
Cedefop employer survey on skill needs in Europe

Definition of required survey outcomes

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EXPERT WORKSHOP
29-30 APRIL 2010, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Background: New Skills for New Jobs initiative

- "The 2007 Council resolution on new skills for new jobs (Council of EU, 2007) stressed the need to anticipate skill needs – and skill gaps – emerging in European labour markets, **including explicitly by strengthening Cedefop's network for the early identification and forecast of skill needs** (Skillsnet).
- Cedefop has been actively involved in the new community initiative 'new skills for new jobs'. This follows the request of the European Council (March 2008) asking the European Commission for a comprehensive assessment of Europe's future skill requirements up to 2020 [...] and to propose ways to anticipate future needs.
- The European Commission has released the **policy priorities** in its communication of 16 December 2008 on new skill needs for new jobs: **anticipating and matching labour-market and skill needs** (European Commission, 2008)" (Cedefop, 2009, p. 3).

Objectives of the employer survey

The central objective of the employer survey is to provide a source of **qualitative and quantitative information on current and potential future skill needs** in organizations of different sizes covering the whole economy (including non-marketed services) in each of the EU Member States.

A survey instrument to reliably identify future needs of **occupations, skills, competences and qualifications** in enterprises in Europe, covering the whole economy has to be developed and piloted.

“Another major objective of Cedefop’s strategy to anticipate future skill needs is the possible use of employers surveys, which have the capacity to generate **more qualitative information** to complement the forecasting exercise.” (Employer surveys on skill needs in Europe. Results of a feasibility study. Unrevised edition 12/2/2010, p. 9)

Definition of survey outcomes - General

On the basis of **changing and newly emerging future skill needs** the survey has to provide **information for decision making** at different levels:

- At policy level
- At intermediary level
- At company level
- At individual level

In terms of

1. Additional labour market information and
2. Substantial information for the modification of VET (IVET and CVET)

Definition of survey outcomes - Focus

1. Additional labour market information
Complementing Cedefop's forcecast exercises in closing information gaps on sectors/occupations and related future skill requirements
2. Substantial information for the modification of VET
 - At policy level: Information on political recommendations, initiatives, investment decisions, Förderprogramme
 - At intermediary level: Information for social partners and other intermediaries such as sectoral associations concerning VET strategies and their own members' support
 - At company level: Information on the design of future HRD/HRM concepts
 - At individual level: Information on decision making concerning career management („Guidance“)

About skills...some definitions

'Skills' according to the 'European Qualifications Framework' (EQF)

skills are described as **cognitive** (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and **practical** (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

Skills according to the feasibility study

"Skills mean the ability to apply knowledge and abilities to problem solving and complete tasks. Skills are distinguished between technical/practical (manual dexterity, ability in the use of tools and instruments), cognitive (use of logical, theoretical and creative thinking) and social (ability to interact and communicate with others)."

Generic skills according to NCVET (National Centre for Vocational Education Research)

Initially, they were called 'core skills' and, following their revision, 'key skills'. key skills are defined as those relevant to a person's learning, career and to personal life, with a strong emphasis on their application to employability.

Specific skills according to Mummford et al.

Occupationally-specific skills involve the application of the broader skill in a specific performance domain. These occupationally-specific skills are limited to one occupation or a set of occupations (such as a job family), but are not designed to cut across all jobs. However, these more specific skills can be utilized across jobs when jobs include similar occupationally-specific skills.

About competence, skills and qualifications

'Competence', 'Skills' and 'Qualification' definition and division according to Tessaring, 2004:

'Competence' is defined as the personal capacity to perform a work task in a given context. Competence denotes the 'proven/demonstrated' individual capacity to use knowledge, know-how, skills or qualification to meet usual and/or changing occupational situations and requirements. The notion of competence may include formal as well as non-formal qualifications and skills.

'Skills' include the relevant knowledge and experience needed to perform a specific task or job. Skills may be the product of education, training and experience acquired both in a formal or non-formal way. The notion of skills refers to, and partly overlaps with, other basic concepts such as competence, qualification, knowledge and ability. The imprecise scope of this concept makes its translation into other languages not easy.

'Qualification' denotes the requirements for an individual to enter or progress within an occupation. It also denotes an official record (certificate, diploma) of achievement which recognises successful completion of education or training, or satisfactory performance in a test or examination.

Tessaring, M. Early identification of skill needs: European activities and perspectives. In: Schmidt, S. L. et al. (eds). Identifying skill needs for the future. From research to policy and practice, Luxembourg, 2004, p. 234-235. (term definitions based on Bjoernavold, Jens)