



problem-solving were above the OECD average and Germany ranks in the top 40% for the strength of its learning culture. Germany is also very successful at activating skills of the workforce with high employment and labour force participation rates, and a low share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Despite this success, there continue to be areas in which Germany could improve. For instance, there is evidence of significant skills imbalances in the labour market. Germany ranks in the bottom 40% of the OECD countries for the alignment between skills supply and labour market demand. The OECD Skills for Jobs database identifies shortages in several skills and knowledge areas, linked to strong demand in sales and marketing but also in computers and electronics and mathematics knowledge.

Some of these imbalances could be resolved by expanding and improving the tertiary attainment rate, which is lower than in many OECD countries, and by improving the inclusiveness of tertiary education. Germany has undertaken education reforms which have improved outcomes for disadvantaged youth, however socio-economic factors still play a big role in participation in higher education.

Germany could also improve the intensity of skills use in workplaces. Germany performs only around average for the adoption of high-performance workplace practices that support the effective use of skills in workplaces.

Germany has taken important steps to respond to many of these challenges. For example, legislation was passed in 2016 to strengthen continuing education and improve access for low qualified workers and long-term unemployed, and several upskilling projects have been implemented. The government also launched a strategy for Education in the Digital World, to improve digital skills and infrastructure, and National Decade for Literacy and Basic Education 2016 to 2026, to raise reading and writing competencies as well as basic education within the context of life-long learning.

Still, Germany could benefit from a renewal of its strategic vision for the future to ensure that all of its people have the skills to respond to the challenges and opportunities of a complex and rapidly changing world, and to secure its position on global value chains. A whole-of government approach is needed to achieve this aim.

### Key recommendations for improving the performance of countries' skills system

#### Developing relevant skills over the life course: Making skills systems responsive

- Making each stage of learning a foundation for success in the next
- Enabling policies to support learning in adulthood
- Supporting teachers to become lifelong learners
- Financing adult learning
- Harnessing the power of technology as a tool for learning

#### Using skills effectively in work and society: Making the most of everyone's potential

- Make full use of everyone's skills
- Making the most of migrants' skills
- Activating skills to build more inclusive and cohesive societies
- Making intensive use of skills in work
- Aligning skills with the needs of the economy and society
- Aligning skills policies with industrial and innovation policies

#### Strengthening the governance of skills systems: Tackling increased complexity

- Promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government
- Engaging stakeholders throughout the policy cycle
- Building integrated information systems
- Aligning and co-ordinating financing arrangements

### Further reading

- OECD (2019), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to shape a better future*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [//doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en).
- OECD (2019), *OECD Skills Outlook 2019: Thriving in a Digital World*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/df80bc12-en>.
- OECD (2018), *OECD Economic Surveys: Germany 2018*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco\\_surveys-deu-2018-en](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-deu-2018-en)
- OECD (forthcoming), *Strengthening the Governance of Skills Systems*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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