

# OECD new blog article: Getting skills right in the United Kingdom

21/11/2017  [European Skills Index](#), [European Skills Index](#), [People and Skills](#), [Matching Skills and Jobs](#), [Future Jobs](#), [Labour Market Context](#), [United Kingdom](#)

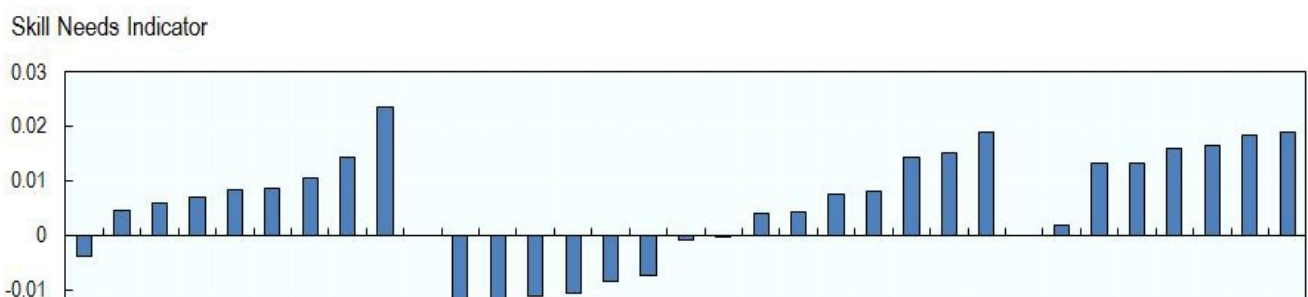
The UK has enjoyed record-high employment levels in recent years and one of the lowest unemployment rates among OECD countries. However, labour productivity growth, which is closely linked to the use of skills, remains weak. As a result, the OECD’s Getting Skills Right: United Kingdom suggests that several actions should be taken to bring skill supply more in line with skill demand to help to boost growth, productivity and earnings.

Improving the alignment of skills supply and skills demand could help to boost growth, productivity and earnings in the UK. To assist UK policymakers in meeting this challenge, the OECD will release its [Getting Skills Right: United Kingdom](#) report on November 20, during a [launch event](#) held in London and in partnership with JPMorgan Chase Foundation and IPPR. The UK report is one of a series of country studies that look at the issue of skill imbalances, building on evidence from the OECD’s [Skills for Jobs](#) database. The launch event also represents the culmination of the IPPR’s three-year project on [New Skills at Work](#).

Skill imbalances are high in the UK: 40% of workers are either over-qualified or under-qualified for their job, and a similar number are working in a field unrelated to the one in which they studied. For instance, more than half of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates in the UK end up in non-science-related occupations, such as finance or the public sector. Many STEM graduates are tempted to enter non-STEM occupations due to lucrative financial incentives despite shortages in mathematics and sciences (Figure 1).

In other cases, field-of-study mismatch arises due to low demand for a given field-of-study. When workers must accept jobs for which they are over-qualified because they cannot find a job in their field-of-study, then they suffer wage penalties and lower job satisfaction. About a third of workers who are mismatched by field-of-study in the UK fall into this group.

**Figure 1: Skill Shortages and Surplus, United Kingdom, 2013**



Manufacturing and Production	Knowledge
Law and Public Safety	Knowledge
Arts and Humanities	Knowledge
Communications	Knowledge
Engineering and Technology	Knowledge
Business and Management	Knowledge
Mathematics and Science	Knowledge
Health Services	Knowledge
Education and Training	Knowledge
Endurance	Abilities
Physical Strength	Abilities
Control Movement Abilities	Abilities
Fine Manipulative Abilities	Abilities
Flexibility, Balance and...	Abilities
Reaction Time and Speed Abilities	Abilities
Visual Abilities	Abilities
Spatial Abilities	Abilities
Auditory and Speech Abilities	Abilities
Attentiveness	Abilities
Perceptual Abilities	Abilities
Memory	Abilities
Quantitative Abilities	Abilities
Reasoning Abilities	Abilities
Verbal Abilities	Abilities
Technical Skills	Skills
Social Skills	Skills
Resource Management Skills	Skills
Basic Skills (Content)	Skills
Complex Problem Solving	Skills
Systems Skills	Skills
Basic Skills (Process)	Skills

Source: OECD Skills for Jobs database

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