

Submission Number: 20
Date Received: 16/01/09



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15 January 2009

The Secretary of the Committee
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Education and Training
Inquiry into Combining School and Work: Supporting
Successful Youth Transitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

I respond to the invitation to provide submissions to the Inquiry into Combining School and Work.

In relation to your terms of reference, I offer the following suggestions:

Proving opportunities to recognise and accredit the employability and career development skills gained through students' part time or casual work.

- It is widely recognised that transferable skills, gathered through various jobs, volunteer work, hobbies, sports, or other life experiences, contribute to people's employability, whether they are re-entering the workforce or entering it for the first time.
- Some universities encourage or require students, especially those not enrolled in vocational courses, to identify and record skills they acquire outside their specific area of study.
 - Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia, provides its students with the tools to identify and monitor their skills development via its Transferable Skills Portfolio to showcase their competence in a range of 'generic' skills outside their specific field, eg

- communication skills, team work, time management, problem solving.
- Similarly, the Transferable Skills Project (*Transferable Skills in Third-Level Modern Languages Curricula*) was a joint initiative between Dublin City University, Trinity College Dublin and Waterford Institute of Technology because many students were not aware of the skills they had gained during their time in higher education.

Accordingly, I would support a mechanism that would recognise and accredit skills acquired through students' part time or casual work.

Support that may be required to assist young people combining work and study to stay engaged in their learning, especially where work and study intersects with income support.

- I note that the Professor Denise Bradley's *Review of Higher Education Report* identifies that current levels of income support are inadequate for the participation and success of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. It contends that reforms to, and better targeting of, income support that would enable such students to attain better qualifications are urgently required. The review recommends that levels of student financial support be increased and eligibility made fairer based on need.

Since it is acknowledged that financial duress may affect students' grades, or even act as a deterrent to further study, I would support a recommendation for additional financial support to allow students to study without the need to work excessive hours.

The effectiveness of school-based training pathways ... particularly in relation to pathways to employment for disadvantaged young people.

I would support improved access to counselling for students, even the guidance of field workers, to provide specific advice and assessment of students needs.

Yours sincerely

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