

Exploring post-school education and training

INTERESTS

SKILLS

EDUCATION & TRAINING

WORK CONDITIONS

VALUES



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The most significant growth in employment opportunities in developed economies, such as Australia, for the period 2017–2024, is predicted to be in occupations requiring tertiary-level qualifications, especially higher level vocational qualifications and Bachelor degrees. Early school leavers and those who enter the workplace after completing Year 12 without any post-school qualifications are likely to be employed in part-time and precarious work. In order to secure stable, full-time employment and develop their opportunities for a career, young people should expect to participate in post-school higher education or occupational training at some point in their lifetime.

Each year, nearly two-thirds of school leavers enter university or vocational education and training (VET), hoping to gain Bachelor degrees or higher level vocational qualifications and the vocational capabilities to adapt to work in the new and emerging industries or to respond to changes in traditional professions. Correspondingly, more than a third of those leaving school each year are faced with fraught transitions to full-time secure jobs unless they undertake further education and training. Both groups may not have developed the career management capacity to navigate the complex array of post-school education and training qualifications that have become increasingly necessary.

The importance of post-school education and training

Higher level vocational and Bachelor degree qualifications not only provide specialist skills and knowledge of a subject or vocational area, they also enable students to develop the capabilities to apply their knowledge, exercise responsibility for themselves and others, and deal with unpredictable situations. These are capabilities well suited to adapting and managing one's work and life opportunities. This is why studies about the future of work predict that people will be better prepared for job changes over their lifetime if they engage in post-school education and training.

Securing employment in a chosen occupational stream depends not only on the relevance of the skills and knowledge acquired for a specific labour market, but also on how well education and training has served broader educational and personal development goals.

What the research shows

Broadly speaking, education and training qualifications serve four purposes:

- preparation for the labour market
- the development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base
- preparation for life as active citizens in a democratic society
- personal development.

The extent to which each of these purposes is emphasised as part of the delivery of a qualification varies, but all four play an important role in post-school education and training.

Educational participation emphasising the four purposes outlined above not only supports learning in a specific area of knowledge and skills, but also develops people's capabilities to self-manage their lifelong learning, respond effectively to changes in labour markets, and be active citizens. Research shows that post-school educational participation, whether it be in VET or in higher education,

should be strongly encouraged because participation is a strong predictor of labour market success, personal health and wellbeing and positive familial and social outcomes.

There is also an important equity message from recent research for those involved in career education. Research on the post-school participation of young people from equity groups has shown that in-school career advice and guidance along with positive student-teacher relations were more conducive to subsequent university enrolment amongst young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, than positive school experiences alone.

To support more students to attend post-school education and training, effective career interventions have been shown to be crucial. Career development practitioners and teachers involved in career education, as well as other key influencers on young people's thinking – such as parents or those involved in community and youth activities – also need an understanding of the changing nature of work and the relationship between courses, qualifications and occupations.

Exploring education pathways using myfuture

myfuture's provision of unbiased career information is a critical tool supporting career development. The system is engineered to ensure that vocational and higher education options, including apprenticeships, are presented with an equal status and prestige. The platform's functionality also boosts the status of VET through its content provision and functional offers.

Drawing on research about how people have used courses and qualifications to progress to different labour markets, myfuture enables career development practitioners and teachers involved in career education, as well as students and young people, to identify pathways to jobs and occupation streams.

These pathways can be explored in various ways, including:

- completing activities using the career exploration tool, *My career profile*, to identify educational aspirations and preferred study areas, in order to discover suggested occupations and related educational pathways
- discovering occupations grouped by learning areas and skill levels on myfuture's *Career bullseyes*
- exploring clusters of occupations and seeing which courses and qualification levels match particular occupations and industries or service fields
- searching courses by discipline area and seeing which occupations match particular courses and qualification levels
- exploring the *Career articles* and selecting articles mapped to the topic 'Lifelong learning'
- reading the real-life *Career stories* about others' education pathways.

By promoting post-school education and training options of all kinds with equal prestige, and in accordance with contemporary research and best practice, myfuture provides essential information for all people to develop their career management capacity at all stages of their career planning.



Explore and download all myfuture *Insights* papers via the teacher and career practitioners and/or parents and carers pages at www.myfuture.edu.au

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Further reading

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