

Mexico's higher education needs to be better aligned with the labour market

10/01/2019 – The mismatch between the skills students acquire in higher education and the skills needed in the labour market is a main barrier to innovation and growth in Mexico. This is the main message of the OECD review *Higher Education in Mexico: Labour Market Relevance and Outcomes* launched today by OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría.

“Mexico needs to do much more to ensure that the half million graduates, who enter the labour market every year, get high quality jobs so that they can effectively contribute to the changing economy. At present, this is not the case,” said OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría.

The expected gains of higher education are largely unmet for graduates and employers in Mexico. Nearly every second graduate works in a job for which no higher education qualification is required and more than one in four ends up in informal jobs without social benefits. Young women are particularly disadvantaged: while they outnumber young men when graduating from higher education, their employment rate is 14 percentage points lower; one of the highest employment gaps across the OECD countries. At the same time, the demand for graduates among Mexican firms is limited, in part, by a lack of confidence among employers that graduates have the skills they need to perform well in their jobs.

The OECD report presents twelve recommendations in three key areas where government and higher education institutions can effectively collaborate to equip students with skills relevant for the labour market:

1. **Aligning higher education with the changing needs of the labour market.** The OECD recommends a national strategy to join existing initiatives in a high-impact framework. Besides strengthening the quality of higher education, this also means greater collaboration between higher education institutions and employers, and a greater diversity of study programmes.
2. **Helping students succeed in higher education and the labour market.** Pockets of innovative teaching, which already exist in some higher education institutions, should become standard practice to ensure that all students gain transferable skills and relevant work experience. This will also mean better pathways into and across higher education and a greater emphasis on lifelong learning.
3. **Working together effectively to enhance labour market relevance and outcomes.** A whole-of-government approach and the involvement of the entire higher education system are crucial for evidence-based policies and planning. More co-ordination and better information on higher education offer and outcomes will help to guide student choices and to ensure high quality and relevant higher education across all states.

The report is available [here](#).

For more information, journalists should contact the OECD Media Office (tel. + 33 1 45 24 97 00)