



Enhancing Employer Cooperation in Education

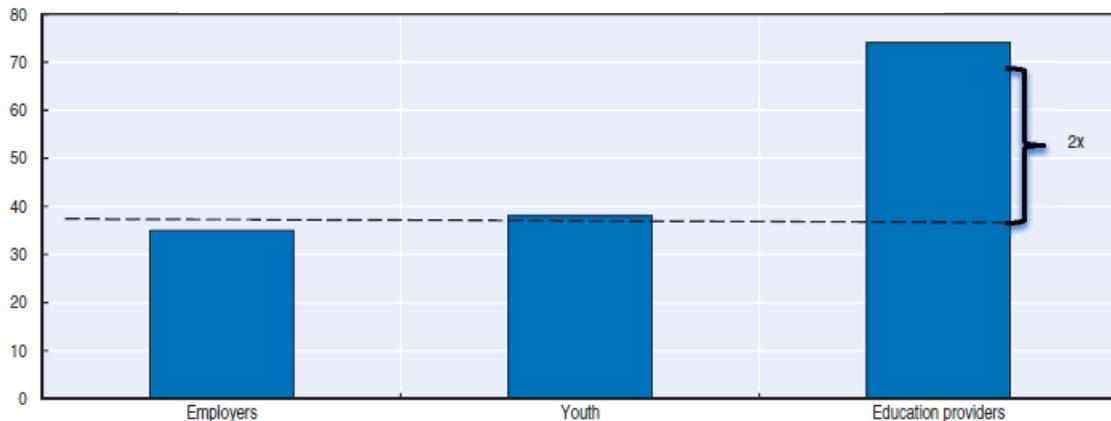
BIAC Statement to the Global Education Industry Summit 2015
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1. Why cooperation is needed

Education is vital to productivity, employment, and growth in the 21st Century. The competitiveness of economies and companies hinges to a great extent on the talent of their people. Employers therefore have a profound interest in ensuring that today's and tomorrow's jobseekers are educated, employable, and can continue to learn throughout their lifetimes.

However, **employers often report that they struggle to find suitably skilled candidates**. A survey by McKinsey of 5,300 youth, 2,600 employers, and 700 post-secondary education providers across eight European countries, finds that **education providers are twice as likely as employers and youth to rate their graduates as prepared for work** (see Figure 1ⁱ). This significant difference in perception suggests that, in order to increase employability, **much closer dialogue is needed between education providers and employers**ⁱⁱ.

Figure 1: Are graduates/new hires adequately prepared for work?



Note: Employers: Overall, the entry-level employees we hired in the past year have been adequately prepared by their pre-hire education and/or training.

Youth: Overall, I think I was adequately prepared for an entry-level position in my chosen career field.

Education providers: Overall, graduates from my institution are adequately prepared for entry level positions in their chosen field of study.

Source: Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (2013). Adapted from Mourshed, Patel and Suder (2014).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171586>

2. Where cooperation is needed

Employers seek cooperation with education policymakers and education institutions in the following areas, among others:ⁱⁱⁱ

- **Review school education curricula to target key labor and societal needs, focusing on modern areas of knowledge (such as STEM), skills (such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration), and character^{iv}, while avoiding curricula overload by carefully paring back less relevant topics and methods.**



- **Strengthen teacher quality and training, including for vocational education and training (VET) and school leadership.**
- **Encourage smarter investment in education.**
- **Improve career guidance for students, both in secondary and post-secondary education.**

3. How to cooperate

Cooperation with employers should include, for instance:^v

- **High-quality, system-level foresight systems for education policy**, engaging all stakeholders (including employers and employers' organizations) to anticipate skills needs and labor market trends over the medium term.
- **Cooperation between education institutions and employers**, notably for assessment and quality assurance systems.
- **Awareness-raising among employers on education and training trends, and possibilities for their engagement in education policy.** Employer organizations can work with governments to inform companies and explain the advantages of their engagement in education policy.
- **Joint initiatives to help develop work-based learning opportunities** could be pursued through cooperation between employers, teachers, researchers and students.

In this context, technologies provided by education industries have an increasingly important role to play in achieving intended learning outcomes in the 21st Century, and should be encouraged. In doing so, it is important to consider that education industry learning solutions are tools that require proper use. Their success in many ways hinges on their supplied content, accompanying pedagogical expertise, innovative learning environments, and other aspects of the education system.

4. Conclusions: The role for the OECD Education Industry Summits

The OECD Education Industry Summits have significant potential to examine conditions for success and to share good practices for effective employer engagement mechanisms in countries, regions, and sectors. Building upon its expertise in educational issues and its established relationship with the business community through BIAC, the OECD is particularly well-placed to make progress in fostering cooperation between employers and education policymakers – in OECD and non-OECD countries alike.^{vi}

ⁱ OECD (2015), Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-en>

ⁱⁱ This was confirmed in BIAC (2013) "Education Committee Survey: Synthesis Report", www.biac.org/statements/edu/130605_BIAC_Education_Survey_PREMIUM.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} BIAC (2015) "Character Qualities for the Workplace", <http://biac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/15-06-Synthesis-BIAC-Character-Survey1.pdf>

^v OECD (2015), Ibid

^{vi} This global reach is particularly relevant considering the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 4 on quality education and lifelong learning.