

Higher Education Policy Survey 2022 – Part B

Upskilling and Reskilling in Higher Education

This document contains the key definitions and survey items for the Higher Education Policy Survey 2022 Part B (higher education upskilling and reskilling).

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Survey scope and definitions

The Higher Education Policy Survey (HEPS) is a fixed-response survey instrument used by the OECD Higher Education Policy Team to collect comparative data on higher education policies in place across OECD member states. HEPS 2022 is focusing on two key topics of current high priority in OECD countries – digitalisation in higher education (Part A), and the role of higher education providers in supporting upskilling and reskilling (Part B). This document contains the questions and relevant definitions for Part B of the survey. The survey aims to elicit comparative information about policies that support the provision of upskilling and reskilling opportunities in higher education systems.

The following points define key terms and the scope of policies covered in the survey:

- We define **upskilling** as education and training that aims to augment or refresh a learner’s existing set of skills. **Reskilling** focuses on the development of skills within a new domain of competency with the purpose of enabling a learner to make a career or job pivot. For example, a computer science graduate who returns to university to study machine learning is engaged in upskilling. A graduate of a music performance programme who returns to higher education to train in digital user experience design is engaged in reskilling. Both upskilling and reskilling are often defined in terms of skills needed to carry out a specific occupation: upskilling ensures that skills remain current as the tasks related to an occupation are automated or otherwise become obsolete; reskilling is the acquisition of a new domain of skills needed to change occupation.
- The focus of the survey is on upskilling or reskilling offered **with the intention of permitting learners to acquire skills for employment-related purposes or progress towards the completion of a recognised education qualification**. Programmes offered solely for enjoyment or hobby purposes are therefore excluded from the scope.
- The survey aims to elicit information on higher education programmes that are suitable for or targeted to **adult learners**. Adult learners may be defined in diverse ways across education systems. For the purposes of this survey, adult learners are broadly defined as learners who are some years older than the typical age of transition into higher education from secondary school and/or are returning to learning after a break in studies (for employment or other purposes). Many countries have a specific age threshold after which a learner is considered to be “adult” or “mature” (e.g., 25 years old). Such programmes are often distinctively targeted but may also include traditional degree programmes accessible to adult learners.
- Many providers and stakeholders support the upskilling and reskilling of the adult population, including governments, industry, higher education institutions, professional associations, regulatory bodies, and private providers. While recognising this fact, this survey specifically focuses on **policies implemented to support upskilling and reskilling by recognised higher education providers**. One item of the survey asks about collaboration between higher education institutions and other providers (e.g., educational technology firms or professional bodies).
- The survey focuses on education programmes that are designed to **result in the award of a certification or credential** that is recognised by other higher education institutions, for example, a certificate, a micro-credential, or a degree. Education programmes may be offered both **within and outside dedicated continuing education units** in higher education institutions.
- The term **“system” or “higher education system”** is used throughout to indicate the level at which information about policies is being elicited. Depending on the specific country context, this term may encompass national higher education systems or those of sub-national states, provinces or territories in federal or federal-like systems. Responses may be provided with respect to national or sub-national systems.

Survey map and survey items

Figure 1 presents the survey topic map for the HEPS upskilling and reskilling module. The survey items are presented in Table 1.

Figure 1. Survey topic map for the HEPS 2022 upskilling and reskilling module

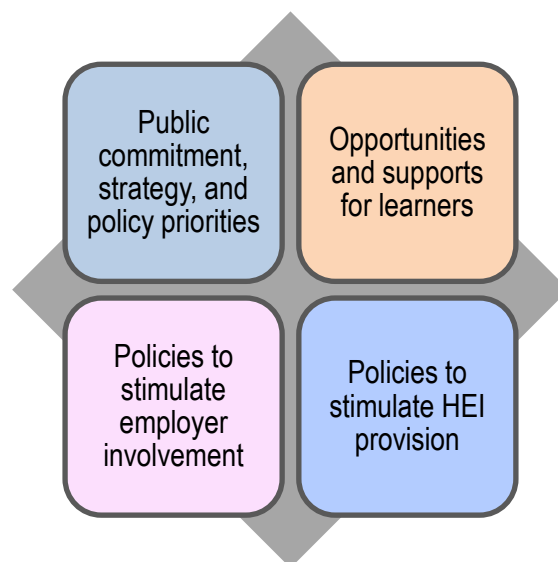


Table 1. Questions included in the HEPS module on upskilling/reskilling

Topic	Question details
Public commitment, strategy, and policy priorities	<p>Q1: Does your government have a public commitment to the use of the higher education system for upskilling or reskilling?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No</p> <p>Q1a: (if option a) is chosen in Q1)</p> <p>Is there a published system-level strategy that discusses the use of the higher education system for upskilling or reskilling?</p> <p>(For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - higher education is specifically mentioned in general government strategies related to skills development and/or lifelong learning - upskilling or reskilling activities are mentioned in government higher education strategies) <p>a) Yes b) No</p>

	<p>If option a) is chosen please, if possible, provide a link to the relevant strategy document(s) in the text box at the end of the page</p>										
Public commitment, strategy, and policy priorities	<p>Q2: Which of the following describes the situation with regard to the provision of upskilling or reskilling in your higher education system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Publicly funded institutions are not allowed to offer upskilling or reskilling programmes targeted at adult learners b) Publicly funded institutions may offer programmes targeted at, or suited to, adult learners at their discretion, but are not legally required to do so. c) Publicly funded institutions are legally required to provide upskilling or reskilling programmes targeted to adult learners <p>Q2a: (if option c) is chosen in Q2)</p> <p>Which forms of upskilling or reskilling are publicly funded institutions obliged to provide? (Please tick all applicable answers)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="384 927 1394 1339"> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 927 722 1227"></td> <td data-bbox="722 927 1059 1227">Institutions are required to provide upskilling or reskilling opportunities through separate programmes exclusively or predominantly targeted to adult learners</td> <td data-bbox="1059 927 1394 1227">Institutions are required to facilitate access to mainstream higher education programmes for adult learners to support upskilling and reskilling (e.g. reserved study places, providing specific access routes)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1227 722 1296">Yes, in some institution sectors or types</td> <td data-bbox="722 1227 1059 1296"></td> <td data-bbox="1059 1227 1394 1296"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1296 722 1339">Yes, in all institutions</td> <td data-bbox="722 1296 1059 1339"></td> <td data-bbox="1059 1296 1394 1339"></td> </tr> </table>			Institutions are required to provide upskilling or reskilling opportunities through separate programmes exclusively or predominantly targeted to adult learners	Institutions are required to facilitate access to mainstream higher education programmes for adult learners to support upskilling and reskilling (e.g. reserved study places, providing specific access routes)	Yes, in some institution sectors or types			Yes, in all institutions		
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Public commitment, strategy, and policy priorities	<p>Q3: Do public authorities in your system collect data related to participation in upskilling or reskilling in higher education?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Yes b) No <p>Q3a: (if "option a) is chosen for Q3)</p> <p>Which types of data are collected? (Please tick all applicable answers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Data on participation/enrolment in traditional degree programmes by adult learners b) Data on completion rates in traditional degree programmes by adult learners c) Data on participation/enrolment in non-degree upskilling or reskilling programmes d) Data on certifications or credentials awarded to participants in non-degree upskilling or 										

	reskilling programmes e) Data on previous employment of educational background of adult learners f) Data on labour market outcomes for adult learners				
Public commitment, strategy, and policy priorities	<p>Q4: Which of the following objectives are pursued within current public policies, and/or represent a near-term policy priority in your higher education system?</p> <p>Note: This question is specifically asking about new objectives under development or being considered in the near term. The following questions will request information on existing policies already embedded in the system.</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p>				
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="387 757 735 891">Objective</th> <th data-bbox="735 757 971 891">Objective is pursued within current policies</th> <th data-bbox="971 757 1201 891">Objective is a near-term future policy priority</th> <th data-bbox="1201 757 1401 891">Objective is not on the policy agenda at this time</th> </tr> </thead> </table>	Objective	Objective is pursued within current policies	Objective is a near-term future policy priority	Objective is not on the policy agenda at this time
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	<i>Creating new opportunities for upskilling or reskilling</i>				
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<i>Promoting wider access to traditional degree programmes for upskilling or reskilling purposes</i>					
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	Introduction of new financial supports, incentives, or benefits targeted to the pursuit of upskilling or reskilling			
<i>Stimulating the involvement of higher education institutions and employers</i>				
	Strengthening incentives in legislation, regulation or funding for higher education institutions to provide upskilling or reskilling opportunities			
	Strengthening incentives for employers to collaborate in developing or subsidising higher education upskilling or reskilling opportunities			
Public commitment, strategy, and policy priorities	<p>Q5: Which system actors are involved in the anticipation of needs for upskilling or reskilling offers at higher education level (i.e., demand for additional advanced skills)?</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <p>a) Ministry of Education/Higher Education/Skills b) Ministry of Employment/Labour/Social Affairs c) Other ministries (outside of education and employment) d) Public agencies/bodies with a remit for skills/human capital development e) Individual higher education institutions f) Employer associations g) Unions or employee organisations h) Sectoral bodies representing higher education institutions i) Industry / sector associations or private companies</p>			
Public commitment, strategy, and policy priorities	<p>Q6: How are upskilling or reskilling education programmes in publicly funded higher education institutions accredited?</p> <p>a) Institution-level accreditation is in place, which permits institutions to independently accredit their own upskilling or reskilling programmes b) Upskilling or reskilling programmes are individually accredited by an external body c) Situations a) or b) may be applied, depending on the type of institution or the type of programme</p> <p>If option c) is chosen, please provide additional information (if possible) in the text box at the end of the page</p>			
Opportunities and supports for learners	<p>Q7: Which types of opportunities are currently available in your system to adult learners seeking to take up upskilling or reskilling opportunities at advanced skills levels?</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <p>a) Specific entry pathway to ISCED 5 programmes (e.g., short-cycle higher education programmes) b) Specific entry pathway to ISCED 6 programmes (e.g., bachelor's degrees)</p>			

- c) Specific entry pathway to ISCED 7 programmes (e.g., master's degrees)
 d) ISCED 3 or ISCED 4 level programmes (typically certificates and diplomas) offered in higher education institutions
 e) Short non-degree programmes (often called "micro-credentials")

Q7a: (if option e is chosen for Q7)

Which types of short non-degree programmes are offered?

(Please tick all applicable answers)

- Non-degree undergraduate level courses or programmes
- Non-degree postgraduate level courses or programmes
- Certificates of specialisation or advanced education
- Preparation for professional/industry-recognised certifications
- Ad-hoc or tailored training for specific employers/industries

Q8: Which types of public financial supports are available to which types of learners to support their participation in upskilling or reskilling in higher education?

(Please tick all applicable answers)

Opportunities
and supports for
learners

	Student grants/loans	Individual learning or training accounts	Education/training vouchers	Tax credits	Subsidies for associated expenses (e.g., childcare costs)
a) First time entrants over a specific age threshold established by policy					
b) Tertiary graduates returning to learning					
c) Learners in specific target groups (e.g., unemployed, low income)					
d) Employees seeking career-related continuing education and training					

	e) Learners seeking specific skills aligned to labour market needs					
Opportunities and supports for learners	<p>Q9: Which means are available for prospective learners to discover higher education reskilling or upskilling opportunities?</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <p>a) A publicly funded information portal for learners to compare choices b) Publicly funded media campaigns to inform learners about upskilling or reskilling opportunities c) Information or guidance centres for prospective learners in public employment or adult learning centres d) Information or guidance centres located within higher education institutions</p>					
Opportunities and supports for learners	<p>Q10: Are there publicly funded or publicly promoted online learning platforms where learners may take upskilling or reskilling courses provided by higher education institutions online?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No</p> <p>If option a) is chosen, please provide a link to the platform, if possible</p> <p>Q10 a: If option a) is chosen for Q10</p> <p>Are learners taking courses online required to register as a student with the higher education institution providing the course?</p> <p>a) Yes, in all cases b) Yes, in some cases c) No</p>					
Policies to stimulate employer involvement	<p>Q11: Does your government provide subsidies or other financial supports to employers to support upskilling or reskilling of their staff members?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No</p> <p>Q11a: if response to Q11 is “Yes”</p> <p>Do the available financial supports cover upskilling or reskilling provided by higher education institutions?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No</p> <p>Q11b-Q11e: if response to Q11a is Yes</p>					

	<p>Q11b: Which types of businesses/employers may benefit from subsidies or financial supports?</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All businesses/employers b) Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) c) Businesses under a certain employee size or turnover threshold that are not classed as SMEs d) Businesses in particular economic sectors <p>Q11c: Which types of employees may benefit from subsidies or financial supports?</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All employees b) Employees in certain grades or categories c) Employees under certain income thresholds d) Other types of employees <p>Q11d: Which types of upskilling or reskilling are covered by the subsidies or financial supports?</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All types, at the discretion of the employer/employee b) Upskilling or reskilling related to the main industry/economic sector of the employer c) Upskilling or reskilling to specific skills in high demand <p>Q11e: Which types of subsidies/financial supports are available?</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tax credits deductible against training costs b) Co-financing of training costs from public funds c) Training fund where employers can apply for funding and/or other supports for reskilling or upskilling employees d) Compensating the employer for paid staff leave for upskilling or reskilling purposes
Policies to stimulate employer involvement	<p>Q12: Which of the following mechanisms are in place in your higher education system to promote co-operation between firms and higher education providers of upskilling or reskilling?</p> <p><i>Note: "Mechanism" can refer to public policies/programmes or sector-led initiatives</i></p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mechanisms for employers to co-design or take the lead in designing learning material delivered by higher education institutions b) Mechanisms for companies to cooperate with higher education institutions on the organisation of jointly beneficial upskilling or reskilling opportunities c) Mechanisms for employers to communicate information on skills needs to higher education institutions d) Mechanisms for higher education institutions to raise awareness among employers of available

	upskilling or reskilling opportunities for employees
Policies to stimulate HEI provision	<p>Q13: Do specific public funding allocations, subsidised projects or incentive schemes exist in your system for higher education institutions to offer micro-credentials or similar short upskilling or reskilling programmes?</p> <p>a) Yes b) No</p> <p>Q13b - if response to Q13 is Yes</p> <p>Under what circumstances may institutions avail of the public supports?</p> <p>a) The education offer must target specific skills, occupations, or economic sectors b) The education offer must be made available to certain targeted learners of the population (e.g., unemployed people) c) Both option a) and option b) apply d) No specific constraints apply</p>
Policies to stimulate HEI provision	<p>Q14: Which of these cases best describes the provision of flexible or modular education options by publicly funded higher education institutions in your system?</p> <p>a) Institutions are not allowed to offer flexible or modular education b) Institutions are allowed to offer flexible or modular education but are not obliged to do so c) Some or all institutions are obliged to offer flexible or modular education</p> <p>Q14a: if response to Q14 is b) or c)</p> <p>Which types of flexible options are in place?</p> <p><i>(Please tick all applicable answers)</i></p> <p>a) Options for learners to enrol on a "module-by-module" basis, building up to a full qualification at their own pace (subject to compatibility of module choices) b) A distinct "continuing education" centre or function, in addition to traditional degree offerings c) Options for learners to retain credits gained and have these recognised by other higher education providers if they disengage, but later re-enrol in higher education</p>
Policies to stimulate HEI provision	<p>Q15: How are enrolments in higher education upskilling or reskilling taken into account in public core funding allocations to higher education institutions?</p> <p>a) Students enrolled in such programmes are taken into account as a parameter in a general funding formula used to allocate public funds to HEIs b) A separate formula-driven lump sum is provided to cover running costs associated with providing such programmes c) A lump sum is provided to institutions, but is not based on a formula (e.g., a historical or fixed allocation) d) HEIs are expected to fund such programmes from non-public sources (e.g. from tuition fees or from international funding) and do not receive a specific funding allocation from government.</p>

