teachers are crucial for the success of VET. There are several efforts to improve teacher training in Kazakhstan. The establishment of the National Centre of Excellence “Orleu” might be seen as one of the most promising of such initiatives as this centre co-ordinates national efforts previously fragmented across different bodies. This centre monitors the performance of teachers after receiving training support. It would be highly desirable that individual colleges harmonise their programmes and the content of qualification courses with this centre with the aim of measuring the impact of training and detect those teachers in need of support. Also, it should be highlighted that the Kasipkor holding is meant to develop new approaches to upgrade the training and qualifications of VET teachers in general and special disciplines. To do so, modular-based programmes informed by labour market requirements will be prepared by Kasipkor to support VET teachers.



# Challenges and Recommendations

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- Improve quality. The quality of VET in Kazakhstan, as in many countries, is not sufficiently adequate in some specific aspects: *i) employers argue that VET graduates do not necessarily gain the skills that firms require; ii) teachers do not seem to have enough access to industry to update their skills regularly; and iii) authorities are conscious that more and detailed information is required for students to inform their education and training choices.*
  - *Strengthen work to update the VET programmes offered in accordance with labour market requirements; ensure that VET teachers' skills are regularly updated with the active participation of employers and through workplace learning; and undertake measures to make it sure that students choices are adequately supported – and their personal preferences balanced – with labour market outcomes information of the VET programmes offered.*



# Challenges and Recommendations

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- Improve co-ordination in the system while strengthen capacities for the interaction between VET schools and employers. Effective VET systems require adequate co-ordination to ensure the participation of multiple stakeholders of varied profiles. A clear allocation of responsibilities would make co-ordination easier and strengthen employers' participation through national, regional and sectorial councils in Kazakhstan. At the same time, VET colleges should be encouraged and supported to take advantage of their autonomy to offer flexibility in more meaningful ways to facilitate co-operation with employers and other relevant stakeholders
  - *Strengthen the role of the National Council for training of technical and vocational education personnel in order to simplify and consolidate the governance of the system. At the same time, take measures to encourage colleges to make full use of their autonomy and undertake more meaningful interactions with employers and other stakeholders.*



# Challenges and Recommendations

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- Strengthen the identity and recognition of post-secondary VET. Despite its size, post-secondary VET in Kazakhstan does not seem to have a clear and strong institutional identity which, in turn, makes it difficult for stakeholders to recognise its distinctive contribution. Stronger post-secondary VET should help industries to tackle a shortage of more advanced technical skills, especially when ambitious upgrading and competitiveness programmes are set out as pillars for economic development and social cohesion. Also, vocational education should be attractive for students that look for opportunities for up-skilling and further education.
  - *Strengthen the identity and recognition of post-secondary VET through: i) meeting labour market needs beyond upper secondary level and clarifying its contribution to economic development and social cohesion; ii) giving a clearer nomenclature to the sector; and iii) considering locate post-secondary VET in institutions with a clear mission to deliver such programmes.*



# Challenges and Recommendations

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- Improve assessment and certification processes in VET. Impressive efforts are being made in Kazakhstan to build up a certification system that is independent from colleges. But Kazakhstan should be encouraged to go one step further and give employers a more prominent role in certification. At the same time, professional examinations might be considered as a helpful means to strengthen the validity of this process and facilitating the recognition of prior learning as an additional route for certification.
  - *Strengthen the certification process giving employers more responsibilities as well as improving the examinations associated with certification in order to enhance their validity and facilitate the recognition of prior learning.*



# Challenges and Recommendations

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- Support and enhance workplace learning. Although workplace learning is required in VET programmes by law and much effort has been made to secure job internships for students in the country, the VET system in Kazakhstan should be encouraged to continue enhancing the quality of workplace learning as well as improving the framework to facilitate its implementation. At the moment, it remains unclear to what extent workplace learning is truly a standard practice across all colleges in Kazakhstan and how quality is assured.
  - *Strengthen and support the practice of workplace learning in Kazakhstan by enhancing its quality and links with employers through a framework that should aim to include also SMEs.*



# Skills beyond School Reviews

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- 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 builds 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.



# Skills beyond School Reviews

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- 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. Further information is available on the OECD website: [www.oecd.org/education/vet](http://www.oecd.org/education/vet)



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OECD Reviews of Vocational  
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