



Call for abstracts for Cedefop's conference

Future of VET: A driver for excellence, competitiveness and inclusion

**Thursday 19 November 2026
Cedefop (Online Zoom platform, Greece)**

Conference theme

Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, will organise a conference on the **Future of Vocational Education and Training (VET)** in November 2026, as a flagship event within the **European Skills and VET Week**. The event will provide a strategic platform linking research/academia, policy, and practice in the fields of VET, skills and qualifications.

Building on Cedefop's extensive analytical work, under its [Future of VET](#) research strand, the purpose of this conference is to deepen the understanding of the interaction between the broad policy objectives on [excellence and inclusion in VET](#). Cedefop's [research](#) shows that, over the past 25 years, VET policies across Europe have increasingly embraced both excellence and inclusion. The focus has shifted from narrow approaches towards a broader vision of high-quality VET that is accessible to all. The idea of 'inclusive excellence' is now emerging in policy debates.

Yet the challenge remains:

How can VET deliver top-quality skills and opportunities while ensuring that no learner is left behind?

This conference will explore how VET can contribute to the EU's competitiveness while ensuring excellence, inclusion and equal opportunities. It will showcase how high-quality and accessible VET can equip people with the skills needed to respond to labour market and societal needs, support innovation and strengthen social cohesion across Europe.

A large part of the conference will be participatory. Contributors whose abstracts are accepted through a submission process will present their research and have the opportunity to receive feedback from peers and practitioners.

Abstracts' Topics

Researchers – both from academia and applied policy research – are invited to submit an extended abstract related to the conference theme. Contributions are expected to engage with current debates on the future of VET and may draw on country-level evidence, including Cedefop material ⁽¹⁾ such as selected country reports and selected

⁽¹⁾ Country reports referenced in this call are unpublished and not publicly available. Selected authors will be granted access to these materials for the purposes of developing their contributions. As the reports contain information that is otherwise not accessible publicly, prospective authors who wish to

extracts from the [Timeline of VET policies](#) ⁽²⁾, alongside authors' own research and data sources.

Abstracts should address one or a combination of the following topics:

1. **Excellence in VET** at national level and the way it shapes reforms, governance arrangements and policy implementation. Contributions may address, for example:
 - institutional reforms and initiatives;
 - pedagogical and curricular developments;
 - stakeholder involvement and coordination within and beyond VET systems.
2. **Future approaches to inclusion in VET** and the ways VET systems can widen participation while supporting social cohesion and labour market objectives.
3. **Exploring the integration of AI in VET**, ensuring EU Member States' VET policies and systems remain future-ready while also promoting inclusion and accessibility. Contributions may address, for example:
 - Uptake or embeddedness of AI into VET systems (for example, through policies, teacher training, curriculum reforms, governance/funding arrangements);
 - Initiatives on supporting personalised learning pathways through AI tools/policies/initiatives;
 - insights on safe, ethical, and compliant use of AI in VET systems.

Analytical approaches and evidence base

The conference particularly welcomes contributions based on qualitative, comparative and/or longitudinal approaches that help illuminate the future of VET in relation to labour market developments. Contributions drawing on in-depth national analysis, governance perspectives, policy implementation research or cross-country comparison are especially encouraged.

Cedefop's ongoing work builds on the [three-perspective analytical framework](#) developed through its VET research (2015–2022), examining conceptions of VET across countries and their evolution over time. Contributors may utilise and refer to this framework where relevant.

Submissions should focus on European Union Member States, Iceland, and Norway. Contributions from other geographical contexts are not within the scope of this call unless they are explicitly comparative and directly relevant to EU VET policy and practice.

Peer review process

The primary target group of the call includes researchers in VET, labour economics, education policy, and innovation studies, as well as higher education institutions within the established Future of VET community.

assess the suitability of a paper idea are encouraged to contact Cedefop in advance for further information on the scope and content of the reports.

⁽²⁾ Although the data in the Timeline of VET policies is publicly available, Cedefop can provide it in a more user-friendly format upon request.

Cedefop experts will peer-review the submitted abstracts against transparent criteria, including thematic relevance, methodological robustness, policy implications, and contributions to identified research gaps.

Selected authors will be invited to develop the abstract into a paper and present it at the Cedefop conference, where a discussant will provide feedback and inspiration to support the authors in finalising their paper. The selected authors will have the option to develop a paper that will be peer reviewed.

Depending on their quality and relevance, papers might be **selected for publication by Cedefop**. Papers will be included in a thematic compilation of papers, published in [Cedefop's Community in Zenodo](#) and made available on the webpage.

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Submission guidelines and requirements

Submitted proposals should take the form of extended abstracts (max. 1 000 words) and clearly outline the addressed research gap, theoretical framework, methodological approach, empirical basis, and main findings of the proposed contribution. Contributions should demonstrate analytical rigour and relevance to current conference themes (excellence and inclusion in VET, use of AI in VET).

Submissions should include:

- title of the contribution;
- author name(s), institutional affiliation(s) and ORCID identifier(s);
- justification why the paper fits the conference;
- indication and justification of the specific topic (i.e. excellence, inclusion, AI) addressed;
- extended abstract in English (max. 1 000 words, covering the addressed research gap, theoretical framework, methodological approach and empirical basis);
- references following APA 7 citation style.

Abstracts should be submitted via EU Survey by completing the online submission form and uploading the abstract as a Word (.docx) file.

[Click to submit your abstract](#)

Important dates

- Abstract submission deadline: **15 July 2026**
- Notification of acceptance: **15 September 2026**
- Registration for presenters of accepted abstracts and broader audience opens: **1 October 2026**
- Online Conference date: **19 November 2026**

✚ Indicative date for publication in Cedefop's Community in Zenodo: **Spring 2027**

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