VOCEDplus HIGHLIGHTS

A snapshot of a selection of items added to VOCEDplus

MARCH 2025

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Tertiary harmonisation is not about merging or integrating VET and higher education - each would remain a distinctive sector with important differences in their missions and their approaches to learning

Towards a tertiary harmonisation roadmap in Australia

Opportunity and productivity: towards a tertiary harmonisation roadmap / Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA).

Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Jobs and Skills Australia, 2025. 71 pages.

This report seeks to articulate the benefits of a more harmonised tertiary sector and provides recommendations on how to create a sustainable pathway forward in collaboration with key stakeholders. Tertiary harmonisation is the strategic alignment of the higher education and vocational education and training (VET) sectors. It involves the effective coordination and cooperation of key system actors, to enable learners to obtain the combination of knowledge, skills and their application needed to be successful in a changing labour market. The report identifies the benefits of harmonisation as improving tertiary system effectiveness and growing access, particularly to people who have traditionally had difficulty accessing the tertiary education system. A more harmonised system would also facilitate tackling national challenges, helping to address skilled workforce shortages and improve productivity and labour market outcomes.

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Training and skill-enhancing efforts can become a catalyst for shaping occupations, jobs, and skills, and driving high-tech and green innovations

Skills for the green transition in Sweden

Challenges in providing industry with skills for the green transition at the right pace / Maria Gustavsson, Agneta Halvarsson Lundkvist and Daniel Persson Thunqvist.

European journal of workplace innovation, volume 9, number 1-2, February 2025, pages 192-209.

The manufacturing industry is undergoing a significant transformation, characterised by a green transition and rapid digitalisation. Technological advances have dominated Industry 4.0, whereas the transition to Industry 5.0 emphasises improving technology from a human-centric lens. This necessitates focusing on digital and green skills development to accelerate the green transition in industry. Within the context of Swedish higher vocational education (HVE), this paper aims to investigate HVE providers' experiences of challenges in providing industry with the skills needed for the green transition. The findings indicate that there is an imbalance in pace between HVE and industry caused by various challenges at three transitional levels: the individual level, the company-HVE provider level, and the HVE system level.

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Image management campaigns should be considered in policymaking as a means of increasing participation in adult learning and continued vocational education and training activities

Perception and participation in adult learning in Europe

How perception affects participation: the case of adult learning and continued vocational education and training in Europe / Annika Heuer, Luis Serratos-Sotelo and Andreas Motel-Klingebiel.

International journal of lifelong education, volume 44, number 1, January-February 2025, pages 17-37.

In this paper, the authors aim to understand how perceptions of adult learning and continued vocational education and training (CVET) are related to participation in these activities. Using novel survey data from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the probability of participation in adult learning and CVET is estimated by means of linear and logistic regression models. Results show a highly significant positive relationship between perceptions and participation. If adult learning and CVET are perceived as important, the likelihood to participate in them increases. The authors also find evidence that age, education and occupational category can be associated with different participation rates in adult learning and CVET.

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The work of quality assurance agencies can be situated on a continuum, ranging from activities focused on assessing institutional compliance with baseline quality standards (i.e. an accountability function) to activities that seek to promote teaching excellence (i.e. an enhancement function)

Ensuring quality in VET and higher education in Europe

Ensuring quality in VET and higher education: getting quality assurance right / François Staring, Stewart Butler and Patricio Ruedi.

Paris, France: OECD, 2025. 57 pages.

Policy makers thinking about the design of their VET and higher education quality assurance (QA) systems face similar challenges. Three questions appear to dominate contemporary policy discussions on QA in VET and higher education: the mission of QA bodies, the real impact of QA assessments on quality, and the potential links between external QA systems for different parts of the education and training system. For each of these three questions, this paper reviews recent policy developments in the ten selected European jurisdictions: Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, and Scotland.

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By exposing students to the practice of their discipline in authentic settings early in their studies, and repeatedly during their studies, students will more quickly adopt and adapt to the changing practice of their discipline and contribute towards the evolution of the workplace

Defining and designing work-integrated learning

Defining and designing work-integrated learning curriculum / Sonia J. Ferns, Karsten E. Zegwaard, T. Judene Pretti and Anna D. Rowe.

Higher education research and development, volume 44, number 2, March 2025, pages 371-385.

The scope of work-integrated learning (WIL) has expanded and evolved globally and is a recognised pedagogy that enhances graduate employability, strengthens students' personal attributes, and affords a personalised learning experience. The purpose of this paper is to provide insights into WIL curriculum design and educational practices. A framework for conceptualising the enactment of the WIL curriculum is presented that preserves the flexibility of WIL while establishing a consistent interpretation of what WIL curriculum entails. Consensus on the defining elements of WIL and its enactment will facilitate stronger global collaboration, shared teaching ethos, and augmented research impact.

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How can colleges, polytechnics, and universities reduce the barriers that neurodivergent students face?

Creating inclusive campuses in Canada

Creating inclusive campuses: neuroinclusive policies and practices in post-secondary education / Jennifer Fane.

Ottawa, Ontario: Conference Board of Canada, 2025. 24 pages.

How do neurodivergent students experience post-secondary education? How can faculty and staff better address the needs of neurodivergent students and improve their academic success and wellbeing? This report presents the findings of the first national survey of neurodivergent post-secondary students and recent graduates as well as in-depth interviews with neurodivergent students and graduates, and staff and leaders working in accessibility services. The author delves into the perceptions of these students, staff, and leaders to detail the policies and practices that hinder or promote neuroinclusivity in post-secondary education. From this, the author provides actionable recommendations for post-secondary institutions working to make more inclusive environments for neurodivergent students. Key insights include: (1) Neurodivergent faculty and administrative staff represent an underutilised resource for shaping neuroinclusive policies; (2) Neurodivergent students benefit from receiving targeted information about their learning profiles and relevant accessibility services; and (3) Adopting a neuroinclusive and neuro-affirming wraparound-service model can ensure neurodivergent students receive coordinated support across academic, accessibility, and mental health services.

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Students reported that in online courses they were less likely to know whether other students had similar confusion or struggles with course content - students who assumed they were the only ones facing challenges were likely to feel demotivated and less confident

Promoting motivation and learning in online courses

Beyond engagement: promoting motivation and learning in online courses / Susan Bickerstaff, Akilah H. Thompson, Keena P. Walters and Jenivee Gastelum.

New York, New York: Community College Research Center, 2025. 15 pages.

Online courses have become an increasingly common feature of the higher education landscape, expanding access and offering flexibility for students. Yet, they also pose unique challenges. This brief examines how students develop and use self-directed learning (SDL) skills - motivational, metacognitive, and applied learning processes that enable them to sustain effort, reflect on progress, set goals, and adapt their study strategies. Drawing on interviews with students in online STEM courses at eight broad-access institutions, the brief reveals key insights into students' strengths, motivations, and learning strategies for online courses. The brief offers evidence-based recommendations for improving online instruction and reducing performance gaps. It emphasises strategies that support active learning, encourage meaningful instructor-student interactions, and leverage students' existing strengths.

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