International Forum on Skills Intelligence in Post-Secondary & Higher Education

Advancing Skills Intelligence in Post-Secondary & Higher Education:

Anticipation, Alignment, and the Future of Work

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Good practices on implementing Skills Assessment and Anticipation

Across the OECD, 23% of workers are over-qualified and 26% report being over-skilled for their current roles (OECD, 2024). These skills mismatches, jointly with skills shortages, decrease job satisfaction and wages for mismatched workers (OECD, 2024) and can have an impact on economic growth, as they limit businesses' productivity (McGowan and D., 2015; OECD, 2024b). The success of interventions to tackle these skills mismatches and shortages depends on having accurate and comprehensive data about current and future skill needs. This presentation will focus on good practices regarding data sources and methodologies to use for Skills Assessment and Anticipation (SAA).

It relies on an analysis of 17 national and whole-of-economy exercises in Australia, Austria, Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Information was gathered in early 2025 through desk research, supplemented with interviews and a peer-learning workshop with international experts. SAA exercises use a range of methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative approaches generally offer more consistent and comparable results, and can be more easily replicated.

However, they tend to be more suited to identifying labour shortages and surpluses than skill mismatches, as information on skills is limited. Recent innovations in SAA have focused on identifying skills demand using big data, such as job postings. However, identifying skills supply is more complex, particularly for skills provided by higher education, which are determined at the institution level. Efforts are underway using new technologies to identify skills supply from Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs') documentation, such as programme descriptors. Quantitative approaches may also miss important information not yet visible in the data, such as technological innovations that will have an impact on skill requirements at work.

Quantitative analysis is therefore frequently complemented with qualitative information, either as an input to the SAA exercise or to validate the quantitative assumptions, methodology, or results. Given the extensive information required and the multiple potential uses of SAA exercise results, it is crucial to engage as many relevant stakeholders as possible. This serves to validate the results but also ensures the exercise meets stakeholders' needs and that they contribute relevant information.

Video

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