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## Report highlights risks of trial-and-error approach to training policy

The process of modernising vocational education and training is driven by the need to respond to socioeconomic challenges, with little input from research. But as Cedefop argues in its recent research report, *Modernising vocational education and training* (see link below), this carries the risk that the efforts to modernise VET will not achieve the desired results.

This report, the fourth in Cedefop's research series, shows how socioeconomic pressures push vocational education and training (VET) systems to change. It also shows how VET itself can be a factor for change: it supports economic development, encourages innovation and productivity in companies, and helps provide the skills that employers and employees need.

**The report recommends that research on European VET issues mirror the priorities set by policy-makers.**

Rather than simply reviewing policies and practices - as is mostly the case now - **research should identify "what works, under which conditions and for whose benefit"**. It should thus provide the evidence that will ground policies and underpin practice in the field.

For policy-makers it may not always be possible to wait for research to mature before taking decisions. Nevertheless, **they should use applied research and evaluations to shape policies and analyse their effectiveness**. A lack of such an evidence base leads to trial-and-error approaches to policy which Europe can ill afford.

**Research in vocational education and training can help answer policy questions** such as:

- a) The economic and social advantages that employers can gain from training
- b) Interdependencies between ageing, work and learning
- c) The ways in which training can promote social inclusion and social cohesion
- d) The consequences of the shift to learning outcomes in qualifications systems for curriculum development and education methods.
- e) The impact of qualifications frameworks - and whether they achieve the range of institutional benefits expected
- f) The future demand for teachers and trainers;
- g) Whether guidance and counselling services can be responsive to local needs without perpetuating social and territorial inequalities.

**Modernising vocational education and training. Fourth report on vocational education and training research in Europe: synthesis report.**

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This publication is complemented by three background reports:

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**About Cedefop**

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), an agency of the European Union based in Thessaloniki, Greece, supports European policy-making in the field of vocational education and training, [www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)