

**Higher vocational education, pathways and social inequality: implications for research and policy
6 July 2017, Worcester College, Oxford**

The 3rd International Pathways Collaborative Symposium will be held on 6 July 2017. It will precede the 12th Annual Journal of Vocational Education and Training *Researching Vocational Education and Training* to be held at Worcester College, Oxford, UK, 7-9 July 2017 (<http://jvetconferences.com/>)

The key theme of the pathways symposium will be to examine *if and how pathways from vocational to higher education support social justice, social inclusion and social mobility*. Our aim is to provide insights for future research and policy, drawing on knowledge and experience across different countries.

We invite participation from researchers, policy makers, policy analysts and practitioners to discuss these questions:

- Do pathways from vocational to higher education support social mobility for disadvantaged groups? Alternatively are pathways colonised by students from more privileged backgrounds? Do pathways open opportunities for students? Which students and what kinds of opportunities? What happens and why does it happen?
- What are the tensions between credentialism, skills mismatches and the broader purposes of higher vocational education? How should we envisage the role of higher vocational education and how can we support students to find good jobs, move to higher-level studies, and contribute to their families, communities and society?
- How do we ensure that higher vocational education is high quality and at the same time widens access to disadvantaged students? Is this the impossible dream?
- Can the 'capabilities approach' provide a framework for thinking about the role of policy, institutions, qualifications and curriculum in higher vocational education? Is there a risk of generating a 'capabilities' list that simply reinforces the current focus on employability and generic skills?

We invite you to focus on one of the above questions and submit a 200 word summary, based on your research, or informed by research that you are familiar with, that addresses these questions:

- What insights does research provide into these problems?
- What are the implications for policy?

Abstracts will be grouped to address each of the key research questions above, and you will be invited to provide a *five-minute contribution* on your summary. There will be no PowerPoint. The purpose of the symposium is to facilitate discussion, and to provide the opportunity to share ideas and to develop new ideas for future research, for engaging with policy, and for identifying the potential for collaboration.

Participants will include researchers, policy makers and policy analysts and practitioners.

The International Pathways Collaborative

The International Pathways Collaborative was formed in 2013 by a group of scholars who research pathways policies and programs in different regions of the world. This 3rd international symposium is being hosted by the Journal of Vocational Education and Training in advance of their International Conference *Researching Vocational Education and Training*, which will be held at Worcester College Oxford, UK, 7-9 July 2017 (<http://jvetconferences.com/>). Our last international symposium, held on April

2016 was hosted by New America (<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/events/a-global-renaissance-in-postsecondary-vocational-education/>).

Please send your summary to: Leesa Wheelahan at leesa.wheelahan@utoronto.ca by 30 April 2017. A draft program will be distributed by the beginning of June 2017.

Organising committee

Ann-Marie Bathmaker, University of Birmingham

Kevin Orr, University of Huddersfield

Leesa Wheelahan, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Gavin Moodie, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Accommodation

There may be accommodation for Thursday night at Worcester College. You need to contact Bill Bailey williambailey47@yahoo.co.uk. Alternatively, you may want to explore Oxford's tourist information website: http://www.oxfordcity.co.uk/oxford/home_accommodation.html or another very good website University Rooms: <http://www.universityrooms.com/en/city/oxford/home>

Template for submissions

Name:

Institutional affiliation:

Email:

Question addressed:

Title:

Summary (200 words)

References/bibliography