

The Changing Structure of IVET Provision

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Purpose of the investigation

- To what extent is the dividing line between VET and general upper secondary education and training blurring and what kind of institutional solutions can be associated to this?
- **To what extent can we observe the existence of combined schools and programmes, delivering both VET and general education?**
- **To what extent can we observe ‘hybrid’ institutions and programmes, seeking to combine vocational and general subjects?**
- To what extent can we observe a consolidation and harmonisation of national initial vocational education and training (IVET) provisions; to what extent can we observe a diversification?



Factors affecting decision making in IVET

Macro level

- External factors affecting the demand for IVET
- Shifts in economic / education policy which are likely to affect the global debate about IVET

Meso level

- National policy discourse on IVET

Micro level

- The implementation of policy in practice (including unintended outcomes)



Issues of interest

	POLICY DISCOURSE
META FACTORS	
Education debate	The role and purpose of VET in society
	Effective pedagogy
	The combination of skills, competence, and knowledge which should be conferred on students
MESO-LEVEL	
Political economy (Indirect)	Views about the balance of private and public provision of services, the size and role of the state, the role of the market, etc...
	Public sector spending limits and impact on VET budgets
	Changing views about the role of social partnership and collective bargaining
	Changing balance between state, regional, and local government
Political economy (direct)	Views about the relative merits of general versus vocational education / relative rates of return
	Policy on the role of VET: what it should deliver (e.g. with respect to the range of programmes / qualifications), to whom, and why. How should it be funded?
	Consensus / conflict over the relative strengths and weaknesses of the IVET system
	The shifting balance of interests and influence about the future of VET (i.e. the shift in influence of various institutions)
Path dependency	Prevailing consensus on the role and purpose of IVET, the programmes to be delivered, who should deliver them, etc.
	Spillovers from other policy areas which affect IVET trajectories
	Shifting balance of influences between institutions which affects IVET trajectory
MICRO-LEVEL	
Management of change	Identification of who is involved in the change process
	Extent to which various actors understand the changes to be introduced
	Degree of consensus on the purpose of the changed
	Observed changes versus those intended



Initial evidence from England

- Long history of trying to develop a technical stream of education (cf. Education Act 1944 sought to create a three tier education system – grammar / technical / secondary modern schools) with limited success
- 1980s onwards saw creation of market for training – creation of large external training market including private and state funded providers
- A degree of stability in the structure since then despite numerous changes in VET policy especially relating to its governance...
- ... with some experimentation at the margins



Experimentation at the margins

- There has been some experimentation designed to improve parent / learner choice...
- ... the emphasis is typically providing more vocational content
- Studio schools / University Technical Schools – recruit students at 14 years which breaks with lower / upper secondary divide common to rest of system
- Relatively small scale development – in 2020, 48 UTCs and 24 studio schools
- Tends to be an emphasis on pushing reforms through existing infrastructure



Initial conclusions

- Numerous policy papers promising a renaissance of technical education in England
- ... this can be traced back over much of the past 100 years
- The problem is potentially one of demand rather than the structure of provision...
- ... over time, providers especially Further Education Colleges have become adept to responding to policy changes
- The critical issue is whether changes in the structure of provision will be required if there is an increase in demand and from structural changes elsewhere such as the new introduction of T-level qualifications
- At the moment the focus of policy appears to be on maintaining current provision



Thank you

Any questions?



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