



Briefing note _The skills employers want!

04/2019 European Skills Index, Skills in online job vacancies, Matching Skills and Jobs, Reports & publications



BRIEFING NOTE

THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT!

Cedefop develops real-time skills intelligence by analysing online job vacancies

65% of children entering primary school today may ultimately end up working in completely new types of job that do not yet exist. Scott McLeod and Karl Fisch advanced this hypothesis several years ago in their widely discussed *Shift happens* analysis⁽¹⁾. While such findings may be hard to verify empirically, it is clear that labour market change has been accelerating in recent years and that dynamics go far beyond shifts in sectors and occupations. The broad patterns of workplace transformation and of changing skill needs in today's jobs are, however, visible and give us some clues as to likely future developments (see Box 1). For example, findings from Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey⁽²⁾ show that 43% of EU workers have seen the technologies they use at work (machines, ICT systems) change in the past five years or since they started their current job; 47% experienced changes in their working methods and practices. Such trends, which are necessarily underpinned by an array of upskilling and reskilling measures, are likely to continue in the coming years.

Job losses? Job growth? Job changes?

Cedefop's 2016 skills forecast revealed that jobs largely based on routine tasks are expected to decline, while jobs involving 21st century skills such as advanced literacy, ICT, problem solving and learning skills are projected to be on the rise. The 2018 skills forecast⁽³⁾ pointed to a reduction in physical work and an increase in intellectual tasks requiring communication and social skills. This projection is especially valid for jobs at the top and the bottom of the skills scale where human qualities can least be replaced by machines. The resilience of jobs requiring low skills and qualifications can be

explained by the fact that these jobs often involve personal services (hotels, restaurants, caring and other proximity services) which are little affected by automation and globalisation⁽⁴⁾.

Box 1: CHANGING JOBS AND SKILL NEEDS

DRIVERS OF CHANGE IN EU WORKPLACES

Driver	% of EU workers reporting changes
work methods and practices	47
technology (machines, ICT systems)	39
products or services	33
customer contact	28

Note: % of EU workers reporting changes in the past five years or since they started their current job.

DECLINING JOBS BASED ON ROUTINE TASKS, PHYSICAL WORK

GROWING JOBS BASED ON INTELLECTUAL TASKS

Advanced literacy skills **ICT** skills problem solving learning skills

ability to adapt to change responsibility teamwork creativity

SKILLS AND PERSONALITY TRAITS INCREASINGLY IN DEMAND

Source: Cedefop European skills and jobs survey (ESJS: see (2)) and Cedefop skills forecasts 2016 and 2018.

Nevertheless, technological change and automation are potentially disruptive. Some years ago, widespread concern about massive job destruction (up to 50% according to some estimates) dominated discussions; more recent evidence points to job losses in some

(1) The related video had been published in Wikispaces, a site created in 2005 and used by educators worldwide. Owing to financial constraints the site closed in 2018.

(2) Cedefop (2015). *Skills, qualifications and jobs in the EU: the making of a perfect match?*

(3) Cedefop and Eurofound's skills forecast up to 2030.

(4) Briefing note *Less brain more brain for tomorrow's workers* on Cedefop's 2018 skills forecast up to 2030.

(5) Cedefop (2018). *Automation risk in the EU labour market: a skill-needs approach.*

BRIEFING NOTE | APRIL 2019 | ISSN 1831-2411
Page 1

65% of children entering primary school today may ultimately end up working in completely new types of job that do not yet exist. Scott McLeod and Karl Fisch advanced this hypothesis several years ago in their widely discussed *Shift happens* analysis. While such findings may be hard to verify empirically, it is

...clear that labour market change has been accelerating in recent years and that dynamics go far beyond shifts in sectors and occupations. The broad patterns of workplace transformation and of changing skill needs in today's jobs are, however, visible and give us some clues as to likely future developments. For example, findings from Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey show that 43% of EU workers have seen the technologies they use at work (machines, ICT systems) change in the past five years or since they started their current job; 47% experienced changes in their working methods and practices. Such trends, which are necessarily underpinned by an array of upskilling and reskilling measures, are likely to continue in the coming years.

Cedefop will continue its work on the system to ensure data quality, analyse the results in more detail and progressively release findings. It will focus on better understanding skills and jobs and on designing ways to use the information so that it benefits decision-makers in all related fields, including education and training. With time, Cedefop's system will collect more online job vacancies, and it will be possible to look at how jobs change.

Combining different perspectives and methods is often the best way to make sense of what we see. Detailed and real-time information on jobs and skills, coupled with medium- and long-term labour market trends identified using traditional methods, can benefit policy-making by deepening insight into how the world of work is changing. Understanding change is crucial to dealing with it.

Download the full briefing note [here](#).

See also the Skills Panorama [Skills in Online Vacancies](#) dashboard

© CEDEFOP 2019

POWERED BY:

