

**POLICY BRIEFING NOTE: 15**

This is the 15th of a series of short Policy Briefing Notes

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**DEMAND FOR SKILLED STUDENTS IN THE FUTURE**



**Vocational qualifications have never been so in demand - is the VQ day message**

**IPPR Briefing suggests too much focus on churning out graduates, too little responding to needs of employers**

**BRIEFING WINNING THE GLOBAL RACE? JOBS, SKILLS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION-IPPR-SUPPORTED BY EDGE FOUNDATION**

Jonathan Clifton, Spencer Thompson and Craig Thorley- June 2014

[http://www.edge.co.uk/media/134800/winning-global-race\\_june2014.pdf](http://www.edge.co.uk/media/134800/winning-global-race_june2014.pdf)

**Comments**

1. Three A-levels and a degree - the traditional 'golden route' in education - is no longer the only option when it comes to securing a job in the future according to a new **report from the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) and backed by the Edge Foundation, released to mark VQ Day, 2014**. The Briefing report investigates the changing shape of the UK workforce and jobs market within the next decade. It reveals that many of the jobs expected to drive economic growth and mobility in the future will be accessible with a vocational qualification.

2. A key message from this is that it is not sufficient for policy makers to focus on increasing the number of graduates in the workforce as a way of creating more skilled jobs and driving economic growth. Indeed, the system may be delivering too many graduates than is required, certainly in some sectors of the labour market. The report suggests a growing demand for high quality vocational qualifications in the future, with the vocational route a useful pathway into work. But it also warned that the qualifications and courses taken by young people need to better match the needs of employers
3. By 2022 there is set to be an additional 3.6 million job vacancies in mid-skilled occupations such as child care supervisor, legal executive and commercial roofer, all of which employ high numbers of people with vocational qualifications at level 3 - the standard reached through Advanced Apprenticeships and many further education courses.
4. Additionally, the skills required for 9 out of the 10 most in-demand occupations of the future can be attained by completing vocational qualifications.
5. In 2022, the top three in-demand occupations will all be in health and care. As a result of our ageing population, nearly three million more health and care workers (2.75m) are going to be needed to look after people in hospitals, care homes and the community.
6. There will be nearly half a million jobs in skilled construction trades, ranging from bricklayers to geothermal pump installers.
7. There will be a quarter of a million jobs for 'associate professionals' - people with level 4 qualifications such as Foundation Degrees and Higher Apprenticeships. Opportunities range from accounting technician to day care manager and from dental technologist to financial adviser.
8. The top 10 occupations of the future (2022) are as follows:
  - *Caring and personal service occupations (e.g. care workers and dental nurses)*
  - *Health and social care associate professionals (e.g. social workers and probation officers)*
  - *Health professionals (e.g. medical practitioners, psychologists and pharmacists)*
  - *Business, media and public service professionals (e.g. journalists and public relations professionals)*
  - *Corporate managers and directors (e.g. chief executives and production managers/directors in manufacturing)*
  - *Culture, media and sports occupations (e.g. artists, dancers and photographers)*
  - *Leisure, travel and related personal service occupations (e.g. sports and leisure assistants and hairdressers)*
  - *Other managers and proprietors (e.g. property/housing/estate managers and waste disposal/environmental services managers)*

- *Customer service occupations (e.g. sales/retail assistants and telephone salespersons)*
  - *Business and public service associate professionals (e.g. air traffic controllers and insurance underwriters)*
9. While many jobs will be created by economic growth, people leaving the workforce - mainly through retirement - will be directly responsible for creating the majority of job vacancies between now and 2022. In fact, more than 5.5million jobs - just within the top 10 most in-demand occupations - will be created through retirements.
10. The Edge Foundation says that the report also challenges the notion of **the 'hourglass' economy** which assumes many highly skilled jobs at the top and low skilled jobs at the bottom, but relatively few mid-level jobs in between. The data projections show substantial growth in the middle and lower end of the occupational ladder as well as at the top. For example, there will be additional jobs for:
- *Caring personal service occupations (#1) - 1.6 million additional jobs*
  - *Business and public service associate professionals (#10) - 1.2 million additional jobs*
  - *Skilled construction trades (#16) - nearly half a million additional jobs*
  - *Associate professional jobs in areas such as health, science and engineering (#2) - a quarter of a million additional jobs*
11. Just over a third of all jobs will be created in high skilled occupations. It is important to note, says the Edge Foundation, that more people than ever are accessing higher education with vocational qualifications, giving them the edge with a combination of academic and practical knowledge. Recent Government research reveals that nearly 20% of advanced apprentices go on to higher education within a few years of completing their apprenticeships.

**Jan Hodges OBE, CEO of the Edge Foundation** which leads VQ Day, says: *"This research clearly demonstrates that we must continue to support high quality vocational education if we are to meet the needs of our future economy.*

*"Education that combines rigorous academic teaching with a more practical and technical element - as we are seeing at University Technical Colleges, Career Colleges and Studio Schools - is a good example of how we can address the future skills issue. However, we also need to raise the esteem of vocational qualifications and celebrate the success of people completing them, which is what VQ Day is all about."*

**Skills and Enterprise Minister, Matthew Hancock**, says: *"VQ day is about celebrating the ways in which high-quality vocational education and training, in all its forms, benefits learners, employers and the economy as a whole. We are reforming vocational qualifications*

to make sure they are rigorous and responsive to employers' needs, to ensure all students get a valued qualification. The VQ Awards form an important part of the celebrations and set an exceptional example, demonstrating the success that can be achieved through taking vocational qualifications."

**Michele Sutton, President of the Association of Colleges**, says: *"The learning and training landscape has changed for young people. It shouldn't be assumed that completing a three-year academic course in university is the best path to follow to get a successful career.*

*"Our own 'Careers Guidance: Guaranteed' campaign highlights the need to make sure school children have access to careers advice and guidance on post-14 education, training and employment options. We need to make sure they are provided with advice for the best route through education based on their needs, rather than anyone else's.*

*"The research launched by the Edge Foundation today supports this. This found that nine out of 10 of the most in-demand occupations in the future can be attained by vocational qualifications. Colleges are already part of this, providing a wide range of courses to their students.*

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Note: Also see Jan Hodges article in Daily Telegraph, 4 June, 2014: **'VALUABLE CAREERS FROM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'**

As VQ Day arrives, Jan Hodges says that while there are many interesting opportunities out there, vocational qualifications aren't always given the recognition they deserve:

*"22 per cent of students told they are 'too clever' for vocational education. The traditional pathway of three A-levels and a degree is no longer the only route to success. In the UK today we have many highly skilled people, working across a range of industries, who are absolutely key to our growing economy. Within the next few years, however, many of these people are set to retire. Coupled with continued economic growth, we are set to have a skills shortage on our hands. Something we need to address, urgently. For some years, the focus of most education policies has been to encourage our young people down academic routes, regardless of personal interests and talents, with few alternative options ever being offered or discussed. Survey upon survey tells us that many parents and teachers are unaware of the vocational qualifications and associated career opportunities that are available."*

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationopinion/10872909/Valuable-careers-from-vocational-education.html>

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