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A snapshot of a selection of items added to VOCEDplus

MAY 2019

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*The evidence shows that Australia's future prosperity will rely on a strong tertiary education sector*

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### **Rethinking and revitalising tertiary education in Australia**

**Rethinking and revitalising tertiary education in Australia / Peter Dawkins, Peter Noonan and Peter Hurley.**

Melbourne, Victoria: Mitchell Institute, Victoria University, 2019. iii, 34 pages.

This paper canvasses current evidence about the state of Australian tertiary education, and identifies options for innovative policy reform, to achieve cost-effective transformation throughout the sector. Tertiary education includes vocational education and training (VET), which comes under the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business at a federal level, (who also has an Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships), and various state-level Ministers; and higher education under the federal Minister for Education who also has various state counterparts. To assist governments around Australia in making the difficult decisions ahead, they will have the benefit of a range of reviews and reports on: the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); the VET sector; the reallocation of Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) for enabling, sub-bachelor and postgraduate courses; the Higher Education Provider Category Standards; and Performance-Based Funding for the Commonwealth Grant Scheme. This paper argues that it will be imperative for both federal Ministers to work together, and with their state government counterparts, to take a holistic approach to these reviews in the face of huge challenges facing the Australian tertiary education sector.

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*Ensuring people can benefit from new technologies and are not left behind requires a comprehensive and co-ordinated policy effort*

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### **Latest OECD skills outlook**

**OECD skills outlook 2019: thriving in a digital world / Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).**

Paris, France: OECD, 2019. 269 pages.

Economies and societies are undergoing digital transformations that bring both opportunities and challenges and countries' preparedness to seize the benefits of a digital world is largely dependent on the skills of their population. This report aims to understand how policies, and in particular those that affect skills development and use, can shape the outcomes of digital transformation and translate into more equally shared benefits among and within countries' populations. This package of co-ordinated policies needs to simultaneously promote digitalisation to increase productivity and well-being, and also cushion its negative impacts.

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*Skill shortages and mismatch are costly to individuals, firms and society because they negatively affect earnings, productivity, innovation and productivity growth*

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## Skill shortages and skill mismatch in Europe

**Skill shortages and skill mismatch in Europe: a review of the literature / Giorgio Brunello and Patricia Wruuck.**

Bonn, Germany: IZA, 2019. 34 pages.

Labour markets are currently in a phase of cyclical recovery and undergoing structural transformation due to globalisation, demographic trends, advancing digital technologies and automation and changes in labour market institutions. Against this background, businesses increasingly report that the limited availability of skills poses an impediment to corporate investment. Genuine skill constraints can negatively affect labour productivity and hamper the ability to innovate and adopt technological developments. For individual Europeans, not having 'the right skills' limits employability prospects and access to quality jobs. For Europe at large, persistent skill gaps and mismatches come at economic and social costs. This paper reviews the recent economic literature on skill mismatch and skill shortages with a focus on Europe.

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*Entry into tertiary education often incurs costs for students and their families, both in tuition fees and living expenses, which can act as an important obstacle to entry if there is insufficient financial support available to students*

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## Socio-economic status and entry into tertiary education

**How does socio-economic status influence entry into tertiary education? / Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).**

Paris, France: OECD, 2019. 6 pages.

Across OECD countries, individuals without tertiary-educated parents tend to be considerably under-represented among entrants to tertiary education. However, inequalities tend to accumulate throughout an individual's educational career. In particular, the period from starting upper secondary to entering tertiary education is critical in determining students' future career and education choices. Understanding how socio-economic disparities at earlier levels may influence entry rates to tertiary education will be essential if policy makers are to design better policies to improve equity.

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*In contrast to their peers from the general track who typically enter academically focused universities, graduates of the vocational track are more likely to enroll in universities of applied sciences*

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## Returns to vocational secondary education in Finland

**Labor market returns to vocational secondary education / Mikko Silliman and Hanna Virtanen.**

Helsinki, Finland: The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (ETLA), 2019. 40 pages.

The authors study labor market returns to vocational versus general secondary education using a regression discontinuity design created by the centralised admissions process in Finland. Admission to the vocational track increases annual income by seven per cent at age 31, and the benefits show no signs of diminishing with time. Moreover, admission to the vocational track does not increase the likelihood of working in jobs at risk of replacement by automation or offshoring. Consistent with the notion of comparative advantage, the authors observe significantly larger returns for people who express a preference for vocational education in their applications to secondary school.

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*Automation technologies such as robots can affect the prospects of hundreds of millions of Chinese workers in manufacturing and other sectors exposed to these technologies*

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## Automation technologies and jobs in China

**Is an army of robots marching on Chinese jobs? / Osea Giuntella and Tianyi Wang.**

Bonn, Germany: IZA, 2019. 56 pages.

A handful of studies have investigated the effects of robots on workers in advanced economies. According to a recent report from the World Bank (2016), 1.8 billion jobs in developing countries are susceptible to automation. Given the inability of labor markets to adjust to rapid changes, there is a growing concern that the effect of automation and robotization in emerging economies may increase inequality and social unrest. Yet, we still know very little about the impact of robots in developing countries. In this paper the authors analyse the effects of exposure to industrial robots in the Chinese labor market. Using aggregate data from Chinese prefectural cities (2000-2016) and individual longitudinal data from China, they find a large negative impact of robot exposure on employment and wages of Chinese workers. Effects are concentrated in the state-owned sector and are larger among low-skilled, male, and prime-age and older workers. Furthermore, the authors find evidence that exposure to robots affected internal mobility and increased the number of labor-related strikes and protests.

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*In 2018, completion rates in Scotland were higher than in most other countries, at 78 per cent, compared with 69 per cent in England, 53 per cent in Australia and 75 per cent in Germany*

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## Apprenticeship completion in Scotland

**Factors affecting Modern Apprenticeship completion in Scotland / Malcolm Greig.**

International journal of training and development, volume 23, issue 1, March 2019, pages 27-50.

International research, notably in England, Australia and Germany, has identified factors specific to the apprentice, employer and training provision that are associated with a higher chance of completion. However, to date, there has been no comparable research in Scotland, which operates its own distinct and well-established apprenticeship system. Based on the factors identified in other countries, logistic regression was conducted on records of apprenticeship leavers in Scotland, covering the period from 2007 to 2015. Data for a total of 78,952 leavers were analysed, consisting of 59,737 completers and 19,215 non-completers. It was found that women are more likely to complete an apprenticeship than men, while those from deprived areas are less likely to complete. Apprentices employed by a large employer, those receiving training from public sector organisations and those studying for selected technical subjects are more likely to complete, as are apprentices living in an area with a high local unemployment rate. The paper considers the reasons why some apprentices are more likely to complete than others and discusses the implications for apprenticeship policy in Scotland and beyond.

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