

A snapshot of a selection of items added to VOCEDplus

APRIL 2025

The [full list](https://www.voced.edu.au/full-list) of new additions to VOCEDplus is available at [www.voced.edu.au](https://www.voced.edu.au)

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*To advance the quality of teaching and learning in VET and higher education, it is crucial for governments to invest in the production, dissemination and use of educational research by teaching staff*

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*Both the Augar Review and the Universities Accord Review indicate both countries' increasing interest in reforms that would create greater connectedness between higher education and VET*

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## Fostering excellence in higher education and VET

**Fostering excellence in higher education and VET: going beyond quality assurance / François Staring, Stewart Butler and Patricio Ruedi.**

Paris, France: OECD, 2025. 63 pages.

This paper examines a wide range of quality-focused policies, other than quality assurance, used by governments to promote pedagogical innovation and enhancement in higher education and vocational education and training (VET) in ten European jurisdictions: Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Scotland (United Kingdom). This Education Policy Perspective is the second in a two-part series of policy papers on 'Promoting quality and excellence in higher education and VET'. The first paper, [Ensuring quality in VET and higher education: getting quality assurance right](#), reviews recent policy developments in external evaluation and quality assurance.

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## Mid-level qualifications in Australia and England

**Mid-level qualifications in the divided tertiary education systems in Australia and England / Binh Ta, Peter Dawkins and Cuong Huu Hoang.**

Journal of higher education policy and management, forthcoming article first published online in March 2025.

The [Universities Accord 2024](#) in Australia and the [Augar Review 2019](#) in England both argue for a more cohesive tertiary education system and consider promoting mid-level qualifications. This paper compares the roles of mid-level qualifications in the two countries' current systems. The authors review government reports and analyse national statistics, and find that despite England's population being three times larger, Australia's mid-level qualification enrolments were three times higher, mainly driven by Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas. Both countries have intricate networks of mid-level qualification providers and funding systems that prioritise Bachelor's Degrees over mid-level qualifications. However, England has recently announced a new funding policy, the [Lifelong Learning Entitlement](#), which was motivated partly to promote participation in mid-level qualifications. In contrast, a significant barrier for Australia is its complex funding system involving both state and federal governments.

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*How programs brand their services and respond to adults' goals for learning is crucial to engagement*

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*In Germany, half of the students drop out of academic second-chance education*

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*Privatisation and marketisation have led to a race to the bottom in funding, quality, and probity*

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## Adults in foundational education in the United States

**U.S. adults in foundational education: backgrounds and skills of learners with low numeracy skills / Margaret Becker Patterson.**

Adult literacy education: the international journal of literacy, language, and numeracy, volume 7, number 1, Winter 2025, pages 4-17.

Adults with low numeracy skills often start adult foundational education services or work with individual tutors. Using United States Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) 2012/2014/2017 data, this paper examines the characteristics, educational backgrounds, and numeracy proficiency of adult learners in adult foundational education, along with use of numeracy skills at home and how skills predict use. Adult foundational education learner numeracy scores generally fall at Level 1, but positive links occur between numeracy skills and use, particularly in calculations and financial transactions. The paper offers resources for instructors to enhance learner numeracy.

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## Second chance education challenges in Germany

**Teacher practice under the structural challenges of academic second chance education / Claudia Schuchart, Doris Bühler-Niederberger and Benjamin Schimke.**

Studies in continuing education, volume 47, number 1, March 2025, pages 88-110.

Academic second-chance education (SCE) provides young adults with the opportunity for upward mobility. However, many young people in academic SCE have unfavourable prerequisites, which make it difficult for them to meet academic requirements. In this article, the authors explore how teachers respond to this challenge in their practice and the extent to which teacher practice matches learner expectations. The research is based on a dataset of 176 teachers and 600 learners in 9 schools of academic SCE in Germany. The article discusses the extent to which structural features of academic SCE make it difficult to perceive the adult needs of learners and at the same time to pursue challenging learning goals.

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## Role of vocational colleges in Australia

**What do vocational colleges do and why do they matter?: thinking about the role of colleges as local actors / Leesa Wheelahan and Gavin Moodie.**

Journal of vocational education and training, volume 77, number 1, March 2025, pages 36-57.

Vocational colleges' social role has been under-developed because they have been marketised and privatised, and because the idea of the vocational college has not been advanced and institutionalised. The paper describes this for public vocational colleges in Australia, which are at the vanguard of competency-based education and in being disciplined with neoliberal policies. The paper bases an institutionalisation of vocational colleges on the capabilities approach and an extension of their social role to anchor the development of communities' collective education, social and economic development, and their capacity for collective action.

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*Employees in jobs where new technologies resulted in both task displacement and task creation were over 30 percentage points more likely to have undertaken job-related training in the previous 12 months, relative to employees in jobs not impacted by new technologies*

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*Encouraging, enabling and rewarding ongoing qualification is an investment in the future pipeline of educators, teachers and leaders in ECEC and essential to support and sustain the quality of provision for the benefit of all children and the nation*

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## Technological change and upskilling workers in Europe

**Technological change and the upskilling of European workers / Seamus McGuinness, Paul Redmond, Konstantinos Pouliakas, Lorcan Kelly and Luke Brosnan.**

Bonn, Germany: IZA, 2025. 22 pages.

Using the second wave of the European Skills and Jobs Survey for 29 European countries, this paper measures the relationship between technological change that automates or augments workers' job tasks and their participation in work-related training. The authors find that 58 per cent of European employees experienced no change in the need to learn new technologies in their jobs during the 2020-21 period. Of those exposed to new digital technology, 14 per cent did not experience any change in job tasks, 10 per cent reported that new tasks had been created while 5 per cent only saw some of their tasks being displaced by new technology. Analysis shows that employees in jobs impacted by new digital technologies are more likely to have to react to unpredictable situations, thus demonstrating a positive link between technologically driven task disruption and job complexity. There is a strong linear relationship between technologically driven job task disruption and the need for job-related training, with training requirements increasing the greater the impact of new technologies on task content.

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## Early childhood education and care workforce in Australia

**Australia's ECEC workforce pipeline: who and how many are pursuing further qualifications? / Sharon McKinlay, Karen Thorpe, Chrystal Whiteford, Laura Bentley, Susan Irvine.**

Australian educational researcher, volume 52, number 1, March 2025, pages 295-314.

The significant shortfall of staff in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce identifies an imperative not only to recruit educators but to support ongoing qualifications and career advancement of those within. Indeed, [Shaping Our Future](#), Australia's workforce strategy for 2022-2031, identifies qualifications and career development as key focus areas. Taking this imperative, the authors asked 'Who?' and 'How many?' within the Australian workforce are committed to ongoing study? Analysing a national survey (N = 1291), this research examines characteristics of those studying (20.5 per cent), intending (52.3 per cent) or wavering about further study (18.7 per cent). Study and study intention were associated with being younger and at an early career-stage, identifying a positive message for career growth. Those who were older or working part-time were less certain about ongoing training. Those with long tenure in ECEC had higher rates of studying for non-ECEC qualifications. Implications for qualification pipeline, career pathways and workforce strategy are discussed.

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