Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research

Report of the

National Committee on **Pathways and Technical Education Advancement**

2025 HIGHER EDUCATION summit

Executive Summary

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has always played a critical role in promoting economic growth in Mauritius by equipping the workforce with the right skills to contribute actively to the employment sector as it transitioned from an agrarian to a manufacturing and, more recently, a service economy. Despite its importance as a lever of economic development, the TVET sector is fraught with governance issues in the way that it connects with other education institutions and the industry, adversely impacting the delivery of TVET and its value perception as a sub-standard option to academic learning.

The review of the TVET framework and the urgent need for a Skills Master Plan, especially as Mauritius prepares for the upcoming digital revolution, cannot be understated and has been rightly captured under the Government Programme 2025-2029 and the setting up of a National Committee to advise on TVET Advancement and Pathways (the Committee). The Committee applied a mixed methods approach to gain a thorough understanding of the TVET landscape and the practical issues in Mauritius that complement the more theoretical discourse on TVET. The methodology included a review of local and international publications on TVET, analysis of data collected from structured questionnaires sent to relevant TVET institutions and training institutions registered with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA), focus groups with a purposefully diverse assortment of TVET stakeholders and interviews with key local and international TVET experts.

The 11 recommendations proposed by the Committee to address the identified TVET issues constitute a holistic approach with the aim of enhancing TVET governance and delivery and are grouped under four distinct thematic areas, as follows:

A. Reforming the TVET governance framework to promote a Lifelong Learning Strategy

- Revision of the National Qualifications Framework
- Revision of the Quality Assurance Mechanism
- Mapping Effective Pathways for all Learners in Practice
- Setting up of a ‘Chambres de Métiers’

B. Internationalisation strategies for TVET

- Prioritizing the Africa Strategy - Positioning Mauritius as a Regional TVET Hub
- Promoting Specialised TVET Programmes

C. Strengthening TVET-industry partnership

- Establishing a National TVET Workforce Priorities Framework
- Developing New Models of TVET-Industry Collaboration

D. Enhancing TVET delivery and value perception

- Curriculum Alignment between TVET and Higher Education
- Promoting Inclusivity in TVET
- Branding Initiatives for New and Future TVET

By working together with all relevant stakeholders in TVET, HE, industry and Government, the impact of TVET can be maximised to achieve the desired goals.

Foreword

On Friday, 28th February 2025, the National Committee for Pathways and TVET Advancement was formally constituted in response to the Government's vision to strengthen the TVET sector and foster seamless pathways to higher education in Mauritius. The Committee's establishment reflects a national commitment to building an inclusive, future-ready education system that responds to the evolving needs of the labour market and supports lifelong learning.

The Committee was entrusted with a comprehensive Terms of Reference (TOR) as per Annex 1, outlining its mandate to develop strategies for integrating TVET with higher education, promote industry collaboration, and drive innovation and workforce readiness across key economic sectors. The TOR also emphasised the importance of inclusivity, quality assurance, and the development of robust articulation and credit transfer mechanisms to ensure that vocational training serves as a legitimate complement to academic education.

- Mr. Yamal Matabudul, Chief Executive Officer of Polytechnics Mauritius, was appointed as Chairperson of the Committee. The initial core membership comprised:
- Dr. B Y R Surnam, Dean, Faculty of Engineering, University of Mauritius (UoM)
- Dr. Navin Hurreeram, Associate Professor and Head of School of Applied Sciences, Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE)
- Mr. Hemraj Ramsurrun, Manager and/Curator (Electrical/Electronics/IT), Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre (RGSC)

Recognising the need for a broader spectrum of expertise along with private sector input, the Chairperson subsequently invited additional members to join, including:

- Dr. Tarkeshwarsingh Beeharry, Regulatory Affairs and Accreditation Officer, Higher Education Commission (HEC)
- Mr. Rajcoomar Ramchurun, Manager, Learner Attainment and Information Services, Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA)

- Mr. Mohammad Nizaam Abdool, Training Centre Manager, Research, Project and Curriculum Development Division, Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD)
- Mrs. Bharatee Awotar, Ag. Chief Employment Coordinator, Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations
- Mr. Alain Beche, Proviseur/Programme Officer, Collège Technique St Gabriel
- Mr. Amit Namah, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Polytechnics Mauritius
- Mr. R.K Sharma Seechurn, Research and Development Coordinator, Human Resources Development Council (HRDC)

The Committee's work was supported by Mr. Gino David Philippe, Administrator at the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, who served as Secretary.

Throughout its mandate, the Committee engaged in extensive consultations, stakeholder meetings, and data-driven analysis. Notably, a comprehensive survey was conducted and analysed by Mr. Roshan K. Seebaluck, Manager, Centre for Innovation, Professional Development and Incubation (CIPDI), Polytechnics Mauritius. The background research, design and coordination for this report were further strengthened by the contributions of Mrs. Madhunisha Potigadoo, Mrs. Sarada Coolen and Ms. Divya Karouna Canhye from the CEO's Office at Polytechnics Mauritius.

This report represents the collective effort of its members and contributors. It aims to chart a transformative course for TVET and higher education integration in Mauritius, ensuring that all learners are empowered to thrive in a dynamic, knowledge-driven economy.

Acknowledgements

The National Committee on Pathways and TVET Advancement extends its deepest gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful development of this report.

We acknowledge the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, and Research for entrusting the Committee with the important mandate reflected in the Terms of Reference. The vision of the Dr. The Honourable Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research has been pivotal in guiding this work towards fostering inclusive, sustainable, and a future-ready higher education system in Mauritius.

We are especially grateful to the key experts who generously shared their insights and expertise during interviews and consultations. Our sincere thanks go to Prof (Dr.) K. Bhujun, Dr. E. Castel, Mr. T. Chellapermal, Mrs. S. Gunny, Prof. E. Keep, Mr. S. Maudarbocus, Prof. G. Mohamedbhai, Mr. S. Munbodh, Mr. S. Narrainen, Dr. R. Phoolchund and Dr. D. Ramdenee, whose perspectives enriched our understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the TVET landscape. Their contributions were indeed instrumental in shaping the Committee's recommendations and strategic outlook.

We also thank all stakeholders who participated in the consultation meeting, including representatives from government ministries, the HRDC and TVET institutions, industry partners and employer agencies. Your engagement and candid feedback ensured that the report reflects a broad spectrum of views and is aligned with both national priorities and global best practices. A special word of appreciation goes to the students who participated in the survey and provided valuable feedback on their experiences, aspirations, and challenges within the TVET system.

Finally, we recognize the dedication and collaborative spirit of all Committee members, whose commitment to excellence and innovation has driven this initiative forward. The National Committee on Pathways and TVET Advancement was composed of

representatives from a diverse array of institutions, each bringing unique perspectives and expertise to the table.

We hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for meaningful change, advancing the status of TVET, establishing seamless pathways between TVET and higher education, and empowering learners across the nation.

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Abbreviations

ADI	: Academy of Design and Innovation
AQF	: Australian Qualifications Framework
AI	: Artificial Intelligence
AU	: African Union
BTEC	: Business and Technology Education Council
CET	: Community Education & Training
COMESA	: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPE	: Certificate of Primary Education
ECSA	: Engineering Council of South Africa
EQF	: European Qualifications Framework
FPLNS	: Foundation Programme in Literacy, Numeracy, and Skills
GATS	: General Agreement on Trade in Services
HE	: Higher Education
HNC	: Higher National Certificate
HND	: Higher National Diploma
HRDC	: Human Resource Development Council
HTQs	: Higher Technical Qualifications
IOC	: Indian Ocean Commission
ILO	: International Labour Organization
IPRCs	: Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges
IR	: Industrial Revolution
ITE	: Institute of Technical Education
ITES	: Information Technology Enabled Services
ITET	: Institute of Technical Education and Technology
ITI	: Industrial Training Institute
IVTB	: Industrial and Vocational Training Board
MASS	: Mauritius to Africa Scholarships Scheme
MITD	: Mauritius Institute of Training and Development
MQA	: Mauritius Qualifications Authority
MQF	: Malaysian Qualifications Framework
NCE	: National Certificate of Education

NEET : Not in Education, Employment and Training
NGOs : Non-Governmental Organisations
NQF : National Qualifications Framework
OECD : Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA : Programme for International Student Assessment
PML : Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd
PSAC : Primary School Achievement Certificate
RPL : Recognition of Prior Learning
SADC : Southern African Development Community
SCQF : Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SDG : Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS : Small Island Developing State
SMEs : Small and Medium Enterprises
STEM : Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TAFE : Technical and Further Education
FTES : Free Tertiary Education Scheme
ToR : Terms of Reference
TSMTF : Technical School Management Trust Fund
TVET : Technical Vocational Education and Training
UDL : Universal Design for Learning
UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEVOC : UNESCO International Project on Technical and Vocational Education
VET : Vocational Education and Training
WBG : World Bank Group
WDA : Workforce Development Authority
WEF : World Economic Forum
WSG : Workforce Singapore
WTO : World Trade Organization
ZIMSEC : Zimbabwe School Examinations Council

Participants | Stakeholder Meeting

Total Participants: 17

Table 1: Stakeholders' Meeting Participants

Name	Title	Organisation
Mrs. Trishilla Benydin-Koolwont	Senior Manager	Economic Development Board (EDB) Mauritius
Mr. Ashkwin Rishi Budloo	Renewable Energy Development Officer	Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA)
Mrs. Rekha Busgeeth	Business Analyst	Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency (MDPA)
Dr. Tomal Chadeea	Senior Lecturer	Open University
Mrs. Domijan-Bowler	Director | Regional Training Centre	Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture
Mr. Daniel Essoo	CEO	Mauritius Bankers Association (MBA)
Mrs. Aurelie Henshaw	Head of Training	Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (MWF)
Mrs. S Jhaumeer-Laulloo	Professor	University of Mauritius
Mr. Didier Manuel	Part of the Managing Committee Training Center Manager	Mauritius Information Technology Industry Association (MITIA) Formation Recrutement Et Conseil Informatique Limitee (FRCI)

Dr. D. Marie	Director	Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI)
Mr. Pratab Nankessor	Principal Extension Officer (Information & Training)	Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI)
Mr. Vishal Roopun	Head of Constance Academy	Association of Hoteliers and Restaurants in Mauritius (AHRIM)
Mr. S. Ruhomutally	Human Resource Coordinator	Mauritius Export Association (MEXA)
Mr. Shateeaum Sewpaul	First Vice-President (Excelerate Consulting)	Outsourcing & Telecommunications Association of Mauritius (OTAM)
Ms. Benazeer Saidoo	CEO	Mauritius Africa FinTech Hub (MAFH)
Mr Ashwin Seegolam	Manager	Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency (MDPA)
Mr. Jeevesh Sewdeen	Programme Welfare officer	Small Farmers Welfare Fund (SFWF)

Participants | Key Experts Insight

Each session allowed for direct engagement with the respective expert, ensuring that their insights and recommendations were incorporated into the report.

Table 2: Meetings with Key Experts

Name	Title	Organisation
Prof (Dr) Kiran Bhujun	Director Tertiary Education & Scientific Research	Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
Dr. Eduarda Castel-Branco	Consultant	Former Coordinator of ETF Skills Forecasting project, Ukraine
Mr. Toriden Chellapermal	President CEO	Association of Private Higher Education Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry Business School
Mrs. Shirin Gunny	CEO	Association of Mauritian Manufacturers & Made in Moris
Prof Ewart Keep	Chair in Education, Training and Skills at the Department of Education Founding Member and Associate Director	University of Oxford Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE)
Prof Goolam Mohamedbhai, GOSK	Former Secretary-General Honorary President Former Vice-Chancellor	Association of African Universities International Association of Universities University of Mauritius
Mr. Suresh Munbodh	TVET Expert	

Mr. Sen Narrainen	Senior Economic Adviser	Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Mr. Soobeeraj Parmessa	Temporary Assistant Director	Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
Dr. Robin Phoolchund	Consultant in Learning and development Former Director	Mauritius Qualifications Authority
Dr. Drishtee Ramdenee	Secretary General	Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry Business School
Mr. Maudarbocus Sayadaly	Director	Mauritius Institute of Training and Development

1 Introduction

TVET plays a critical role in economic growth and sustainable development. TVET for today's economy must provide skilled workers at all levels, improve and enhance skill levels on a continuous basis to meet the needs of new and emerging industries, help overcome unemployment and underemployment and reduce poverty and social exclusion. TVET initiatives have two primary objectives: to place graduates in employment offering improved income opportunities and to supply both the public and private sectors with in-demand skills. TVET differs significantly from other segments of education in that it takes place across different locations. In contrast with basic schooling and higher education that are mainly located at school and university premises, TVET also takes place through informal education, in colleges, in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in specialised TVET institutions and at the workplace, among others.

In Mauritius, TVET has been a vital instrument in supporting the economic transition from a predominantly agrarian to a diversified industrial economy in the 1980-90s and more sophisticated services-oriented developments since the 2000s. The TVET sector has thus undergone a series of changes targeting the different forms of standardised vocational education, apprenticeships and skills development schemes to equip the emerging workforce with the necessary skills for employment and contribute to the country's economic growth. More importantly, as a small island developing state (SIDS) devoid of any natural resources, Mauritius depends directly on its human capital to fuel its economic emancipation. Today, with nearly 46% of its population under the age of 35, Mauritius stands at a critical juncture to harness this demographic dividend by turning its youthful population into a powerful engine to enhance its economic positioning in the fourth industrial revolution that is transforming the fundamental ways in which we work and live.[1]

Despite the critical importance of TVET in the Mauritian education system, it continues to suffer due its practical and applied bias, carrying the legacy of a second-rate

[1] World Economic Forum (2025). Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/focus/fourth-industrial-revolution/ on 25 May 2025.

education mainly aimed for the less academically able. TVET potential is further hindered through rapid changes in technology, high rates of underemployment, shrinking birth rates, a mismatch between skills and labour market needs, a 17.4%[2] youth NEET (Not in employment, education or training) rate, and a large youth informal employment rate of almost 25%.[3] This calls for an urgent need to change the narrative of TVET as a sub-standard option to academic learning to ensure a comprehensive skilling agenda that meets the demands of industry and society at large.

The Government Programme 2025-2029, A Bridge to the Future [4] has rightly addressed the need for a Skills Master Plan for the economy. This is perhaps the boldest and most comprehensive move that a Government has initiated in addressing the skills mismatch. In the wake of Government's new vision, a National Committee on TVET Advancement and Pathways (the Committee) has been set up to examine the broader issue of pathways while ensuring that every learner faces no dead ends in his skilling journey. More specifically, the Committee aims to transform Mauritius into a leader in technical and vocational education by creating seamless pathways from TVET to higher education (HE) and fostering win-win industry and academic collaboration. By aligning technical education with labour market needs, the Committee also aims to promote inclusivity and lifelong learning and drive innovation. Finally, the Committee seeks to equip local and international students with workforce-ready skills to stimulate economic growth.

In approaching this complex issue, the Committee has opted for a more expansive view on a lifelong learning strategy rather than a narrow perspective on problem fixing TVET and higher education. This calls for joined up thinking and real complementarity between pathways and providers while situating the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders (the learner, industry, TVET, HE institutions and Government).

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[2] World Bank Data (2023) Share of youth not in education, employment and training, total (% of youth population), Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.NEET.ZS?spm=a2ty_o01.29997173.0.0.1467c921aB8T7F&file=SL.UEM.NEET.ZS, on 27 May 2025.

[3] World Bank Data (2022), Youth informal employment rate, retrieved from https://humancapital.worldbank.org/en/indicator/WB_HCP_EMP_NIFL_Y, on 20 April 2025.

[4] Prime Minister Office (2025). Government program 2025-2029: a bridge to the future. Retrieved from https://pmo.govmu.org/Communique/Government%20Programme%202025-2029.pdf, on 20 April, 2025.

This Report is organised as follows: Section 2 delves in the methodology adopted to gather primary and secondary data. Section 3 discusses the findings of the research study. Section 4 lays out some concrete recommendations on how to reform the current status quo while focusing on actionable solutions and frameworks that will effect change before concluding in Section 5.

1.1 Situating the Mauritian TVET in the Global Context

1.1.1 International Perspectives on TVET to Higher Education

Empirical evidence from the World Bank and UNESCO (2023)[5] highlights that, in OECD countries such as Germany and Switzerland, TVET graduates account for 70–90% of employment in sectors including manufacturing, engineering, and healthcare. Similarly, in Southeast Asia, countries like Singapore and Malaysia report TVET graduate employment rates of 75–85% in emerging industries such as electronics, hospitality, and logistics. In Sub-Saharan Africa, nations such as Rwanda and South Africa have made concerted efforts to increase the proportion of TVET graduates, achieving employment rates of 50–75% in fields like construction, agriculture, and IT.

The effectiveness of TVET systems is attributable to comprehensive educational reforms that not only drive societal progress, economic growth, and innovation but also foster individual advancement. TVET pathways provide learners with opportunities for educational progression, enabling them to acquire advanced skills, enhance self-esteem, and achieve self-actualisation. This, in turn, supports the attainment of a balanced standard of living through access to quality employment and remuneration, contributing to a dynamic equilibrium between skills acquisition and economic growth.

The positive correlation between advanced skills development and economic growth is further evidenced by the articulation of TVET graduates into HE. For instance, Singapore demonstrates a 48% articulation rate from lower-level TVET (Institute of Technical Education, ITE) through polytechnics to universities. Comparable articulation rates are observed in the United Kingdom (44%), Canada (38%), Germany (33%), Malaysia (30%), and Rwanda (28%).[6]

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[5] World Bank Report 2023, retrieved from https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/e0f016c369ef94f87dec9bcb22a80dc7-0330212023/original/Annual-Report-2023.pdf on 30 May 2025.
UNESCO-UNEVOC Report 2023, retrieved from: https://gem-report-2023.unesco.org/

[6] The percentages, retrieved from: https://unevoc.unesco.org/pub/tvet_country_profile_-_singapore_revised_may_2020_final.pdf
https://www.theigc.org/sites/default/files/2014/09/Kingombe-2014-Working-Paper.pdf
https://www.moe.gov.sg/-/media/files/about-us/education-statistics-digest-2023.pdf on 30 May 2025.

According to the Education & Skills 2020 report[7], Singapore is recognised as a leading performer, alongside Germany, Finland, Australia, and Malaysia, due to its robust Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education system and the SkillsFuture initiative introduced in 2016. Similarly, countries like Germany have its Dual System education allowing learners from vocational stream to move to university level education or the education system in UK, allowing learners who have completed their HNC/HND articulating to degree programmes. Other models which further exemplifies effective TVET to HE pathways are the TAFE system of Australia and Rwanda's Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges (IPRCs).

Significant educational reforms have facilitated seamless TVET-to-HE pathways in various countries. For example, Malaysia's revised Qualifications Framework has strengthened TVET by enabling credit transfer and recognition between academic and vocational institutions, while also accommodating industry credentials and alternative learning pathways.

Institutional agreements between TVET and HE providers are critical. Germany's Dual System, for instance, permits TVET graduates to access technical universities, thereby advancing their skills in alignment with industry requirements (World TVET Database Germany, 2012). The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in South Africa has established articulation agreements with five Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, facilitating direct progression to university programmes.

[7] Education and Skills 2020 report retrieved from https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-11/kiese_2020_0.pdf

1.1.2 The Mauritian TVET Context

Mauritius has undergone a series of educational reforms since independence, consistently prioritising education within successive government agendas. These reforms, spanning from pre-primary to tertiary levels, have aimed to broaden access, enhance the quality of education, and develop a skilled workforce capable of supporting the nation's transition from an agrarian 94% dependent on sugar cane to a diversified industrial economy with the services sector accounting for 78% to GDP.[8]

The establishment of Industrial Trade Training Centres in the 1970s and 1980s marked the inception of formal TVET in Mauritius, addressing the needs of emerging sectors. The subsequent creation of the IVTB in the 1980s and 1990s expanded advanced skills training, standardised vocational education, and promoted apprenticeships and skills development. In response to identified gaps, Pre-Voc was introduced at the secondary level in the 1990s to provide alternative pathways for learners not succeeding in the academic stream.

The 2009, TVET reform rebranded IVTB as the MITD, introducing nationally recognised certificates and diplomas and implementing RPL to validate industry-acquired skills. At the primary level, the Nine-Year Schooling initiative launched in 2016 replaced the CPE with the PSAC, assessing learners at the end of nine years and determining their subsequent academic or TVET trajectory.

Polytechnics Mauritius was established in 2017 to address the skills mismatch at the middle management level in emerging sectors and diversifying higher education offerings. Reforms at the secondary level have evolved, with the threshold for progression to the HSC changing from three to five credits, and most recently, reverting to three credits in 2025. The introduction of Technology Education (rebranded SC Technical) at the SC level in 2023–2024 further supports technical education, while the discontinuation of the Extended Curriculum in favour of a

[8] Statistics Mauritius (2024), retrieved from https://statsmauritius.govmu.org/Pages/Statistics/ESI/National_Accounts/NA/NAE_Mar24.aspx on 20 May 2025.

Foundation Programme in Literacy, Numeracy and Skills (FPLNS) at MITD reflects ongoing adjustments to the educational structure.

Despite these reforms demonstrating effectiveness at various stages, a lack of systemic coherence persists, particularly concerning the articulation between educational streams. The NQF remains static, impeding consistent credit transfer and smooth transitions between TVET and higher education. As a result, innovative forms of education and training, such as micro-credentials, badges, and industry certifications, now common place around the world, are yet to manifest in our educational landscape.

Currently, TVET institutions and universities in Mauritius operate largely in isolation, with limited consultation and agreement to facilitate learner mobility between sectors. Curriculum development occurs independently within each institution, resulting in misalignment between lower and higher-level programmes. Unlike other countries with dedicated authorities guiding programme development in accordance with economic needs, Mauritius faces challenges in this regard. The HRDC, as the apex body for human resource development in Mauritius is currently under pressure to launch new schemes that address the skilling, up-skilling and re-skilling needs of industry and society at large.

The learner profile is itself fast changing. The learner of today is more complex and does not neatly fit into the expectations of either employers or educational institutions. The school leaver is a Generation Z and the learner is Generation Alpha. A digital native who intends to have multiple jobs and careers – perhaps even running concurrently, expects work-life balance and to work from home, wants work to have real meaning and impact and wishes to set his own expectations and rules.

Educational institutions and workplaces are being challenged and are still struggling to adapt to this new generation and its expectations. The new learner is technologically savvy, Chat GPT trained and expects bite-sized and bullet qualifications opting for lifelong learning rather than simply pursue a traditional degree.

Industry also stands at a crossroad in its involvement with education and training institutions. Consistently challenged for work-ready staff, industry is longing for more innovations in the sector, new shared service models of training and win-win partnerships with academia. Industry also complains of over-tinkering in TVET policy and spells out an urgent need to revamp the regulatory framework in Mauritius for TVET and HE. Industry is expecting integrated solutions.

Above all, the Government Programme 2025-2029, 'A Bridge to the Future' addresses the need for a Skills Master Plan and clearly lays out that Government is committed to creating inclusive and dynamic pathways from Technical and Vocational Education and Training to higher education while advancing technical education to meet industry demands. Concurrently, the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research aims to position Mauritius as a global education hub in order to attract international students and establish the nation as a centre of academic excellence.

2 Methodology

To analyse TVET issues from a theoretical and practical perspective, this Committee has opted for a mixed methods approach. First, the Committee delved into a desk review of all the recent publications including both international and local data that pertain to the issue of skills mismatch and the need for pathways. Second, the Committee approached the TVET institutions, namely the MITD, ADI, Collège Saint Gabriel, Polytechnics Mauritius and all the training institutions registered with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority to administer a TVET Graduate Outcome Questionnaire to their learners who have completed their TVET studies within the last five years. This structured questionnaire assessed their academic and career trajectories (much like a tracer study) but was also meant to gain insights into the current TVET landscape and students' abilities to proceed on pathways in real terms. The results of the survey questionnaire are in Annex 2.

To look over the issue of skills mismatch, the Committee held focus groups with a purposefully diverse assortment of industry associations, public and parastatal agencies and education and training institutions along with the regulatory bodies. The focus groups were run as a duelling-moderator focus group[9] with an explanatory focus. This was done to invite divergent viewpoints to unpack the real challenges on the ground and expose practical solutions. Finally, Committee members conducted several open-ended interviews with key experts locally and internationally to gain insights on best practices that could be relevant to the current challenges. Some mini case studies in the form of box diagrams have also been used as heuristic to foreground the recommendations within the broader literature and global practices that resonate with the national context.

[9] Yayeh (2021), Focus Group Discussion as a data collection tool in Economics, Daagu International Journal of Basic & Applied Research- DIJBAR. Volume3, Issue-1, pp (52-61).

3 Findings and Discussions

Based on the research done through the review of various reports, survey analysis and interviews, the Committee identified ten specific yet intertwined issues that hinder the potential transformative impact of TVET and progression of TVET to HE in Mauritius. This section analyses and discusses the implications of following ten issues: 1) learning gaps and deficiencies in basic education, 2) definitional issues around TVET, 3) lower social status of TVET, 4) challenges in the regulatory framework, 5) lack of quality assurance framework, 6) fragmented pathways for learners, 7) inconsistent career guidance for learners 8) minimal internationalisation of TVET, 9) curricular misalignment between TVET and HE, 10) persistent skills mismatch and 11) lack of inclusivity in TVET.

3.1 Learning Gaps and Deficiencies in Basic Education

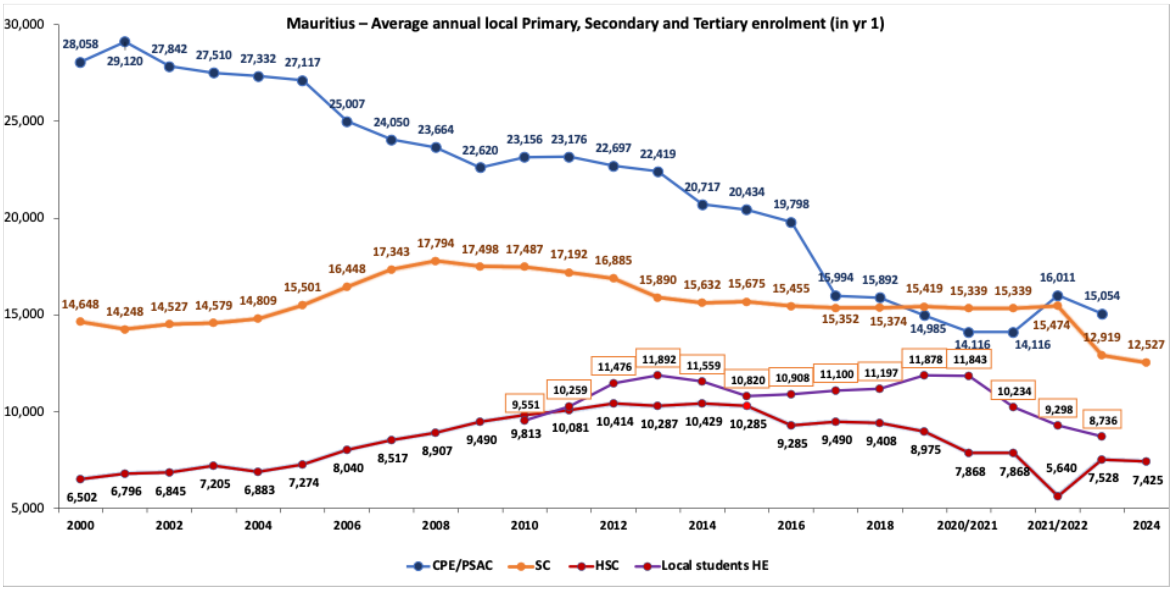
While the mandate of this report does not directly cover primary education and early secondary education, TVET and higher education enrolment will directly depend on the rates of completion learners in basic education.

According to the World Bank (2024), Mauritius is seeing a continuous drop in enrolment of local students because of the declining population and inefficient monitoring and evaluation. Between 2015 and 2021, the number of primary and secondary school students decreased by 13% with a cumulative dropout rate of about 45% between primary and tertiary education[10]. Mauritius' last participation in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), considered to be the gold standard in learners' literacy and numeracy assessment, goes back to 2009, which is now considered outdated. In the 2009 report, students in Mauritius performed almost 90 points below the OECD average, a gap in learning that is equivalent to three years of schooling[11]. Even under the most optimistic scenario if Mauritius ranked in the top 10% of countries with the greatest improvements in learning outcomes in the

[10] The World Bank (2024a), Creating Markets in Mauritius: Increasing Private Sector Participation in an Innovation-Led Economy, retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mauritius/publication/mauritius-afe-cpsd-increasing-private-sector-participation-in-an-innovation-led-economy on 15 April 2025.
[11] OECD (2009), PISA 2009 at a Glance, retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-at-a-glance-2010_9789264095298-en.html on 10 April 2025.

world between its last participation and the most recent available PISA test in 2018, the country's average learning outcomes would still fall significantly well below aspirational peers by 40 PISA points.

Figure 1: Annual local Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Enrolment



Source: Statistics Mauritius

Data from the Statistics Mauritius[12] (as shown in Figure 1) reveals a worrying trend of consistent decline in CPE/PSAC (primary level) candidates, dropping from over 28,000 in 2000 to around 15,000 in 2023, indicating a shrinking school-age population. While SC numbers have remained relatively stable, HSC completions have declined notably since 2016. Local higher education enrolment has also correspondingly fallen from 11,878 in 2019 to just 8,736 in 2023. Alarmingly, despite a growing need for advanced skills in the economy, fewer HSC graduates are transitioning to higher education, risking a future shortage in qualified professionals.

The situation is alarming and worse, Mauritius spends on average about 80% of its total education expenditure on pre-primary, primary and secondary schooling. This decline is unsustainable for a country that fuels its economic emancipation on the

[12] Statistics Mauritius (2024), Education Statistics, retrieved from https://statsmauritius.govmu.org/Pages/Statistics/ESI/Education/Edu_Yr24.aspx on 10 April 2025

basis of its human capital. Hence, before focusing on widening participation in TVET and higher education, basic schooling learner achievement must be addressed. An education system that systemically leaves 50-60% of its students out of formal education system when education is mandatory is not only unjust, but ineffective and inefficient as an approach.

Stakeholders have laid quite some emphasis on using vernacular to boost literacy and numeracy throughout basic schooling instead of using French or English as the languages of instruction. The same issue also applies to vocational education where students struggle with English and French as a medium of instruction. Members having experience with dropouts at the CPE/PSAC level agreed that use of vernacular is an effective method to empower the learner and re-instil confidence. The renewed motivation on its own can be very effective. This is an area that warrants further probing.

3.2 Definitional issues around TVET

Desk research indicates that legislation and regulation on TVET fail to give a proper definition other than “technical vocational education and training”, inscribed within the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act 2001. The lack of clarity goes beyond jargon and syntax because situating TVET, its overall composition, delineating lines and boundaries within the post-secondary education context becomes difficult. Each segment of TVET plays an inter-connected and specific role in education and skills development. Subsequent reforms brought forward the Higher Education Act 2017, Skills Development Act 2019 and the Institute of Technical Education and Technology Act 2021 failed to address the terminology of TVET, while adding new terms such as “technical education”, “skills” and “skills development”.

Stakeholders are of the opinion that this lack of definition and segregating lines around “vocational”, “technical” and “technology” education within the TVET ecosystem has contributed to a vast expanse of providers offering a mix of vocational and technical education that does not deliver on any specific outcome, reinforcing the low status of TVET. Worse, confusion around terminologies has a wide-ranging impact on the effectiveness of the type of TVET being delivered. The occupational standards and

requisite skilling journey of craftsmen/trades versus technicians versus technologists are not properly spelt out in a policy document that can be trusted and accessible to all learners, institutions and employers. The overall effect is a lack of clarity around the definitional norms and practices that depict an unstructured, ad hoc and incoherent approach to TVET provision signalling poor quality and standards. Comparatively, the Higher Education Act 2017 repealed the Tertiary Education Act 1988 but clarified the terms “higher education” and “higher education institution”. When industry is engaging with TVET, having clear definitions will also clarify the ask and the approach to training.

3.3 The enduring lower status of TVET

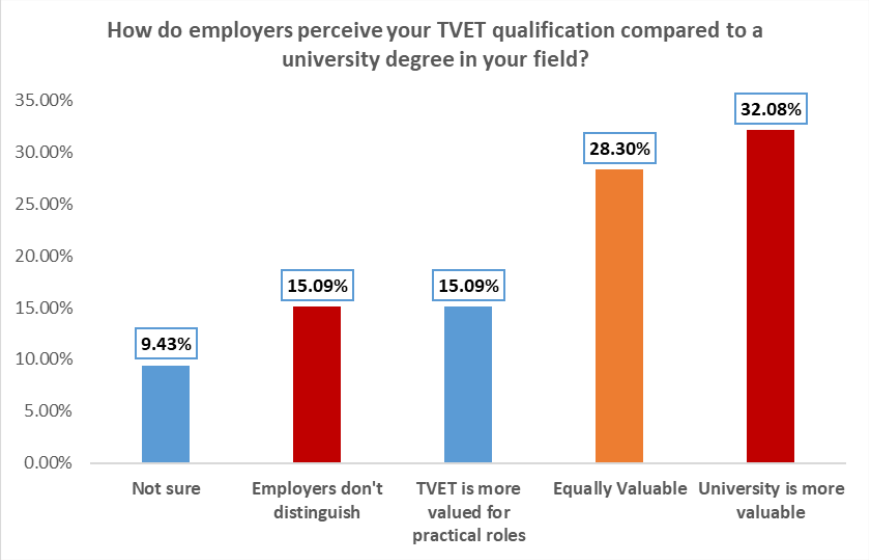
The lower status ascribed to TVET compared to academic learning is neither new nor contextual to Mauritius, it is a global phenomenon. Certain countries have been able to develop a culture of high trust and credibility in their TVET provisions and TVET is therefore readily accepted and pursued as an equally viable pathway to the labour market as highlighted in Section 1. While there have been successive reforms and changes in regulations along with branding and marketing campaigns and sensitisation workshops over the years to raise the attractiveness profile and central role of TVET to socio-economic development, they have had little success, and the lower status has persisted.

Stakeholders shared that the MITD has over the years lost some of its appeal because it has not innovated over time. The same is said for “Ecole Hôtelière Sir Gaëtan Duval” which used to be described as the “fleuron” of Mauritian hospitality. Stakeholders believe that the Polytechnics has somewhat been able to reverse this trend for a particular target audience using branding and communication, new and modern equipment and innovative programmes in line with the emerging sectors of the economy. However, the same stakeholders mentioned that the Polytechnics would not readily be classified as TVET, reinforcing the need for clarity around terminologies as covered in the earlier section.

An international expert interviewed shared an interesting perspective that in the Scottish landscape it is TVET’s intended destination in the labour market that dictates the lower status. In the case of TVET, the lower paying jobs reinforce the stigma not

the educational approach itself. Over time, the proportional higher demand, unmet by supply, has also driven up the pay and hence social status. This is not a cultural phenomenon shared to Mauritius, hence national context and tradition matters.

Figure 2: Employer's perception | TVET qualification vs University degree



As depicted in Figure 2, the survey findings reinforce the perception of a status disparity between TVET and university qualifications. While 28.3% of respondents reported that university degrees are viewed as more valuable, an encouraging 32.08% believed TVET and university credentials are equally valued, suggesting growing recognition of vocational pathways in certain sectors. Additionally, 15.09% indicated that employers do not distinguish between the two, and 15.09% felt TVET is more valued for practical roles, particularly in hands-on industries. However, 9.43% remained unsure, pointing to ongoing ambiguity in employer attitudes. Sector-specific outcomes further illustrate this divide. The healthcare field showed the strongest alignment between qualifications and employment, with 29.81% of graduates working in relevant roles. In contrast, other sectors demonstrated more inconsistent patterns, underscoring the need for targeted, industry-specific strategies to enhance the status and recognition of TVET qualifications rather than applying generalised solutions.

A key expert interviewed from Industry argued that counsellors at schools are not being able to distinguish between elitism and quality. Pushing forth this narrative of

TVET as low quality rather than non-elitist area is reinforcing its lower status and leading to lesser uptake by students. In time, this has skewed the labour market shortages to be more pronounced at the TVET end initially aimed for manual and operational jobs. The ripple effect being a disturbance at the supervisory and middle management level at the enterprise. Manual workers cumulating experience used to grow into supervisory cadres and by then were ready for they had a very good grasp of the mechanics of the job and tasks at hand. Today, stepping in at supervisory level are more university graduates that have graduate skills but lack the inherent knowledge of the trade. This is severely damaging to industry.

3.4 Challenges in the Regulatory Framework

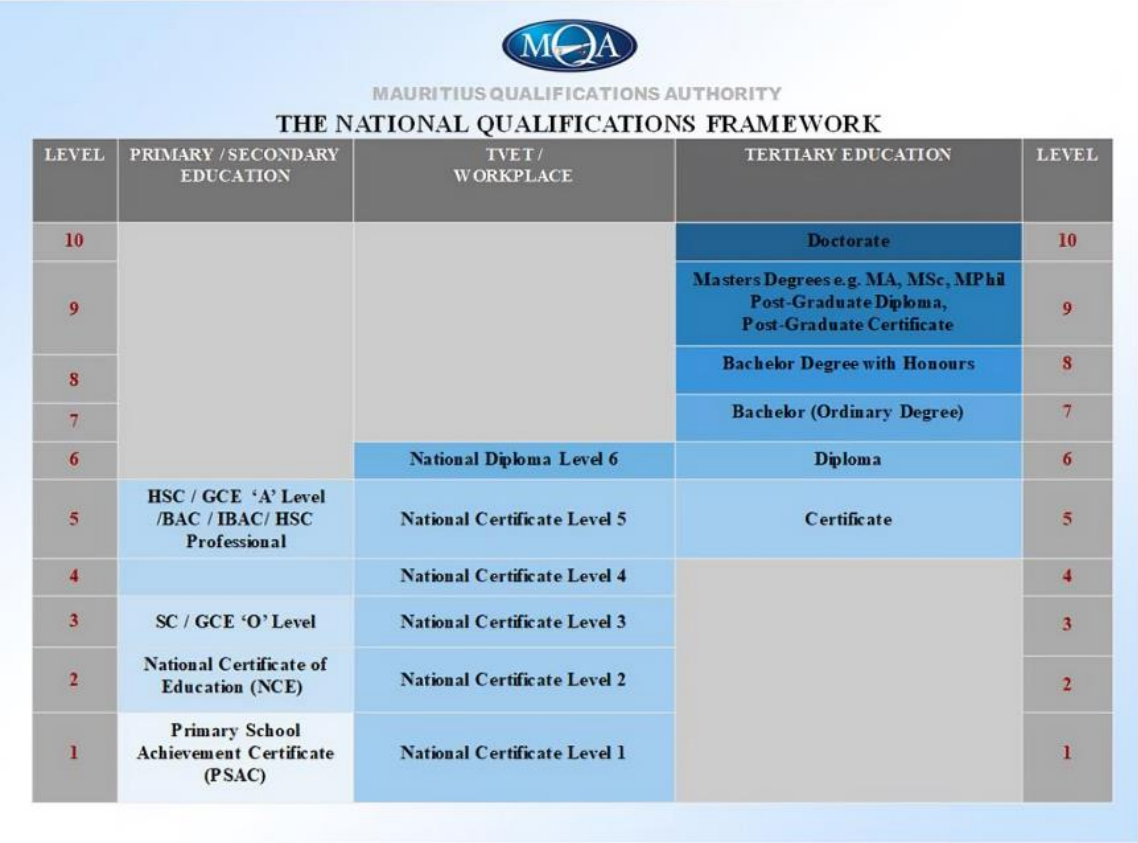
Based on the survey results and stakeholder insights, regulatory misalignments and bottlenecks were evident in three areas: programme recognition, credit transfer, and qualification equivalency. A disconnect between credit systems and curricular alignment in TVET and higher education hinders learner progression, as these sectors operate independently. Vocational qualifications still suffer from low societal status, often seen as a fallback for weaker students. Public awareness of the NQF and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism remains low, limiting engagement. Members clearly indicated that the RPL framework remains a black box for most employers. Yet, there are so many employees that have come in without formal qualifications and have climbed up the career ladder. Today, they seek some recognition for their expertise, but the RPL process stays either very complicated or the level pitching to match their expertise makes them demotivated. Members gave the example of a Mauritius-born Executive Chef from Dubai who wished to come back to Mauritius and had petitioned for an RPL but was only pitched at level 3. Addressing these challenges is key to improving the framework's impact and ensuring it meets the evolving needs of learners and the labour market in Mauritius.

Stakeholders believe that it is time to revise the current NQF [13]– illustrated in Figure 3. There should be clear articulation agreements outlining transparent guidelines for

[13] Current NQA retrieved from https://mqa.govmu.org/mqa/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Learners-information-booklet.pdf

credit allocation across all qualification types to ensure consistency and comparability. Credits from TVET to HE is not easily transferable between qualifications and institutions, and it is problematic that TVET qualifications are pitched only till level 6 on the NQF and learners have to find progression routes into more theoretically inclined universities, who fail to map the full experience of the TVET journey. Stakeholders argued that the current NQF has not evolved in time. For example, new age micro-qualifications such as badges and stackable micro credentials. Until now, when compared against the French system of "validation des acquis de l'expérience[14]" or the "validation des compétences professionnelles", there is no proper framework to recognise prior learning until Bachelor level or Master level, supporting flexible and inclusive learning pathways.

Figure 3: Current NQF



LEVEL	PRIMARY / SECONDARY EDUCATION	TVET / WORKPLACE	TERTIARY EDUCATION	LEVEL
10			Doctorate	10
9			Masters Degrees e.g. MA, MSc, MPhil Post-Graduate Diploma, Post-Graduate Certificate	9
8			Bachelor Degree with Honours	8
7			Bachelor (Ordinary Degree)	7
6		National Diploma Level 6	Diploma	6
5	HSC / GCE 'A' Level /BAC / IBAC/ HSC Professional	National Certificate Level 5	Certificate	5
4		National Certificate Level 4		4
3	SC / GCE 'O' Level	National Certificate Level 3		3
2	National Certificate of Education (NCE)	National Certificate Level 2		2
1	Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC)	National Certificate Level 1		1

Mapping TVET qualifications to specific NQF levels, with clear learning outcomes, supports advanced standing and informs admissions decisions by universities but bachelor degrees within the TVET ecosystem (BTechs) that are now commonplace

[14] Republique Francaise (2025), France VAE, retrieved from https://vae.gouv.fr on 20 May 2025.

around the world are not available in Mauritius. Industry members have pointed out the need for higher TVET qualifications as a response to their evolving needs in industry but are still missing. Traditional university bachelor programmes may not be suitable as they are more theoretical and creates the need for re-training and longer conversion time to market. Furthermore, stakeholders highlighted that the distinction between award and non-award courses attribute more value to “award” programmes, because individuals are drawn to “credit” worthy qualifications giving less importance to continuing education and non-award, but nonetheless industry-worthy skills courses.

Industry standards are not represented at all on the NQF, compared to the SAQA NQF which includes occupational certificates recognised by industry [15] . Industry stakeholders are highly anticipating the launch of micro credentials as a potential solution to assigning credit value and hence rebalancing the importance attached to skill-based courses and bridging the gap between industry needs and individual aspirations. Industry stakeholders also complained of the qualification equivalency issue when dealing with foreign qualifications. For example, there are employees who have completed Diploma programmes from other countries have received equivalence from the regulatory body stating that the Diploma is equivalent to a Certificate in Mauritius, standing in the way of their promotions.

A group of graduates from Health Support and Elderly Care reported difficulties in job placement due to the absence of updated NQF alignment for their programme. Though trained in accordance with current care standards, employers required a qualification level that was yet to be formally recognised by regulatory bodies. This case highlights the urgency for regulatory synchronisation between TVET curriculum updates and the qualifications framework.

[15] South African Qualifications Authority, https://www.saqa.org.za

3.5 Input-driven Quality Assurance System

In Mauritius, TVET is regulated by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA). The MQA accredits award (for credit) programmes and approves non-award (non-credit) short courses. Institutions with awarding powers, usually universities and public TVET institutions, are required to go through an accreditation process for new TVET programmes before launch and once accredited, programmes have a shelf life. Interestingly, these programmes are not per say monitored during the execution of the programme, unless it's a random check or if complaints are officially registered with the MQA. This, in effect, creates a front-loaded input-driven checklist that has to be ticked off at the time of launch but with scant monitoring during the offer of the programme – when issues most probably would arise. In contrast, at the higher education level, the accrediting agency, the Higher Education Commission has a sister organisation, the Quality Assurance Authority (QAA) that monitors and performs audits of HEIs on a regular basis. Standards for quality assurance are issued at the level of the QAA and HEIs are mandated to follow.

An international expert interviewed mentioned that in Scotland the same quality assurance framework oversees HE and TVET and the approach is more focused on continual improvement rather than quality assurance to adopt a lesser punitive outlook. This also helps to redress and enhance the perception of TVET as an equally viable route to the labour market or to higher education for those with the ability and the aspiration to do so.

This striking contrast between TVET and HE in the education landscape has been questioned by stakeholders, especially in view of the disproportionately large number of training institutions registered, more than 500 in Mauritius, compared to the higher education institutions, about 45 in number across the country. Are the barriers to entry low for TVET? Is the lack of monitoring mechanism a compelling reason for why so many training institutions are still sustaining? Does this not also contribute to reinforcing the low status of TVET? The Committee performed a quick comparison across the world for the number of training institutions per active working population to gauge the norm as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Training Institutions Per Active Working Population

Training Institution versus Working Population Comparative Analysis				
Country	**No. of Training institutions**	**Working Population**	**Percentage**	**Institution per workers**
Mauritius	517	560,700	0.09%	About 1 training institution per 1,000 working people.
Australia	4000	13,500,000	0.03%	About 1 training institution per 3,375 working people.
Malaysia	1600	16,460,000	0.01%	About 1 training institution per 10,288 working people.
Singapore	301	3,910,700	0.008%	About 1 training institution per 12,933 working people.
Germany	1000	45,000,000	0.002%	About 1 training institution per 45,000 working people.

Mauritius has three times more training institutions compared to the next developed country and ten times more than its closest peers. How does an employer go about making a selection for training institution in this population of training institutions? Worse, are they all well-functioning and training effectively? How is the MQA able to monitor and evaluate all these training institutions? Members argued that there is an urgent need to rationalise this process and steer the QA assurance mechanism more towards output and outcome of training rather than only focusing on an input driven system.

3.6 Pathways are not working for all Learners

A UNESCO (2019:3) report[16] states that “Member States should develop pathways and facilitate transitions between secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education including flexible admission procedures and guidance, credit accumulation and transfer, bridging programmes and equivalency schemes that are recognised and accredited by relevant authorities. TVET institutions, and other education institutions and authorities, should collaborate for the implementation of such measures”. The same report goes on further and highlights that it is not that those with TVET backgrounds “should” pursue postsecondary or higher education, but rather that they should face no unreasonable hindrances if they wish to do so.

Data indicates that TVET graduates seeking ‘academic progression’ into the university system often encounter a void in which there are no clearly defined articulation pathways to follow, the level to which they are admitted being dependent on the course they wish to pursue and the regulations of the particular university to which they are applying. Worse still, credit transfer mechanisms rarely exist between similar programmes between TVET and upper TVET institutions let alone between TVET institutions and universities. This is a major barrier to articulation and pathways. Some universities do not even recognize any prior learning or skills acquired at the TVET level in their admission requirements. Where it exists, articulation between TVET and universities, it is generally seen as a one-way street between the ‘lower’ TVET and the ‘higher’ university. The feedback generally seems to indicate a “hit and miss” depending on the institution, its pedagogical inclination and inclusive agenda - some have pathways in certain subjects or faculties, but others do not. There does not seem to be a set institutional practice. Several students surveyed indicated that not only is there discrepancy among local universities in their approach to credit mapping and articulation, but inconsistencies also exist when different personnel are consulted at

[16] UNESCO (2019:3), “Global education monitoring report 2019: Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls” retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265866 on 10 May 2025.

the level of the same institution. Students have remarked that when some of them approached a university on different days and dealt with different admission officers they received mixed outcomes of the suggested articulation pathways. Overall, stakeholders argued for a more structured and cohesive approach to articulation for pathways to take place in actual terms.

Stakeholders were also of the view that more effective pathways would grant students the ability to exercise more control over their agency to chart their own academic progression. They however cautioned against lowering standards to create a higher education bulge that may exacerbate the skills mismatch rather than address it. With higher qualifications, expectations around remuneration and job aspirations become inflated. Employer associations shared their concerns around academic inflation in the labour market and about the changing profile of students with Generation Z's entry into the world of work.

3.7 Career guidance is inconsistent and inefficient

In the context of Mauritius, career guidance and proper counselling is not institutionalised leading to a high rate of attrition from programmes. Following different general elections, career guidance services have moved across ministries. Recently, the Ministry of Labour and Training was handling career services, and this has now shifted back to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, which used to be the case previously. However, there are now two ministries overseeing education and both need a section focusing on career services.

Stakeholders remarked that inconsistent career guidance leads to students not being properly advised and channelled from the start and end up graduating in one field but working in another field– often times, in completely unrelated fields. While this pro-choice and mobility across sectors is not a bad occurrence on its own, students often end up dropping out midway. In the case of public HEIs, this spell added complexity because students having partaken of the Free Tertiary Education Scheme (FTES) once, are ineligible for further sponsored education once they drop out.

Stakeholders also noted that, some guidance officers are not aware of the latest developments in the future of work or emerging sectors of the economy and their preparation for new jobs. As such, students are not exposed to the full palette of options for jobs and careers. Some of the materials being used in schools by guidance officers are also outdated.

3.8 Internationalisation across TVET is Missing

The vision of making Mauritius an Education Hub has been one of the rare common themes pursued by successive Governments, yet fifteen years later, enrolment of international students is stalling at roughly 3000 students[17] . While rhetoric of a student hub in Mauritius runs high, the international student enrolment has been slow. Internationalisation is now a central pillar of the new Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research. Questions remain – what is the unique selling proposition of Mauritius as an education hub amidst tough competition from the region and globally? Is there scope for TVET programmes to internationalise?

The lack of mutual recognition agreements between Mauritian and foreign education systems limits international students' access to TVET and higher education. The lack of recognition for education standards from foreign education systems and qualification frameworks limits international students from accessing TVET in Mauritius. Interviews with education system stakeholders confirmed the need to adjust the accreditation system so that it recognizes new, innovative courses and their delivery modes.

An interesting feature of the African landscape is that many countries matriculate secondary education at Grades 11 and 12 rather than the international equivalent of A-levels or International Baccalaureate (Grade 13). Some examples include the South African National Senior Certificate (Matric) at grade 12, the Namibia NSSC at grade 12, the ZIMSEC O' Level School Examinations at grade 11, the Tanzanian Certificate

[17]HEC (2025). A Snapshot of Participation in Tertiary Education 2023, retrieved from https://www.hec.mu/pdf_downloads/pub_rep_pdf/Snapshot%202023.pdf on 25 May 2025.

of Secondary Education Examination at grade 12 (although the ACSEE is equivalent to A-levels but not mandatory), the Uganda Certificate of Education at grade 11. While this decolonisation process of national qualifications presents a loss for Mauritian universities and many universities around the world, it presents a tremendous opportunity for Mauritian TVET.

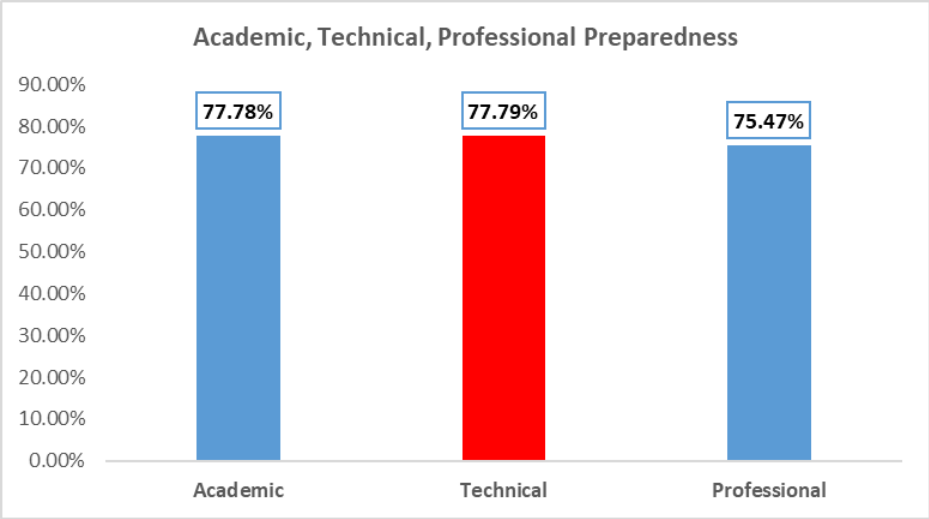
Above all, interviewed stakeholders have spoken of the need for a comprehensive branding strategy for “Study in Mauritius”. Mauritius is more known as a tourism destination with “Sand, sea and sun” as the narrative. Stakeholders argued that there is an urgent need for a road show across Africa and in target countries such as India and China to steer Mauritius as a credible destination for study. The timing is appropriate with more established education hubs such as the USA, UK, Canada and Australia closing off their borders by imposing quotas on international students.

3.9 A greater need for curriculum alignment between TVET and HE

The survey findings illustrate these challenges empirically. Despite 76-78% of respondents feeling adequately prepared academically, technically, and professionally for higher education, specific gaps were identified in theoretical depth (11.4%), academic writing (13.6%), and research methodologies—precisely the areas most valued in university context. These skill disparities contribute to the perception divide between TVET and university education, with 77.78% viewing university education as more theoretical while 77.79% characterised TVET as more practical and hands-on.

However, the complementary nature of these approaches was recognised by a striking 77.79% of graduates (as shown in Figure 4 below), who recommended combining both educational pathways for comprehensive expertise. This suggests an appetite for integrated models that leverage the strengths of both systems rather than maintaining rigid separation. Strategic alignment of curricula—particularly in preparing TVET students for the academic rigors of university study while preserving their practical advantages—emerges as a priority area for institutional collaboration.

Figure 4: Academic, Technical and Professional Preparedness



While the debate is always on whether TVET students are ready to enter higher education, members also questioned whether HE institutions and universities are ready for TVET graduates. At a time when the shelf life of skills is fast diminishing, industry is more keen on skills and competencies acquired than paper qualifications and knowledge earned. It would help for universities to re-imagine their curriculum and pedagogies. This seems to point us in the direction of open and flexible knowledge transfer between TVET institutions and universities. Similarly, while we talk of TVET's readiness for HE, stakeholders remarked that HE has to be ready for TVET as well. For pathways to work in practice, a two-way street is required between TVET and HE.

3.10 Persistent Skills Mismatch in TVET

The skills mismatch is not a new debate; it has been ongoing for the past decade. The future economy is multi-tiered and needs workforce capabilities stemming from every rung of the education and training ladder, rich in opportunity for every learner, with no learner left behind. It is not just about skilling but re-skilling and up-skilling for all individuals, workers, employers – micro, SMEs and large, Government, entrepreneurs, virtual workers, among others.

Industry stakeholders expressed concern over their alleged reticence to be active contributors in the skilling process. On the contrary, industry stakeholders during the focus group discussions indicated that they regularly contribute on the Industry

Advisory Councils of higher education institutions and Sectoral Skills Councils of the HRDC. They also communicate regularly with their employer associations and ventilate their needs and demands through them. In interfacing with educational institutions, employers often find interactions sporadic and ad hoc rather than systematic and regular.

TVET and higher education institutions often involve industry when developing curricula but then only re-initiate contact when students are about to graduate for Career workshops and for tracer studies. Employers argued that they would like to see "training" expertise from training institutions with more diverse models of training. For example, work and learn done concurrently. There is also fatigue because each training institution is working in a silo and engages individually rather than coming together as a sector.

Industry stakeholders shared that they would prefer a more systematic and structured approach of engaging with education and training institutions – whether it is for their involvement in demand assessment, curriculum development, work-integrated learning or equipment financing, among others. Industry stakeholders voiced out clearly that they wish to be win-win partners with education and training institutions.

Industry stakeholders also suggested that TVET and HEIs develop short modular courses through bite sized courses and micro credentials that offer targeted skills upgrading, particularly suited for working adults contributing to their re-skilling and up-skilling. Not every re-skilling or up-skilling needs to be upsold as a formal degree credential. This is an important lesson for Mauritius where individuals have consistently overweighted degrees at the expense of skills, leading in some cases to academic inflation and under employment rather than right employment. This is not an isolated incident and takes place across many sub-sectors of the economy.

It is timely to review the functioning, funding framework and schemes of the training levy at the HRDC, as stipulated in the National Skills Development Strategy[18], although this has not yet taken place. Stakeholders also argued that with rapid changes in automation and AI adoption at the workplace, there is a need to raise the standards of digital skills. The training levy is not working optimally for employers and employees – with a lack of transparency around refund, unusual delays in processing time and schemes that are ill fitted to the national context.

3.11 Lack of inclusivity in TVET

Data on enrolment into and graduation from TVET have not been consistent over time. This is complex for TVET students are situated in multiple locations. The modes of study are also very differentiated from in class to apprenticeships; from programmes with embedded internships to traineeships with models of hop-on and hop-off in industry. Furthermore, TVET institutions are divided into different centres across the island. For example, MITD has 19 centres spread over the island. Members mentioned that without a proper Student Information System centralising the enrolment at all centres, it is hard to monitor and track the evolution of the TVET learner. There is also no repository of TVET learner onboarding into University.

Many TVET centres do not make provision for Special Education Needs students that face learning difficulties. There has been little effort over the years to boost the uptake of girls and women in TVET, challenging the norm that certain STEM or technical fields have an inherent gender bias and cannot continue to operate on this basis. Stakeholders noted that there have been inconsistent efforts and a lack of willingness to make the TVET environment conducive for students with disabilities that may require assistive technologies and support. Even at the curricular level, in certain cases, TVET programmes may not be designed to accommodate the diverse needs of students, including those with disabilities.

[18]HRDC (2022). National Skills Development Strategy, retrieved from https://empment-labour.govmu.org/Documents/NSDS-2022-2026.pdf on 12 May 2025.

Such lack of pertinent TVET data and fragmented system not only makes it hard to track the TVET learner but also contributes to inclusivity issues by making it hard to reach out to all sections of the population to ensure that they are being onboarded seamlessly into the TVET framework.

Stakeholders were of the view that improving accessibility to TVET institutions requires adapting physical infrastructure, such as classrooms and laboratories, and providing specialised or modified training equipment for learners with physical limitations. Financial support should be available for retrofitting facilities, and flexible training schedules-such as evening or weekend classes-should be offered to accommodate vulnerable groups who cannot attend full-time programmes.

Interviewed experts also shared that there is an urgent need to push a campaign for “Women in TVET”. Conventionally perceived as gender biased, TVET is at the dawn of a revolution and needs to be pro-conscious of this demographic dividend. In Mauritius, Statistics Mauritius stipulates that 208,200 women in 2024 reported their principal economic status as "engaged in home duties".[19] This is almost one sixth of the Mauritian population and as such, cannot be ignored.

[19] Statistics Mauritius (2022) retrieved from https://statsmauritius.govmu.org/Pages/Statistics/ESI/Gender/Gender_Yr22.aspx on 15 April 2025.

4 Recommendations

In line with reviewing the TVET sector and addressing the identified problems from a holistic approach, this Report proposes recommendations grouped under four distinct thematic areas: 1) reforming the TVET governance framework to promote a Lifelong Learning Strategy, 2) internationalisation strategies for TVET, 3) strengthening TVET-Industry partnership and 4) enhancing TVET delivery and value perception of TVET.

4.1 Reforming the TVET Governance Framework to Promote a Lifelong Learning Strategy

It is clear from Sections 4.4 and 4.6 that a regulatory framework involving more connected lines and progression routes across different qualifications pitched on the National Qualifications Framework will not suffice to develop seamless pathways from TVET to higher TVET or from TVET to HE. It is not simply an issue of more sensitisation or technical awareness. The recommendations below adopt an expansive view that address issues faced by TVET graduates transitioning into HE as well as issues that lower the number of entrants into TVET from basic schooling. There is also a need to make HE more conducive for TVET learners.

4.1.1 Revision of the National Qualifications Framework

The current NQF in Mauritius is still perpetuating a divided system that rests on a categorical distinction between academic and vocational knowledge and skills. This restricts access and progression and emphasises differentiation and social selection at the expense of social inclusion and the needs of individual learners. At a time when the lines between TVET and academic learning are becoming increasingly porous, the NQF is seen as rigid. Moreover, the world is fast changing and there are new qualifications that learners and industry are seeking that are still absent on the NQF. Box 1 below illustrates the same need in Malaysia and the authorities have revised the Malaysian Qualifications Framework accordingly.

BOX 1: Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)

The MQF is designed to integrate and incorporate post-secondary qualifications, providing clear learning pathways and supporting lifelong learning. It enables progression from skills certificates to diplomas and degrees and recognizes prior experiential learning for adult learners.

Learners completing Skills Diploma can use the equivalency mapping under the MQF to transit either into an Academic or TVET Diploma and eventually progress to Bachelor's degree programme. The MQF applies a single learning outcome approach up to Level 6 (Bachelor's Degree) for TVET qualifications, ensuring that competencies gained in vocational education are recognised for academic progression as well. This framework supports also lifelong learning and removes traditional barriers between vocational and academic routes, making it possible for learners to move more easily and fluidly between sectors and qualifications.

Source: Malaysian Qualifications Agency, "Malaysian Qualifications Framework 2nd Edition" (2019)

A revised model of the NQF combining competency-based, outcome-based, and modular elements would best meet Mauritius' evolving labour market and educational needs. This Committee recommends a model of a revised National Qualifications Framework (Figure 6 below) that embeds TVET, HE and industry echelons. This is a model being proposed by the Committee that intends to be merely illustrative at this stage and has been benchmarked on the South African NQF, the Australian NQF and the Irish NQF[20]. Box 2
below gives a snapshot of how the AQF provides for many additional features, including facilitating RPL entry for mature working person into a Bachelor programme directly or giving learners multiple routes based on choice.

[20] All these NQF reflect the philosophy of the revised NQF being proposed for Mauritius, Irish NQF https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications , South African NQF, https://www.saqa.org.za/national-qualifications-framework/ and Australian QF, https://www.teqsa.gov.au/how-we-regulate/acts-and-standards/australian-qualifications-framework on 25 May 2025

Box 2: Australian Qualification Framework

BOX 2: Articulation and Progression in the AQF

In the AQF model, any leaner completing a TAFE Diploma programme pitched at Level 5 is granted credit for up to one year towards a Bachelor programme at Level 7 in any university. In contrast, to many international systems where vocational qualifications are considered as stand-alone or terminal qualification route, the AQF acts differently and designs purposefully to facilitate progression into further study.

In a similar vein, a Year 12 school graduate has the opportunity and choice to pursue either a Certificate IV or Diploma programme within the VET sector or gain direct entry into university based on the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank. The AQF also makes provision and supports dual enrolment initiatives such as VET in Schools allowing students early access to vocational pathways.

The RPL is another cornerstone of the AQF in skills recognition. It allows, for example, an experienced working person to be assessed and awarded a Certificate III or IV without undertaking formal study and subsequently use the qualification to enter a Bachelor programme. This policy framework endeavours to foster lifelong learning and facilitates career progression.

The framework also accommodates nested qualifications, allowing learners to exit longer programmes with formally recognised awards. For example, a learner enrolled in a Bachelor (Honours) programme may opt to exit earlier with an Associate Degree (Level 6) or a Diploma (Level 5). Such structured exit points are rarely embedded in degree programmes in many other countries.

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment, "Australian Qualifications Framework Review 2019"

The new model is a 10-level structure, building on the existing NQF for continuity and clarity. It must offer clearly defined progression pathways that connect TVET and higher education qualifications while ensuring that TVET also stands on its own to reflect 'new' TVET with new age qualifications that deliver on industry's current and future needs. The Committee was guided by the philosophy of introducing new qualifications when examined for purpose, type and rigour. When seen as complementary to higher education on the NQF, perceptions of TVET as lower status to HE will significantly decrease.

There are several changes that are proposed within this revised NQF. First, new qualifications are being proposed in the TVET cadre – including new BTechs signalling the elongation of the TVET cadre into Higher education. Two qualification types are being introduced. A Bachelor Apprenticeship pitched at level 8 which will last for 5 years (this follows the UK example[21]) and the Bachelor with Co-Op (this follows the Canadian example- for example, the Ontario Qualifications Framework[22]) pitched at level 7 which will last for 4 years.

Second, a re-styling is proposed for the Diploma level 6 – the academic equivalent would be renamed Associate Degree[23] to distinguish with Diploma in the TVET cadre. This has been the practice is many countries around the world, namely Australia, Canada, Denmark or the United States as a more viable route into a Bachelor degree. At a later stage, the TVET echelons could be extended beyond level 8 up to levels 9 and 10 in the form of a Professional Master's degree or MTech and a Professional Doctorate or Industrial Doctorate e.g., Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) but this is not a change that is warranted at this stage by stakeholders. We are however advocating that the change to the NQF needs to incorporate an extrapolation of the TVET cadre

[21] Ofqual's Regulated Framework, retrieved from https://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/qualifications-and-credit-framework-qcf.html and https://www.hampshire.police.uk/internet/asset/4bac2286-4027-40b2-9e07-8efa9d67d2cP/QCF_chart.pdf

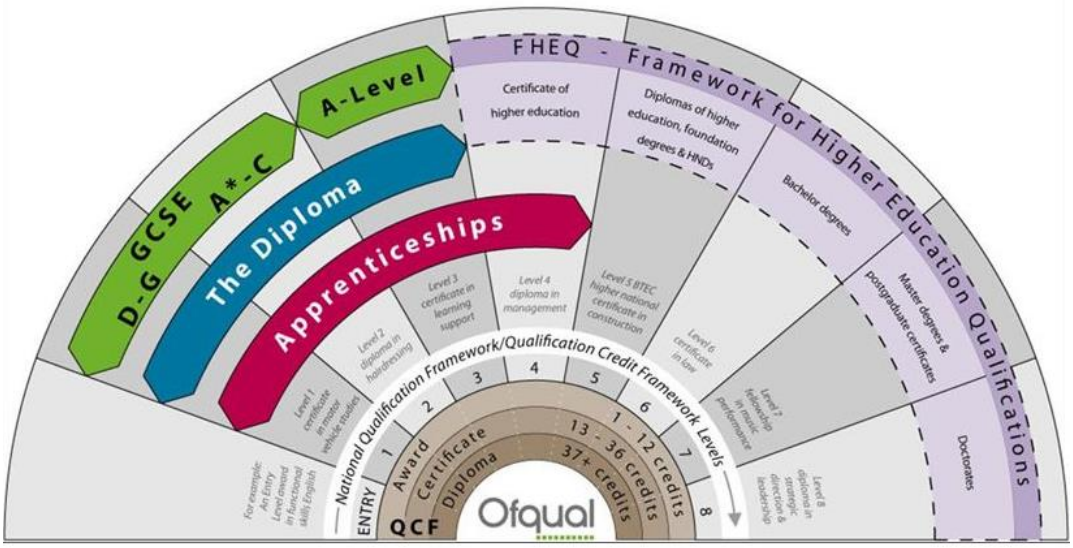
[22] Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities of Ontario (2021), OQF retrieved from https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/programs/oqf/oqf.pdf on 26 May 2025.

[23] Karmel and Lu (2012), Associate Degree or Advanced Diploma, retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536626.pdf on 24 May 2025. This paper submitted to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research makes a strong case for an Associate Degree to be more fitting for the academic route than vocational as it carries more credit to transfer into a Bachelor degree.

all the way into HE up to level 10 to respond to the emerging needs for industry at the higher echelons.

Third, a restyling is also proposed for the Foundation at university as Foundation Degree [24](as is the case in the UK) to create a demarcation with the FPLNS at level 2 of the NQF recently introduced by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. This report has on multiple occasions pressed on the need for more differentiation and clarity in terminology. Although the Foundation for entry into Bachelor programme, practised at the level of several universities is currently not an official qualification type, the Committee believes that clarity is important. Two very distinct programmes at two separate levels cannot bear the same qualification type, i.e. “Foundation”. It is also proposed that the Foundation has to be formally inducted as a qualification type to avoid any confusion, as is the case on Ofqual’s Regulated Framework – pitched equivalent to the Diploma in Higher Education (on Figure 5).

Figure 5: Ofqual's Regulated Framework



Fourth and perhaps the most significant change. It is proposed that badges and micro-credentials be formally included as distinct nano and micro-qualifications, with clear

[24] Foundation Degree, retrieved from https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=3562b281_11 and https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/foundation-degree-characteristics-statement-2020.pdf

rules on recognition, quality assurance, with an option to be stacked towards partial or full qualifications. This change has been eagerly awaited by Industry in order for their skills-based courses to receive “award” (i.e. qualify for academic credit) status and therefore be perceived of higher value and worth. This Committee has been apprised that the Higher Education Commission has worked on a guideline for micro-credentials. It is imperative that there be harmonisation among the different proposals. The Committee further proposes to differentiate the levels of micro-credentials. Simply put, micro-credentials aimed at higher order skills (a Master’s degree module) will be assigned a higher value than a micro-credential for a vocational certificate module. This is only an ordinal number assigned, intended as part of a normative framework to rate levels of micro-credentials. It is not to be confused with the level of qualifications pitched on the NQF.

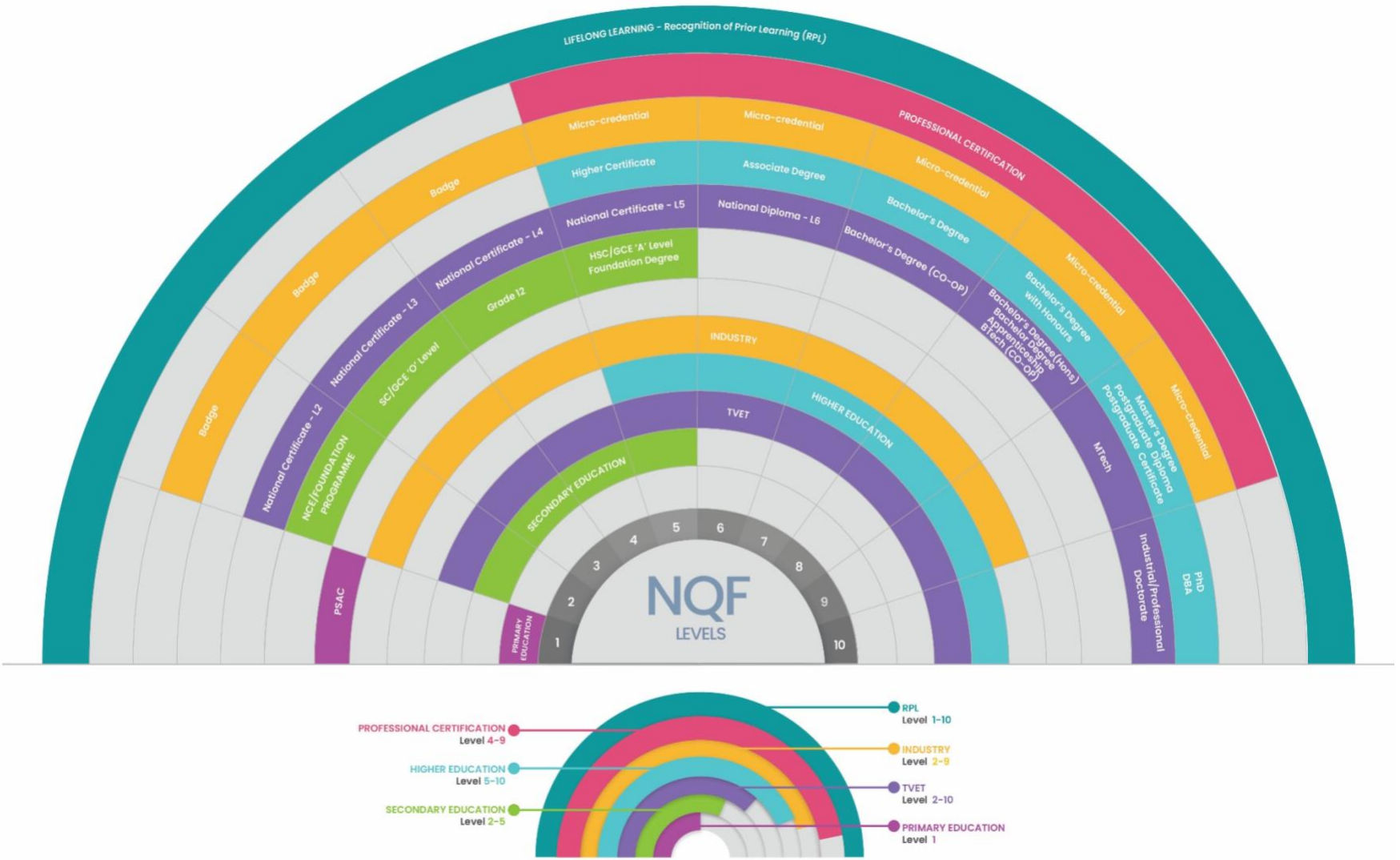
A critical aspect of reviewing the NQF for Mauritius lies in the meticulous examination of the dimensions within its level descriptors. These dimensions—which typically articulate the depth and breadth of knowledge, the nature of skills, and the degree of autonomy and responsibility expected at each qualification level—form the very backbone of the framework. Therefore, a thorough review of these dimensions is paramount to ensure they remain relevant to Mauritius's evolving socio-economic and educational landscape. They should be clearly defined to avoid ambiguity, demonstrate coherent progression between levels, while being sufficiently comprehensive. This level of scrutiny is essential for maintaining the NQF's integrity, credibility, and its utility as a tool for lifelong learning, skills development, and national development.

The Committee proposes to hire an NQF expert to study the full implications of this revision in NQF and this is why it is only intended as an illustrative model at this stage. The committee also recommends to usher in an *Articulation and Pathway Policy* that will have the full force of a regulation. Until now, as identified in the Section 4.6, articulation is ad hoc depending on the university and its orientation on widening access and participation. We cannot embrace a Lifelong Learning Strategy without a national policy of pathways. It is too important to be left to the institutions to implement as per their existing mandates, missions and statutes.

The aim is clear - to deliver on a lifelong learning strategy where all learners easily find themselves. This scrutiny is essential for maintaining the NQF's integrity, credibility, and its utility as a tool for lifelong learning, skills development, and national development. Ongoing stakeholder consultation is essential to ensure the framework meets users' needs. Such a framework also eases the way forward for pathways bringing more clarity on levels and progression routes as it advocates for a dual system of TVET and HE tracks running concurrently.

Figure 6 below proposes a novel NQF framework for integrating TVET and HE.

Figure 6: Integrating TVET and HE



4.1.2 A Revised Quality Assurance Mechanism

In embracing a lifelong learning strategy, improving quality should be an imperative throughout the education cycle. Currently, the front-loaded accreditation process for TVET and little consideration demonstrated to monitoring and evaluation of quality during TVET delivery (except for self-administered audits), makes it more input driven and not outcome oriented.

The Committee recommends that the QAA's mandate be extended to encompass the quality assurance of TVET. This is also in line with suggestions of stakeholders in Section 4.5. This, in effect, will serve two purposes. First, it will establish a prudent and practical solution, rather than devote extra funds to launching a new agency.

Second and more importantly, it will project a continuum in the quality assurance mechanism from TVET to HE signalling that TVET and HE are joined up, connected and integrated. This will also enhance the status of TVET as a viable complementary route to higher education. A new set of standards will have to be developed for the TVET spectrum, bearing in mind that TVET should still retain its practical and competency-based orientation.

4.1.3 Mapping Effective Pathways for all Learners in Practice

While normative frameworks for pathways have existed for quite some time, pathways in real terms have not been implemented to the full extent, as evidenced by Section 4.6. Learners in TVET still struggle to gain access into higher education because of issues of curricular alignment or institutional partnerships or simply due to the different nomenclature of learning. TVET is built on a competency-based framework requiring learning as well as skills outcomes evidenced in practice through traineeships, apprenticeships and internships whereas universities are more focused on theoretical learning and guided by learning outcomes located primarily in the classroom. Part of the problem lies in the unification of these two different approaches, with only "credits" as the

connecting dots. However, even then, capstone projects or internships are not assigned the same credit value as dissertations – although both are terminal assessments.

As seen from the revisions proposed in the NQF in the earlier section, this Committee recommends extending the TVET echelon in the NQF all the way to the Professional Doctorate but activating the Bachelor degree level - BTech for the time being. This will be instrumental for students who are currently pursuing highly technical subjects that due to path dependency do not easily find progression routes or credit exemptions into the academic Bachelor programmes. Such students are currently being required to repeat significant portions of the syllabus to qualify for credit, making it difficult in actual terms.

There are also practical issues encountered by students who seek credit exemptions, for example students who complete Diplomas Level 5 from international awarding bodies may have completed up to three years of a Diploma post O-levels but can only gain equivalence at level 5, although a Diploma is pitched in the NQF at level 6 in Mauritius. This requires them to start a Bachelor degree from Year 1 in Mauritius as level 5 is pitched at the level of A-levels, requiring them six years to complete a degree post Diploma. The same students can articulate into Year 2 of a degree in the UK, South Africa or Canada. The new proposed pathways will solve this issue making articulation easier. This Committee has also been apprised that the Higher Education Commission is currently finalising a National Credit Value and Transfer System (NCVTS) that calls for harmonisation with the new model being proposed.

The proposed pathway also makes provision for the FPLNS at level 2 (recently introduced[25]) allowing learners who have not been academically successful from Grade 6 to complete 3 years of study to articulate in technical stream with the MITD. Likewise,

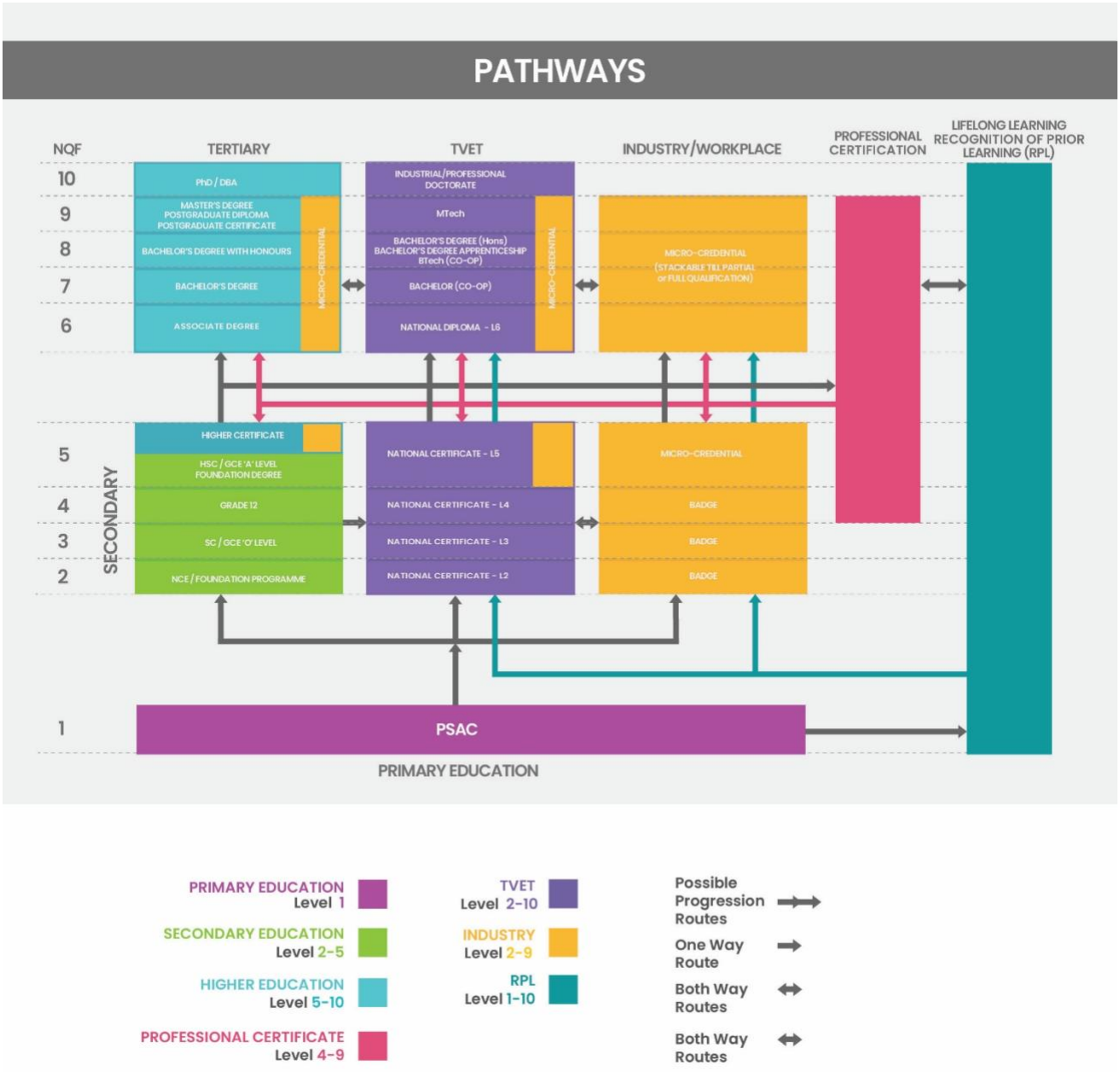
[25] MIE (2024), FPLNS retrieved from http://web.mie.ac.mu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/FPLNS_at_a_glance_2.pdf on 20 May 2025.

a Foundation (proposed to be restyled Foundation Degree) catering for learners who have note secured the full entrance criteria at Grade 13 to embark in a one-year study before enrolling into a Bachelor Degree programme.

Further to the changes proposed, the Committee has re-worked a model for the new Pathways as laid out in the Figure 5 below. This model of representation has been benchmarked on the Croatian model [26], selected for its ease of understanding and clarity of presentation.

[26] CEDEFOP (2021), Croatian Education and Training Model, retrieved from https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/croatia-u2 on 30 May 2025.

Figure 7: New Pathways for TVET



The new pathways also depict the larger role of RPL in this lifelong learning strategy. For its depiction on the pathways, the RPL ladder has been extended all the way onto the PhD. The Committee recommends that an RPL expert be hired to work out a comprehensive policy on the RPL mechanism so as to encourage informal learners and working professionals to seek RPL. The mechanism will need to be thorough and rigorous

so as to ensure that the regulatory bodies are satisfied with the internal rigour and standards imposed on the preparation and validation of the “portfolio”. There are many examples to draw from around the world, including the French model, as stipulated in Section 4.8.

The new Pathways also introduce the Professional Qualifications. Until now, the concerned authorities have always established the comparability or equivalency of qualifications by pitching the professional qualifications on the NQF. However, it is the view of this Committee that a formal “Register of Qualifications” be developed to avoid the unnecessary application process for professionals whose certifications are already listed in the Register.

4.1.4 Launching of a ‘Chambres de Métiers’ to address Youth Underemployment

An education system that systemically leaves 50-60% of its students out of formal education system when education is mandatory is not only unjust, but ineffective and inefficient as an approach (refer to Section 4.1). This problem is very complex and requires a set of purpose-built solutions at the basic schooling level itself, which is beyond the scope of this report. However, TVET and thereafter HE, will only inherit learners, beyond RPL, that are in the formal education system.

There is a pressing need to address the vicious cycle of youth informal employment and underemployment and low paid work which adds a considerable externality to the economy and society at large. The youth informal employment rate in Mauritius stands at 25% (refer to Section 1.0). This is alarming. There is a need to capture this population outside of formal education and employment so as to steer them towards formal education and training and thereafter higher value-higher jobs through a specific tracking system – a unique identifier. As per the OECD (2024), youth informal workers who have been locked out of the formal education systems have fewer opportunities to upgrade their skills and transition to formal jobs. While this may not be directly representative of

Mauritius, the report goes further to mention that close to 45% of informal workers have at best a primary level of education compared to only 7% of those in formal employment[27].

This Committee recommends the setting up of a “Chambres de Métiers” with a view to professionalise trades, crafts and artisanship in areas of need for the country. The Chambres de Métiers will be tasked to develop a repository of training programmes that will target early school leavers of the basic schooling system and dropouts as a means to steer them towards gainful formal employment and give them opportunities to upskill in the formal education system through pathways. The training programmes will have to focus on specific Mauritian standards of practice. For example, all electricians have to be compliant with the MS63 code of practice for electric installations in Mauritius.

The repository will become an official database of standards of practice for the specific trades and crafts and participants upon completion, will be officially registered and allocated a “carte de compétence” with a license number to practice. Any trade registered will be assigned a timeline (for example, by 30 June 2028) to induct and skill new entrants and re-skill existing workers. Thereafter, all non-licensed operators and workers will not be allowed to practise.

The Chambres de Métiers will also include a full repertoire of new certifications for emerging trades for the new economy, for example green jobs, blue jobs, food security, allied health. This will add to the development and branding of “future TVET” but will require the collaboration of institutions and agencies outside of formal TVET delivery. Government may collaborate with private sector in a PPP model to house the Chambres de Métiers. There are many models around the world that can be used as benchmark,

[27] OECD (2024), Breaking the Vicious Circles of Informal Employment and Low Paying Work, retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/breaking-the-vicious-circles-of-informal-employment-and-low-paying-work_f95c5a74-en.html on 31 May 2025.

including the German Handwerkskammer[28] model or the “Chambres de Métiers et de l’Artisanat de France”[29].

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources needs to collaborate with the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research on revamping the Career Guidance Services. There is a need to perform capacity building exercises for the guidance officers while ensuring a system of CPDs to maintain the accuracy and up-to-date advice being provided. The rapid change of industrialisation, automation and emergence of AI is reducing the shelf life of skills and jobs. Many new jobs are being created including in AI, IT, sustainability, climate change, green etc. Guidance officers need to be apprised of the latest developments. Similarly, there is a need to start early and initiate Career Guidance in primary schools so that learners took early stock of the changing nature of the job market.

The Committee also proposes that every learner into primary school be identified by a unique ID so that each learner may be tracked and supported in the most optimal manner possible. We cannot expect to increase our competitiveness with 50-60% of students dropping out of the formal education system from pre-primary to tertiary, especially when pitted against a declining demographic. Each learner’s contribution and ability should be valued and a data-driven system through an ERP or online platform is best to tackle this monitoring and evaluation. By tracking every learner that gets into the formal education system, we can proceed with empirical based policy making on exact interventions and policies that will enable a more just, inclusive and productive society.

[28] https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/fr/service/glossaire/glossar/do/show/handwerkskammer-hwk
[29] https://www.artisanat.fr

4.2 Internationalisation strategies for TVET

Clearly stipulated in the Government Programme 2025-2029, 'A Bridge to the Future', Internationalisation has been identified as a strong pillar of development by the new Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research. Mauritius is uniquely poised as a stable and peaceful nation state endowed with an advanced legal, regulatory and governance framework to welcome international students, educational institutions and centres of excellence, among others.

Until now, TVET has been rather absent in the internationalisation agenda opting to focus on local students and industry. However, it is the strong contention of this Committee that TVET possesses some unique attributes that can bolster its contribution to the education hub.

4.2.1 Prioritizing the Africa Strategy - Positioning Mauritius as a Regional TVET Hub

Mauritius is a success story in Africa. A member of the African Union (AU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern Development African Community (SADC), Mauritius is today considered the most innovative African country by the Global Innovation Index while having the most favourable business climate on the continent, according to the World Bank's "Doing Business" report[30]. Mauritius also occupies the top spot as the safest country in Africa as per the 2024 Global Peace Index.

There are three key factors that make Mauritius a prime candidate as education hub in and for Africa, especially for public higher education institutions: a. the Mauritius to Africa Scholarships Scheme (MASS)[31], b. SADC country students being eligible for home fees

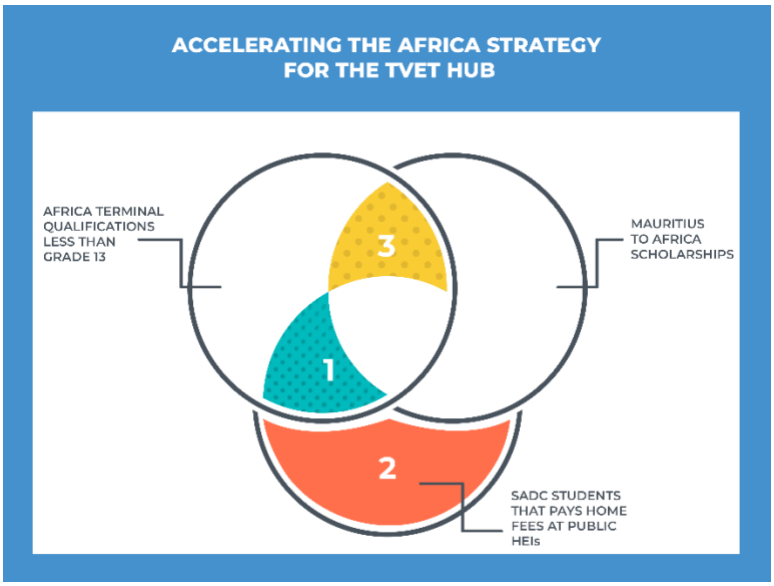
[30] World Bank (2024b), Doing Business Report, retrieved from https://archive.doingbusiness.org/en/rankings?region=sub-saharan-africa on 11 April 2025.

[31] Higher Education Commission (2025), Mauritius Africa Scholarship Scheme, retrieved from https://education.govmu.org/Documents/2024/SCHOLARSHIP/Application%20Form%20undergraduate%202025.pdf on 22 May 2025.

at public higher education institutions through the SADC Protocol on Education[32] and finally, c. African countries having secondary schools' terminal qualifications less than Grade 13 (i.e. less than A-level equivalent) making them ideal targets for TVET programmes.

As a small island state that spends only 9%[33] of its total education budget on tertiary education, Mauritius will not outcompete other nations by pursuing a mass strategy on developing the education hub. Differentiation and focus are important. There is a real need to reflect on where to allocate minimal budget for maximum impact. Our Committee firmly believes that the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research should prioritise and optimize Government funds in accelerating an Africa strategy for the TVET education hub as laid out in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Accelerating the Africa Strategy



1 Target Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe without scholarship because these countries have the greatest need and already qualify for home fees.

2 SADC countries whose terminal qualifications are equivalent to Grade 13.

3 Countries whose terminal high school credentials are less than Grade 13 who are eligible for the MASS scholarship

[32] SADC (2000), Protocol on Education and Training, retrieved from https://tis.sadc.int/files/5213/2680/2090/20060623_protocol_education_training.pdf on 28 May 2025

[33] National Budget 2024- 2025, retrieved from https://nationalbudget2024.govmu.org/documents/2024_25_AppendixB.pdf on 25 May 2025.

The Committee outlines three priorities that can boost the uptake of international students into Mauritius TVET. The first priority should be to focus on the overlap between the countries whose terminal qualifications are less than Grade 13 equivalent making them ineligible to access university education directly and those countries in the SADC region that would be eligible for the home fee arrangement. This overlap gives Mauritius a unique comparative advantage both in terms of cost of study as well as access to programmes of choice. The second priority would be to focus on the SADC countries with home fee arrangements in Mauritius when enrolled in public HEIs but have terminal qualifications eligible for TVET and university entrance. Finally, the third focus would be to attract students whose qualifications make them ineligible for university but attractive for TVET through the MASS scholarships.

Mauritius can position itself as a TVET hub and a preferred destination with the constant growth in students stemming from the African market by exploring trade aspects focusing on the services sector especially in the context of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) which establishes a multilateral framework of rules and principles for trade in services.

The GATS offers a robust structure for Mauritius to leverage its potential as a TVET hub by identifying and committing to specific TVET services, such as curriculum development, instructor training, and quality assurance mechanisms. This will liberalise market access for foreign TVET providers and investors but also ensuring that national regulations are clear, non-discriminatory, and aligned with international best practices.

Moreover, Mauritius can utilise GATS to advocate for the free movement of TVET professionals and the mutual recognition of qualifications, thereby facilitating the exchange of expertise and attracting skilled individuals to contribute to its TVET sector. Through the GATS framework, Mauritius can effectively position itself as a trusted regional leader and global collaborator in TVET knowledge dissemination and innovation.

4.2.2 Promoting Specialised TVET Programmes

An education hub in development generally needs to have global appeal to attract international students to its shores. Around the world, many countries including Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom are all magnets for international students because they have leveraged their world-class education system as a key export industry over the years, contributing massively to their GDP.

In Mauritius, we do not yet have programmes of international repute but we certainly have endemic advantages that could give us an edge in the form of specialised TVET programmes. Interestingly, these are the same TVET programmes that have been highlighted by 32.08% of the respondents in the survey findings to be equally valued as university credentials. The Committee believes that the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research should focus on specific specialised programmes. A few examples have been mentioned in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Specialised TVET Programmes for Internationalisation

Specialised Programmes	Rationale
Nursing and nursing specialisation areas	The World Health Organisation estimates that there is currently a shortage of nurses and will reach 4.5 million by 2030. Over the past 30 years, Mauritian qualified nurses have emigrated to the UK and other parts of the world. Mauritius has a strong foundation in nurse training and a stellar reputation around the world. Periodically, delegations from the EU and Canada visit Mauritius to recruit nurses but are met within insufficient supply of nurses. Ministry of Health and Wellness data[34] indicates that there are an immediate shortage of 1500 nurses in Mauritius. There is a unique opportunity to develop nursing and nursing specialisation talent further to meet both the local and international demand. In Africa, few institutions offer nursing training and seats are very scarce. Mauritius can capitalise on African students to pursue international nursing qualifications. This Committee believes that Mauritius can pursue bilateral partnerships with industrialised countries to export nurses trained under the same rigorous standards and practices for ease of progression. For example, Mauritius could work with the UK's NHS to provide nursing talent and welcome UK institutions to set up in Mauritius and offer nursing programmes.

[34] Ministry of Health and Wellness data, retrieved from https://newsmoris.com/2025/05/12/critical-shortage-of-1500-nurses-mauritius-faces-healthcare-crisis/

Tourism and Hospitality	Mauritius is globally known for its "sand, sea and sun". International franchise agreements can be drawn with international schools of high repute to set up in Mauritius, given its endemic advantages. The whole island is a laboratory in tourism, hospitality and culinary training with its vibrant network of five-star hotels. Specialisation TVET courses can be offered on food and beverage, housekeeping, culinary, resort management, cruise services, event management and luxury brand management, among others.
IT and Emerging Technologies	The World Bank (2024a)[35] estimates that Mauritius will require 10,000 technology specialists over the next two to three years to accelerate the modernization and digitalization of the economy. The country currently produces 1,000 technology specialists annually. This is a unique opportunity to have international students be part of a vibrant Digital Hub with opportunities for post study work permit, post studies in Mauritius.
Maritime Studies	As a small island nation spanning 2,000 square kilometres of land but an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) encompassing an area of approximately 2.3 million square kilometres, including a jointly managed area of around 400,000 square kilometres with Seychelles, Mauritius has an endemic and comparative advantage to launch marine courses. Courses launched should be of international standard in compliance with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for universal acceptance around the world.
Professional courses	Aligning local programmes with global standards uplifts the value and worth of local programmes. For example, the University of Mauritius Faculty of Engineering reviewed its engineering programmes in 2016 to align its offering with the Standards prescribed by the International Engineering Alliance and those of the ECSA, a member of the Washington Accord boosting the profile and credibility of its programmes. The Committee recommends that local institutions pursue collaborations with the ECSA and IEM to facilitate their accession into the Sydney Accord for engineering technology qualifications and the Dublin Accord for engineering technician qualifications respectively, as the ECSA is signatory to all three accords. This would provide the triple benefit of uplifting the status of TVET programmes nationally, garner international recognition for Mauritian TVET learners.

*The above list does not claim to be an exhaustive repository of all specialised TVET programmes.

[35]World Bank (2024a), op. cit., retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstreams/8dca4aff-e0f5-4865-b245-ec9c4583aa60/download

4.3 Strengthening TVET-Industry Partnership

Over the years, the debate on the mismatch of skills between labour demands and supply has been fierce but real solutions remain elusive. Following the State of the Economy[36] which now places strong emphasis on performance-based budgeting, the Government is prioritising efficiency, accountability and results-oriented spending. This strategic shift seeks to ensure that public investments are better aligned with measurable outcomes, particularly in critical sectors such as education and workforce development. In order to match workforce development initiatives with market demands, such investments ought to be focused on industries where employers experience well-documented labour shortages.

Moreover, these mechanisms must remain flexible to respond to the rapid pace of technological change and evolving skills requirements. Given the limitations of traditional public provision, innovative approaches to delivering TVET services are increasingly necessary to achieve meaningful and sustainable impact. The next section illustrates the National TVET Workforce Priorities Framework for Mauritius that will produce the National TVET Workforce Priorities.

4.3.1 Establishing a National TVET Workforce Priorities Framework

It is clear from Section 4.9 those employers want a sustainable fix to their lingering and unmet labour demands. There is a need to align TVET provision with economic planning instead of E&T institutions self-selecting the sectors and sub-sectors they deem to be of need and thereafter inviting industry to form part of Industry Advisory Councils for validation purposes. On the other hand, the influence of industry in course selection should be met with more accountability. Both stakeholders need to find more agile and flexible ways to come together. In certain sectors, the skills mismatch is more worrisome

[36] Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (2024), State of the Economy, retrieved from https://mof.govmu.org/Pages/readmorenews.aspx?n=State-of-the-Economy.aspx on 25 May 2025.

– for example, in the banking, Fintech, healthcare, hospitality and agribusiness sectors. Employers and employer associations expressed concern over the migration of workers to other countries and the perpetual need to retrain and reskill staff at a punitive cost. At the same time, school leavers argue that they are not properly counselled on the emerging sectors and in-demand jobs to make informed decisions on course selection and career choice. Interactions between secondary schools and industry remains low.
The Committee believes it is important to address the issue of labour demand more conclusively. There is both an overload and asymmetry in information regarding in-demand sectors and jobs for the economy. Published lists of priority areas[37] at the level of the HEC (latest publication on the HEC website was in 2021) or skills sector survey outputs of the HRDC serve as an indicator but are not timely and do not give granular-level data to inform decision making. Fields are too broad for specific actions to be initiated on their basis. They are also done on an ad-hoc basis rather than at regular set intervals, if at all just to refresh and curate the lists. Interestingly, the National Skills Development Strategy included a list of all HRDC's schemes and stipends but overall, stakeholders' express discontentment, a sub-optimal use of funds and minimal impact on the return on training investment.

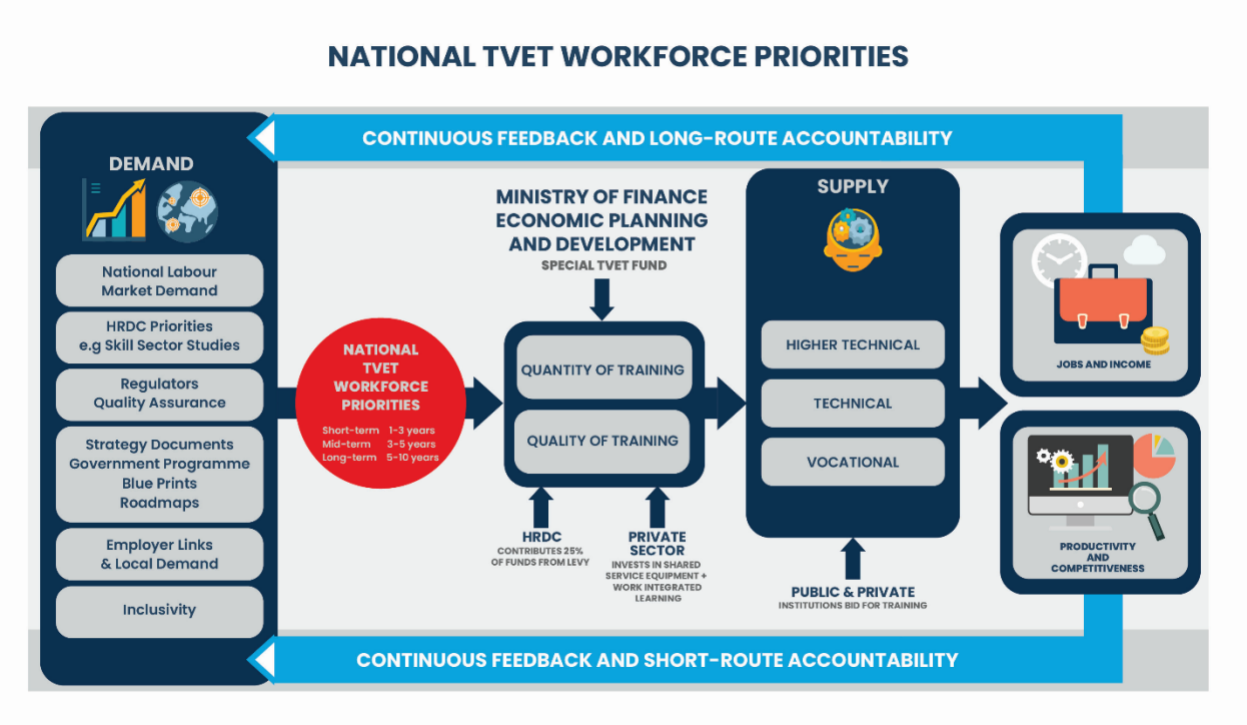
This spell out the need for a more agile framework that continually updates and tracks real time occupational standards and skillsets as and when they are needed in the short, medium and long term. The Committee is proposing a new framework: National TVET Workforce Priorities Framework based on a benchmark – the New Results Framework for TVET by the Millennium Challenge Corporation USA[38] (refer to the Figure 9) This framework has for objective to capture the macro requirements as spelt out in the strategy documents such as the Government Programme 2025 - 2029, Blueprints (for example A

[37] HEC (2021), List of Indicative Priority Fields of Study, retrieved from https://www.hec.mu/pdf_downloads/pub_rep_pdf/LIPFS_2021-2023%20_1102.pdf on 20 May 2025.

[38] MCC (2020), New Results Framework for TVET, retrieved from https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/issue-brief-principles-practice-tvet/#five-lessons-for-improved-tvet-programming on 25 May 2025.

Blueprint for Mauritius – Digital Transformation 2025-2029[39]), roadmaps and private sector inputs at the level of Business Mauritius or Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other statutory and research bodies (e.g. HEC, HRDC, etc.) through a high-level National Skills Taskforce. This data will then be used to produce a highly focused and agreed set of National TVET Workforce Priorities (NTWP) spelling training needs over the short term (1-3 years), medium term (3-5 years) and long term (5-10 years).

Figure 9: National TVET Workforce Priorities Framework



The National Skills Taskforce then issues a 'Call for Proposal' to deliver on the specific National TVET Workforce Priorities. We are recommending that the list of schemes at the level of the HRDC are to be reviewed and discontinued in their current format. A multilateral fund will be set up based on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

[39] MITCI (2025), A Blueprint for Mauritius – A Bridge to the Future, retrieved from https://mitci.govmu.org/Communique/Blueprint%20for%20Mauritius%202025.pdf on 30 May 2025.

We recommend that 25% of the levy funds be committed to the implementation of the NTWP and remaining financing come from two sources a. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development sets aside a “Special TVET Fund” and b. industry is to invest in a new shared service model for equipment financing along with payment of work-integrated learning stipends to learners. This addresses the concern of employer agencies in Section 4.9. TVET training institutions can be divided up into vocational, technical and higher technical to focus on training in their respective segments. The governance structure of the National Skills Taskforce will be chaired by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development who will bring together all social partners on a quarterly basis to prepare, update and review the National TVET Workforce Priorities. The intended effect is to streamline and re-balance the TVET priorities for the country and ensure that funding is optimally assorted among national priorities and institutions reducing duplication and wastage. For example, one NTWP could be on capacity building and upskilling for bunkering for the maritime sector.

4.3.2 Developing New Models of TVET-Industry Collaboration

In a world where practical, immersive work-integrated learning in industry is often described as the solution to reducing skills gaps and increasing work readiness, TVET plays a crucial role. The future economy is multi-tiered and needs new and innovative solutions, yet we are still creating hierarchies of schools and institutions at a time when these hierarchies are fast vanishing. There is an urgent need to modernise the work-study arrangements to make TVET more relevant to employers’ needs.

4.3.2.1 Learn and Earn

Around the world and in Mauritius, the school-work-retire model is growing increasingly defunct and today, we see work and learning blend into one. Drawing on some of the best practices around the world such as the SkillsFuture launched in 2016 in Singapore,[40] the ‘Learn and Earn’ model positions the learner in a dual setting – at work and at school.

[40] SkillsFuture (2016), retrieved from https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/initiatives/employers#initiatives on 29 May 2025.

The focus lies on skilling, re-skilling or up-skilling in line with the immediate needs of the employer while reversing the traditional structure of the person being based at an education institution and only being at the workplace during internships or traineeships.

This Committee recommends that the HRDC could introduce a new scheme on “Learn and Earn” by having the student present at school and at the workplace every day. For example, the student could work from 08 00 to 13 00 during the peak operational hours and then study from 13 30 to 16 30 every day. Consultation is needed to determine the most optimal spread of time between the educational institution and the workplace.

The Committee also recommends that the HRDC fund micro-credentials relevant for re-skilling and upskilling of employees in line with the National TVET Workforce Priorities (refer to Section 5.3.1). This will offer the dual benefit of promoting lifelong learning while increasing productivity at work in national areas of need.

4.3.2.2 Degree Apprenticeships

Mauritius is today in the midst of a talent crisis which is prompting a re-think at national level for more innovative and optimal ways to reduce the financial pressures on Government. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), government and the private sector can work together through apprenticeships to quickly, efficiently and adequately train and reskill workers to fill these gaps, while providing opportunities for intelligent but underutilised communities[41].

Apprenticeships in Mauritius have been primarily used for specific trades meant essentially for low paying manual jobs.[42] Bachelor Apprenticeships are not new around the world[43] but have as yet not been introduced in Mauritius. In Section 5.1.1, the

[41] World Economic Forum (2019), The future of work requires a return to apprenticeships, retrieved from: https://www.weforum.org/stories/2019/12/apprenticeships-future-work-4ir-training-reskilling/ on 30 May 2025.
[42]What is an apprenticeship? – London South Bank University, retrieved from https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/study/apprenticeships/what-is-an-apprenticeship
[43] Degree Apprenticeships exist already in France, Germany (nearly 5% of total HE enrolment), Switzerland, and the UK, among others. – retrieved from https://workshift.org/germany-jumps-on-degree-apprenticeships/

Committee has recommended for the introduction of Bachelor Apprenticeship in the education ecosystem as part of the new Pathways. As employer needs become more sophisticated and require higher order skills, bachelor apprenticeships could provide an optimal solution to the skills mismatch. This model grants employer immediate access to learners in a bachelor programme rather than having to wait for an internship or completion of the academic qualification.

This Committee recommends that a national guideline for Degree Apprenticeships be developed with a cost sharing agreement between employer and Government. Currently, Government pays first time entrants into TVET and undergraduate programmes at public institutions their full tuition fees through the Free Tertiary Education Scheme. The Degree Apprenticeship, in effect, would reduce the financial burden on Government while benefitting the employer directly with an extra pair of hands to put to use at work immediately. The work-study arrangements would have to be specified in the guideline. In the U.K, the degree apprenticeship is fully funded by industry.

4.4 Enhancing TVET Delivery and Value Perception

Enhancing TVET delivery and raising public perception of TVET is crucial for addressing skills gaps, improving employability and promoting economic growth. This can be achieved in many ways: aligning curriculum between TVET and higher education, expanding work-integrated learning, enhancing the quality of TVET trainers, promoting greater gender inclusion and branding new and future TVET through success stories. By aligning TVET with HE and industry needs and actively reshaping public perception through targeted campaigns, TVET can become a preferred pathways for skills development and career success.

4.4.1 Curriculum Alignment between TVET and Higher Education

The collaborative efforts between TVET institutions and Universities have revealed a fundamental difference in their priorities. Whereas TVET institutions prioritise competency-based models that focus on industry partnerships for immediate employment

outcomes, Universities still focus on theoretical knowledge and academic learning taking place mainly in classroom or online. This difference necessitates a nuanced approach to curriculum development and articulation strategies if the goals of both sectors are to be accommodated.

The Committee recommends three distinct articulation methodologies, based on a World Bank Working Paper that studied articulation agreements across 12 African countries[44]. First, regulatory articulation will be based on legislation, policies and various other official elements linked to and supportive of learning and work pathways. In Section 5.1.2, the Committee recommended regulating pathways through an Articulation and Pathway Policy. This is a direct example of regulatory articulation.

Second, institutional articulation that involves the structuring or aligning of qualifications to enable progression in practice through mechanisms such as formal memoranda of understanding (MoUs) or memoranda of agreement (MoAs). This is already taking place at the institutional levels in Mauritius.

Finally, a third type should be considered as transitional articulation, involving individual learning pathways as they progress and as they are supported in their learning and workplaces. This involves eliminating the barriers that individuals encounter as they move between the different elements of learning pathways, and providing the support needed for that transition. The support can be in the form of career development advice, mentoring and coaching in the workplace.

The Committee also recommends that all TVET programmes at levels 5 and 6 of the National Qualifications Framework should include mandatory modules on “research

[44] Ng’ethe, Subotzky and Afeti (2008), Differentiation and articulation in tertiary education systems: a study of twelve African countries (World Bank Working Paper No. 145).

methodology" and "academic writing" so that learners are prepared for the university ecosystem (refer to section 4.8). Box 3 below demonstrates an articulation agreement signed between Cape Peninsula University of Technology and five Further Education Training (FET) in South Africa. The agreement is very comprehensive and includes capacity building, career guidance, direct articulation, as suggested by institutional and transitional articulation of our articulation framework.

Box 3: Articulation in South Africa education and training

BOX 3: Articulation in South Africa education and training

In South Africa, the Cape Peninsula University of technology (CPUT) has signed agreements with five FET colleges in the region. The areas of collaboration include:

- Direct articulation for college students to access programmes at CPUT;
- Bridging programmes;
- Upgrading of lecturer qualifications;
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for the FET college sector;
- Partnerships aimed at improved retention and throughput rates at the South Africa NQF level 5;
- Curriculum analysis and development; and,
- Career guidance (HESA 2012).

Once students completed at FET colleges and achieve successfully, they are accepted into various Engineering programmes offered at CPUT.

In line with articulation process, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) has mapped college learning programmes against cognate qualifications in vocational fields of study such as Engineering, ICT, Finance and Accounting, Management, Marketing and Tourism so as to allow smooth pathways between the colleges and university.

The Department of Higher Education and Training is planning to work with SAQA and the three quality councils to develop an enabling environment for a well- articulated Post-School Education & Training system. This includes the revision of the policy environment, work with institutions to ensure that programmes have clear articulation pathways, and that the public is informed of articulation pathways and options. The Authority will also work together to ensure that qualifications have built-in articulation possibilities and are communicated to the public.

Source: Blom R., (2013) Articulation in the South African Education and Training System. Doi: 10.13140/RG.2.2.21748.14720

4.4.2 Promoting Inclusivity

To develop inclusive frameworks and policies, systemic barriers must be addressed through the alignment of national regulations with international standards like the CRPD and ILO recommendations. This includes instituting quotas for seats and scholarships for people with disabilities, setting inclusivity benchmarks through the MQA, and allocating budgets based on the achievement of these benchmarks. Additionally, establishing a comprehensive database of disability-friendly TVET programmes will help ensure that training is matched to the capabilities and employability needs of persons with disabilities. It is essential to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all learners, particularly those with disabilities and from vulnerable groups. Guided by international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)[45] and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4.5),[46] Mauritius recognizes the need to move beyond general education policies and prepare a policy on inclusion in TVET.

The adoption of inclusive pedagogies is another crucial pillar. This involves promoting mother-tongue instruction, such as Kreol Repiblik Moris, to remove language barriers, and shifting curriculum design towards a UDL model that anticipates diverse learning needs from the outset. Curricula should be regularly reviewed to integrate inclusive elements, such as materials in Braille and the use of sign language, and training should move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to individualised learning plans. TVET institutions should be equipped with assistive technologies and at least one fully inclusive TVET centre should be established in each district or educational zone. Furthermore, curriculum alignment between TVET and higher education institutions is necessary to facilitate seamless transitions for learners with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

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[45] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd

[46] Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4.5): https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4

Creating support systems is vital for sustaining inclusivity in TVET. This includes comprehensive capacity-building for teaching staff on inclusive content delivery and assessment, as well as the establishment of strong career guidance mechanisms to help learners select suitable pathways. Mentorship, counselling, and tutoring services should be available to support learners academically and emotionally, particularly those with disabilities or from vulnerable backgrounds. Partnerships with NGOs, agencies, and industries are essential to support job placement and long-term employment outcomes for these groups.

The Committee recommends developing a *National Policy on Inclusion for the TVET sector*. This policy should be anchored on four key pillars: development of inclusive frameworks and policies, improvement of accessibility to TVET institutions, adoption of inclusive pedagogies, and creation of robust support systems. The policy should include targeted teacher training, establishment of disability support units, implementation of inclusive policies, and ongoing collaboration among stakeholders. Addressing societal attitudes and integrating students with disabilities into mainstream TVET, rather than segregating them, are also critical steps toward achieving true equity and inclusivity.

4.4.3 Branding Initiatives for New and Future TVET

There has been much progress in competency-based frameworks and innovations in TVET delivery over the years. Yet, the image persists of TVET being of low-quality, worn-out equipment and facilities and obsolete traditional pedagogies when compared to higher education. There is also confusion because TVET traditionally targets students with lower entrance criteria than higher education. As discussed in Section 4.3, stakeholders have made a strong argument for the need to differentiate between non-elitist and low quality. To attract students, employers and policy makers, TVET needs a powerful rebranding that positions it as a dynamic, future-proof and distinctive pathway and choice. For example, as explained in Section 2.1, the articulation rate post basic schooling in Germany, Malaysia, Singapore and Switzerland, among others, is more than 65% of

students preferentially opting for TVET. TVET is seen as rigorous, fit-for-purpose and robust in terms of standards.

The Committee firmly espouses the belief that incremental progress will only have the psychological effect of a plus-model in the mindsets of people, which is insufficient and will fail. The only viable route is to completely overhaul the image. For any probability of success, there is a need to reframe the narrative completely from TVET as "Last Resort" to TVET as the "Smart Choice".

The Committee, bearing in mind that financing is scarce, recommends a carefully designed and implemented new branding campaign aimed at showcasing the new face of TVET. First, the campaign needs to highlight Success Stories of TVET students across many areas demonstrating their "faster" progression in the world of work, evidence of its rigour, direct employment focus and career progression outcome. Care should be exercised to use youth-attuned channels, such as social media and use of influencers. The messaging has to be tailored to different audiences, for example students would be attracted by "Start you career faster with hands-on skills", whereas parents would be more interested in "A secure future for your child with in-demand and new emerging jobs". For example, SkillsFuture Singapore has attracted 31% more intake into TVET in 2021 from 2020 through a targeted branding campaign[47].

Second, there is need to showcase modern and hi-tech buildings and "simulation design labs" with latest industry-certified equipment for practical workshops. Stakeholders were of the opinion that Polytechnics has succeeded in reframing the narrative through its new and fully equipped campuses (refer to Section 4.3). Third, TVET features mandatory work-integrated learning through internships, traineeships and project level work directly with Industry which can portray a first step in the door of employment. All these bear

[47] SkillsFuture Singapore, https://www.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/content/portal/en/index.html

evidence of the unique practical and applied preparation students go through to be job ready and career ready, unlike universities.

Third, there is a need to highlight the higher placement rate of TVET students into industry following graduation[48]. The placement rate is significantly higher when compared to higher education.

Fourth, there is an unprecedented opportunity to reframe the narrative on Future TVET during a branding campaign by focusing on new emerging areas of the economy. For example, “Green TVET” including renewable energy, electric and hybrid vehicles, climate change, sustainable tourism, and “Blue TVET” including sustainable fishing, aquaculture, marine ecology, bunkering, etc.

[48] EU (2024), Employment rates of recent graduates, retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Employment_rates_of_recent_graduates on 28 May 2025. While this example refers to the EU, it does mention that this is a global trend.

5 Conclusion

TVET in Mauritius is in the midst of a major rethink. While it may have served its purpose of empowering the workforce with the necessary skills to support the economic transition of Mauritius from an agrarian economy to a manufacturing and more recently a service economy, the TVET sector continues to suffer from governance issues in its connections with other education institutions and the industry. These in turn negatively impact the delivery of TVET and its value perception, carrying the legacy of a second-rate education mainly aimed for the less academically able. This makes Mauritius particularly vulnerable when it comes to effectively equipping its emerging workforce with the necessary skills and mindset to prepare for the upcoming digital revolution and the future of work in the new economy.

This Report aims to address the urgent need to strengthen the TVET sector in Mauritius in line with the Government Programme 2025-2029 to review TVET Advancement and Pathways. By using a mixed methods approach that includes a review of local and international publications on TVET, analysis of data collected from structured questionnaires sent to relevant TVET institutions and training institutions registered with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA), focus groups with various TVET stakeholders and interviews with TVET experts, this Report identifies ten specific yet intertwined issues that hinder the potential transformative impact of TVET in Mauritius. The issues relate to 1) learning gaps and deficiencies in basic education, 2) definitional issues around TVET, 3) lower social status of TVET, 4) challenges in the regulatory framework, 5) lack of quality assurance framework, 6) fragmented pathways for learners, 7) inconsistency in career guidance services, 8) minimal internationalisation of TVET, 9) curricular misalignment between TVET and HE, 10) skills mismatch and 11) lack of inclusivity in TVET.

Based on a thorough analysis of the above ten issues, this Report proposes eleven recommendations that aim to enhance TVET governance and delivery from a holistic

perspective, grouped under four distinct thematic areas. The first theme is reforming the TVET governance framework to promote a Lifelong Learning Strategy through the revision of the National Qualifications Framework and Quality Assurance Mechanism, the mapping of effective Pathways for all learners in practice and the setting up of a 'Chambres de Métiers' to address youth underemployment. The second thematic area relates to the internationalisation of TVET by prioritising the Africa Strategy and positioning Mauritius as a Regional TVET Hub and also promoting specialised TVET programmes. The third theme addresses the strengthening of TVET-industry partnership by establishing a National TVET Workforce Priorities Framework and also developing new models of TVET-Industry collaboration such as 'Learn and Earn' and 'Degree Apprenticeships'. Finally, the fourth recommended theme is the enhancement of TVET delivery and value perception through curriculum alignment between TVET and HE, the promotion of inclusivity across the TVET sector and the branding of new and future TVET in line with the new and emerging sectors of the economy.

Last but not least, it is important to emphasize that although the recommendations proposed target specific aspects in the TVET sector, the transformative impact of TVET through skills pathways and delivery can only be fully realised if the collaborative framework underpinning basic education-TVET-HE-industry is strengthened and formalised into a holistic education ecosystem.

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference, National Committee on TVET Advancement and Pathways

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a critical pillar in Mauritius' journey towards fostering inclusive, sustainable, and future-ready education systems. Recognising the need to bridge the gap between vocational and higher education, the Government is committed to establishing seamless pathways that empower learners and equip them with the skills and knowledge required to thrive in an ever-evolving labour market. This initiative will not only address skills mismatches but also create opportunities for lifelong learning, ensuring that our education system remains inclusive, adaptable, and responsive to national and global economic needs.

By formalising articulation agreements between TVET institutions and higher education providers, implementing robust credit transfer mechanisms, and introducing bridging programmes, this initiative will enable a smooth transition for students, fostering greater access and participation in higher education. Recognising prior vocational training as a legitimate foundation for academic advancement will ensure inclusivity and strengthen the link between education and the workforce.

Simultaneously, efforts to advance technical education will focus on expanding specialised programmes in critical sectors such as Health Sciences, Information Technology, Tourism, Engineering, and Business. By investing in state-of-the-art facilities and aligning curricula with industry standards, Mauritius will produce workforce-ready graduates equipped with the practical and technical skills demanded by employers.

This initiative is underpinned by a vision to integrate technical education and industry collaboration seamlessly, creating a dynamic ecosystem that fosters innovation, drives economic growth, and enhances employment opportunities. Strengthened partnerships between academia and industry will ensure that education remains aligned with labour

market trends, while quality assurance frameworks and performance indicators will maintain the highest standards in technical and vocational education.

By positioning Mauritius as a leader in technical education, this integrated approach will address pressing societal and economic challenges, enhance workforce development, and propel the nation towards greater global competitiveness. This initiative reaffirms Mauritius's commitment to empowering its citizens, driving economic progress, and building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready education system.

Aim

The National Committee for Pathways and Technical Education Advancement aims to transform Mauritius into a leader in technical and vocational education by creating seamless pathways from TVET to higher education and fostering industry collaboration. By aligning technical education with labour market needs, promoting inclusivity and lifelong learning, and driving innovation, the Committee seeks to equip local and international students with workforce-ready skills and stimulate economic growth.

Members of the Committee

Members of the Committee will include Specialists in TVET integration and pathways from renowned global institutions, representatives from international organisations focused on vocational and technical education, and Professionals from accreditation agencies. An expert in TVET and higher education policy; representatives from the Ministry of Labour; representatives from the Human Resource Development Council; Heads of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions; and representatives from key industries.

Objectives

1. Create Seamless Pathways for TVET to Higher Education by facilitating the integration of TVET into higher education through streamlined articulation agreements and credit transfer mechanisms.
2. Develop strategies to attract students from overseas to join local TVET institutions.

3. Foster Lifelong Learning and Inclusivity by recognising prior vocational training to promote lifelong learning, address skills mismatches, and create a more inclusive and responsive education system aligned with economic demands.
4. Expand Specialised Technical Education Programmes by supporting technical and vocational education institutions in developing specialised programmes in critical sectors such as Health Sciences, Information Technology, Tourism, Engineering, and Business.
5. Enhance Industry Readiness and Workforce Development by equipping students with practical, workforce-ready skills through state-of-the-art facilities and industry-aligned curricula, meeting the needs of a dynamic labour market.
6. Drive Innovation, Economic Growth, and Employment by using technical education as a catalyst to strengthen the labour market, stimulate economic growth, and create sustainable employment opportunities.

Comprehensive Terms of Reference

1. Develop Seamless Pathways from TVET to Higher Education
2. Design and formalise articulation agreements between TVET institutions and higher education providers.
3. Establish a robust credit transfer mechanism that recognises prior vocational training and ensures smooth transitions for students.
4. Create bridging programmes to align vocational skills with academic prerequisites, ensuring students are adequately prepared for higher education.
5. Develop a strategy to attract students from overseas.
6. Strengthen Lifelong Learning and Inclusivity
7. Implement policies that recognise and value prior learning to encourage participation in lifelong learning.
8. Address barriers to access by developing inclusive education frameworks that cater to diverse student needs.
9. Advise on the ways to expand and modernise Technical Education.

10. Support technical and vocational education institutions in offering specialised programmes tailored to critical sectors.
11. Advise on the strategies to upgrade facilities, including laboratories, workshops, and technology-enabled classrooms, to reflect industry standards.
12. Align technical education curricula with evolving industry requirements, ensuring relevance and competitiveness.
13. Promote Industry Collaboration
14. Develop partnerships between TVET institutions, higher education providers, and industry stakeholders to co-create programmes.
15. Facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities to bridge education with real-world applications.
16. Design strategies to enhance Workforce Readiness.
17. Advise on equipping students with practical, technical, and soft skills that align with labour market needs.
18. Establish mechanisms to regularly assess and adapt technical education programmes based on workforce demand trends.
19. Ensure Quality Assurance
20. Implement quality assurance frameworks to maintain high standards in technical and vocational education programmes.
21. Develop performance indicators to evaluate the success of pathways from TVET to higher education.
22. Drive Innovation and Economic Growth
23. Foster innovation in technical education by integrating emerging technologies and entrepreneurship components into programmes.
24. Establish Centres of Excellence in key sectors to serve as hubs for specialised training and research.
25. Devise mechanisms to collect the feedback of the TVET students on curriculum effectiveness, transition challenges and employment readiness, as well as to allow them to act as ambassadors can provide insight.
26. Lay emphasis on the integration of digital skills in all areas of TVET programs.

27. Explore partnerships with tech firms/institutions that can help facilitate training and upgrade infrastructure.
28. Establish and sustain entrepreneurship programs, such as startup incubators or innovation hubs, especially in TVET institutions.
29. Empower the accessibility aspect, providing equal chance for TVET, for those disadvantaged people or those with disabilities. This may include targeted outreach programs and adaptive learning technologies.
30. Incorporate sustainability and green practices into the curriculum of TVET programs, specifically within fields such as tourism and engineering, to equip students for the future green economy.
31. Monitor and Report Progress
32. Develop a monitoring and evaluation system to assess the implementation of seamless pathways and the advancement of technical education.
33. Submit periodic reports to the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, and Research, highlighting progress, challenges, and recommendations.

Time Plan:

1. Phase 1: Committee Formation: February 2025
2. Phase 2: Development of the Pathways and Policies: March – April 2025
3. Phase 3: Present the findings at the Higher Education Summit in May 2025.

Annex 2: Full TVET Survey Report 2025

Executive Summary

This TVET Graduate Survey captures the perspectives of 161 recent graduates from key Mauritian vocational institutions, primarily Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd (PML), the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD), Academy of Design and Innovation (ADI), and others. The report provides evidence-based insights into their academic trajectories, career transitions, and perceived strengths and limitations of their training.

Key Findings

Gender

The survey achieved a fairly balanced gender representation, with **45.34% (73) female** and **54.66% male** (88) respondents, ensuring that the findings reflect diverse perspectives on TVET across both genders

Institutional Distribution and Field Concentration

76.25% of respondents were from PML, followed by MITD (18.13%) and ADI (2.15%). The most represented fields of study were Nursing & Allied Health (29.81%) and Hospitality and Tourism (24.22%), with emerging interest in Engineering (16.77%), IT (6.83%), and Logistics (4.97%).

Transition to Higher Education

Only 31.68% of respondents pursued or were pursuing higher education. The main barriers included time and work commitments (27.10%), financial constraints (23.70%), and a lack of suitable top-up programs or intake availability (17.80%). This highlights systemic gaps in academic progression, particularly in Logistics and Hospitality.

Motivators and Challenges

Career advancement was cited by 90.1% as the primary motivation for further studies, followed by personal interest (50.6%) and employer encouragement (19.8%). However, 54.78% of those transitioning did so without institutional support, underscoring a reactive rather than proactive guidance framework.

Employment Outcomes and Employer Perceptions

Only 81.13% are employed in a field directly related to their qualifications. Healthcare roles were the most aligned sector (34.8%). Meanwhile, 29.3% of respondents believe employers value university qualifications more than TVET credentials, indicating an image and awareness gap.

Strengths of TVET Training

Respondents highlighted time management & discipline (18.46%), practical/hands-on experience (16.92%), and soft skills like communication and time management (12.31%) as key benefits. These attributes helped many adapt to higher education and employment.

Limitations of TVET Training

Noted limitations included insufficient academic writing and research preparation (20%), weak theoretical foundations in some areas (13.8%), and time constraints/workload challenges (10.8%). Administrative and curriculum-related challenges (3.1%) also emerged as barriers.

Pathway Clarity and Complementarity

64.81% felt there was a clear pathway to university, and 75.47% believed combining TVET and university education results in more well-rounded expertise. Most (77.78%) pursuing higher education felt it positively impacted their career aspirations.

Qualitative Insights

Strengths: Practical application, soft skills, and industry-linked internships were frequently cited as beneficial to both employment and further education readiness.

Limitations: Gaps in academic writing, theoretical depth, and structured guidance affected university transitions. The unavailability of progression programs further limited advancement.

Advice from Peers: Graduates encouraged future TVET learners to be proactive, plan careers strategically, and develop resilience.

Critical Evaluation

Strengths: Robust response rates and rich qualitative feedback provided multidimensional perspectives across fields and institutions.

Limitations: A dominant representation from PML and the health/hospitality sectors may affect generalisability. Inconsistent response completeness and ambiguous questions reduced some data reliability.

Recommendations

Develop More Top-Up Programs: Particularly in Logistics, Hospitality, and IT, to address the needs of 17.80% of respondents citing lack of progression options.

Integrate Academic Preparation: Introduce academic writing and research modules to bridge the university readiness gap.

Offer Financial Flexibility: Scholarships, installment plans, and subsidies can mitigate financial barriers for the 23.70% affected.

Expand Career and Academic Guidance: Formal mentorship, counseling, and alumni engagement should be institutionalised.

Enhance Employer Engagement: Promote the practical value of TVET credentials and partner with industry to improve job alignment.

Promote Flexible Learning Options: Evening, part-time, and online modalities can accommodate the needs of working learners.

Conclusion

TVET programs in Mauritius, especially at institutions like PML and MITD, have proven effective in cultivating practical skills, work ethic, and adaptability. However, persistent gaps in academic support, progression pathways, and societal perceptions must be addressed to ensure TVET serves as a robust, upwardly mobile educational and career trajectory. Strengthening institutional transitions, financial accessibility, and employer engagement will be key to unlocking the full value of TVET for learners and the national economy.

Introduction

In a global economy increasingly driven by skills and adaptability, TVET systems have emerged as crucial enablers of workforce readiness and economic resilience. Mauritius, aspiring to become a knowledge-based economy, has positioned institutions such as Polytechnics Mauritius (PML) and MITD at the forefront of this transformation. These institutions aim to bridge the gap between formal education and labour market needs by equipping learners with technical competencies and soft skills.

Despite their critical role, TVET pathways remain undervalued compared to traditional academic routes. This survey was designed to explore how TVET graduates navigate further education and employment, and to gather their perceptions on the effectiveness of their training in real-world settings.

Methodology & Data Collection

Data was collected via an online survey distributed among recent TVET graduates. The survey was structured to capture both quantitative data (e.g., employment status, further studies) and qualitative perceptions (e.g., comparative value of education models). A total of **161** valid responses were recorded out of 1000 survey questionnaires sent.

Analytical Approach

Data Preparation: Responses were cleaned for consistency and completeness.

Descriptive Analysis: Frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations provided a foundational understanding.

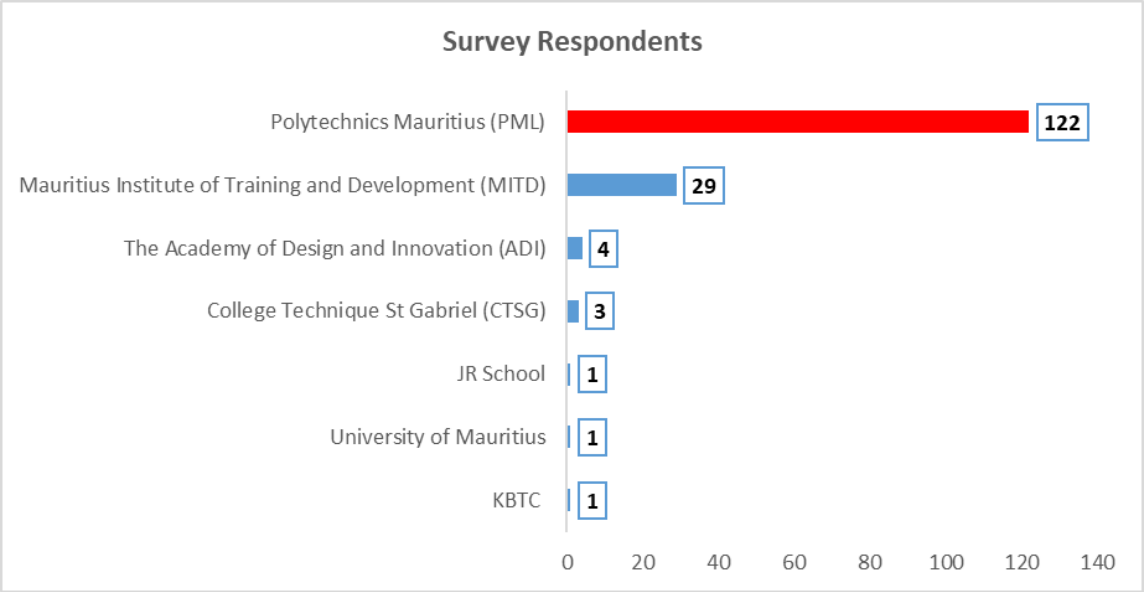
Thematic Interpretation: Open-ended responses were thematically analysed to extract qualitative insights.

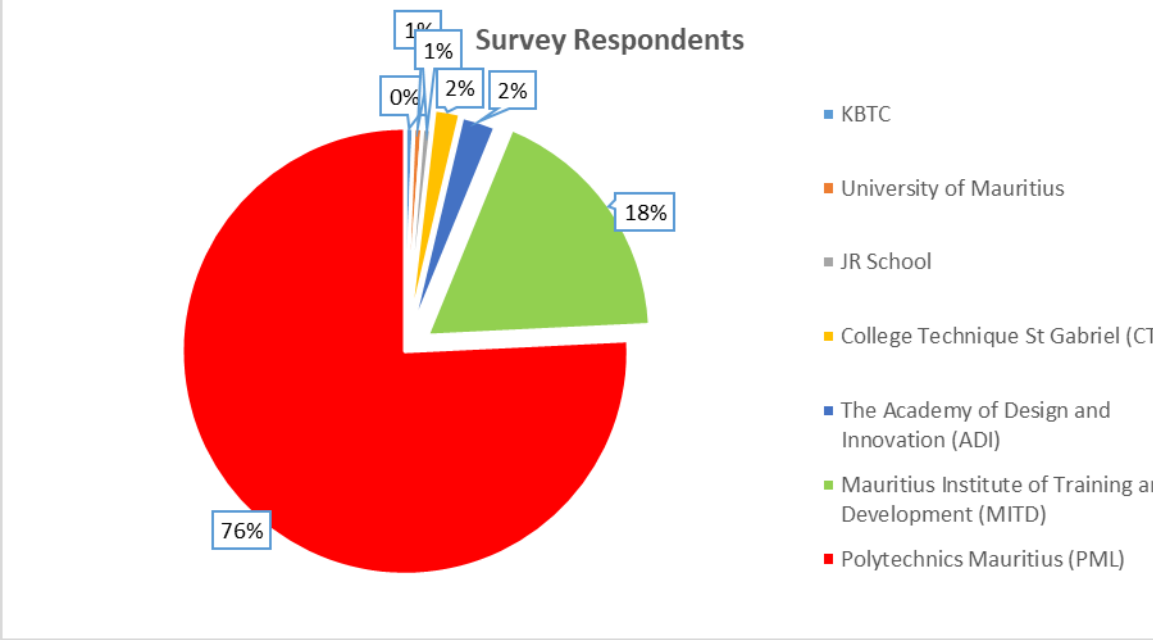
Comparative Review: Differences across institutions, years of graduation, and fields of study were examined.

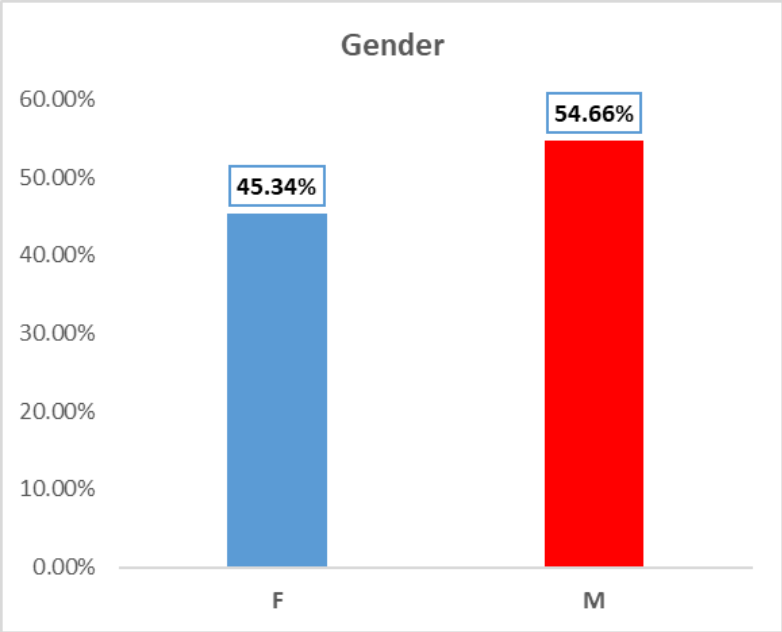
Respondent Profile

Institutional Background

The overwhelming majority **(76.25%)** of respondents were from Polytechnics Mauritius, demonstrating its scale and recent graduate output. MITD accounted for **18.13%,** and other institutions like ADI (**2.15%**), and CTSG **(1.88%)**, JR School, University of Mauritius **(0.63%) a**nd KBTC each representing marginal participation **(0.63%)**. This distribution also reflects the maturity of these institutions and their focus areas.







Out of a total of **161** individuals, **73** were female **(45.34%)** and **88** were male **(54.66%)**. This balanced participation ensures that the survey findings capture perspectives from both genders fairly and supports the formulation of gender-responsive recommendations in relation to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Mauritius.

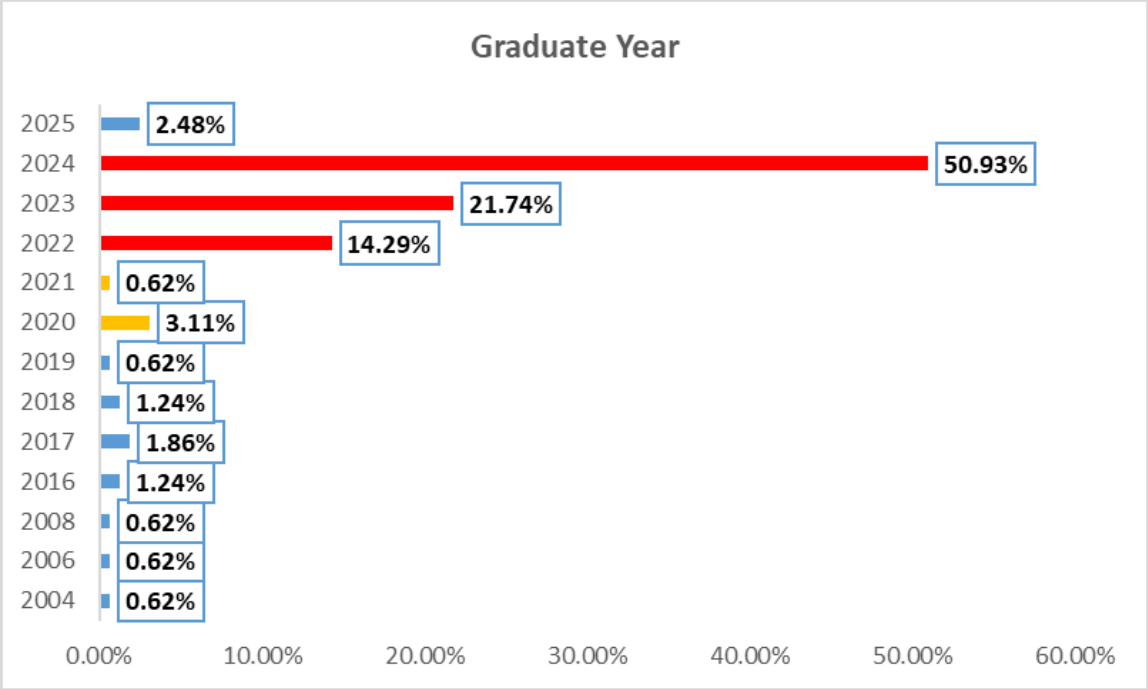
Graduation Trends - Temporal Patterns

Interestingly, the combined 2022–2023 cohorts showed a lower pursuit rate **(36.02%)** compared to **50.93%** among the 2024 graduates. This may indicate either a recent rise in incentives for transitioning to higher education or a shift in perceptions regarding the return on investment (ROI) of further studies.

Survey includes recent graduates (2022–2024) constituting the bulk of respondents **(86.96%),** indicating fresh perspectives on post-TVET experiences. The small number of older graduates (pre-2020) offers a comparative baseline, though the sample is insufficient to generalise long-term trends.

Year	%
2004	0.62%
2006	0.62%

2008	0.62%
2016	1.24%
2017	1.86%
2018	1.24%
2019	0.62%
2020	3.11%
2021	0.62%
2022	14.29%
2023	21.74%
2024	50.93%
2025	2.48%

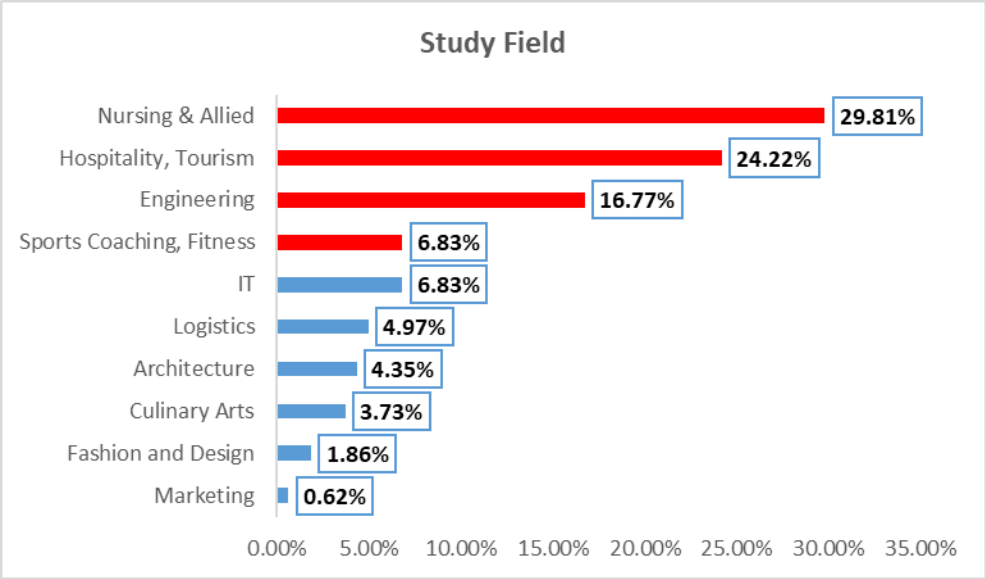


Field of Study Distribution

The survey respondents represented a diverse range of study fields within the TVET system. The majority came from Nursing & Allied Health **(29.81%)** and Hospitality and Tourism **(24.22%),** reflecting strong enrollment in health and service-oriented programs.

Other notable fields included Engineering **(16.77%)** Sports Coaching and and IT (each at **6.83%)** and followed by Logistics **(each at 4.97%),**

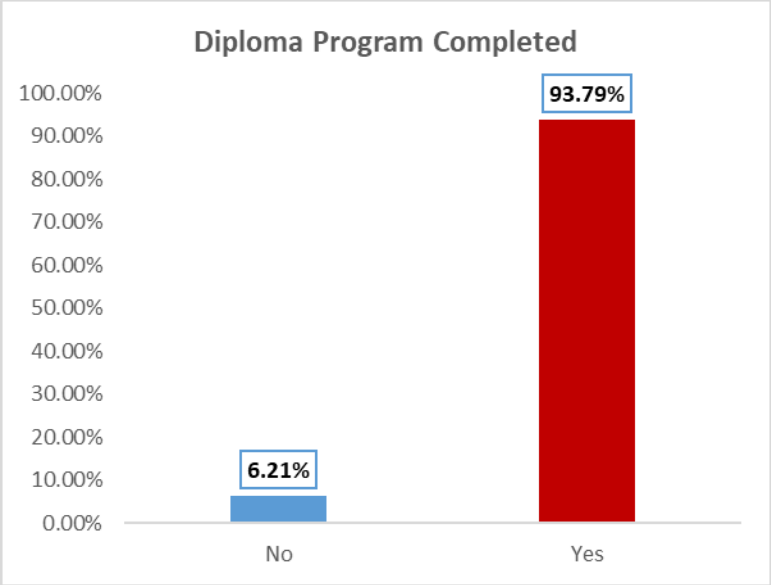
Less represented disciplines included Architecture **(4.35%)** Culinary Arts **(3.73%)**, Fashion & Design **(1.86%)** and Marketing/HRM **(0.62%).** This distribution highlights a concentration in healthcare and tourism, with emerging interest in technical and creative sectors.



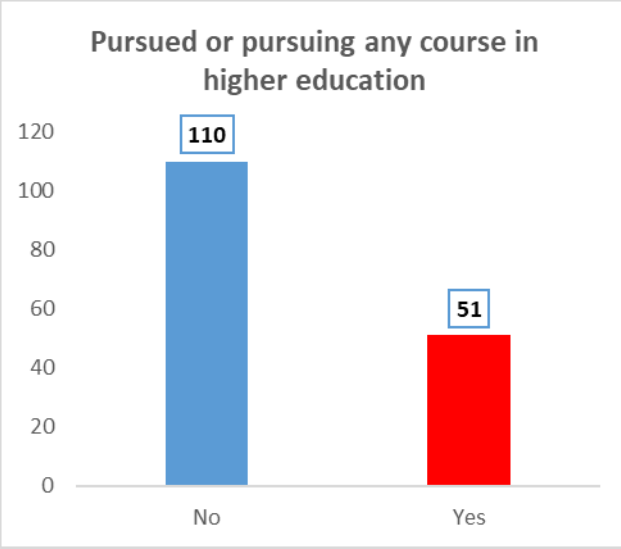
Higher Education Pursuit

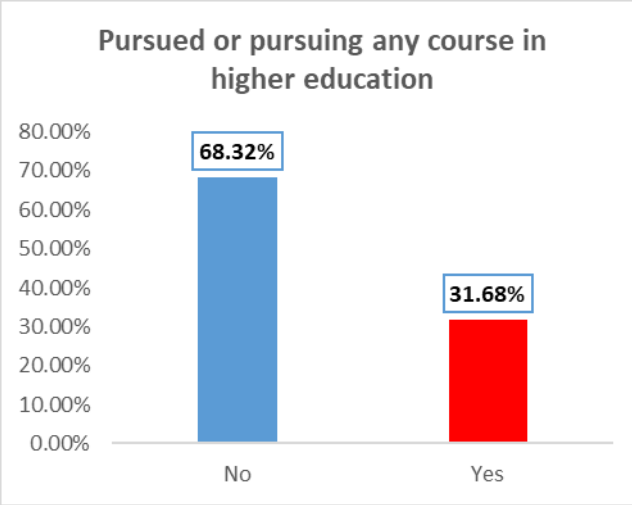
General Trends

Out of the **161 respondents 93.79%** ***(142 out of 151)*** completed their diploma programme



Only **31.68%** ***(51 out of 161)*** pursued or were pursuing higher education. This moderate uptake indicates that while TVET serves as a viable endpoint for many, there remains an aspirational drive among a substantial minority to attain further qualifications.





Institutional Variation

Significant disparities in progression rates reveal underlying institutional dynamics of the **31.68%** pursuing higher education:

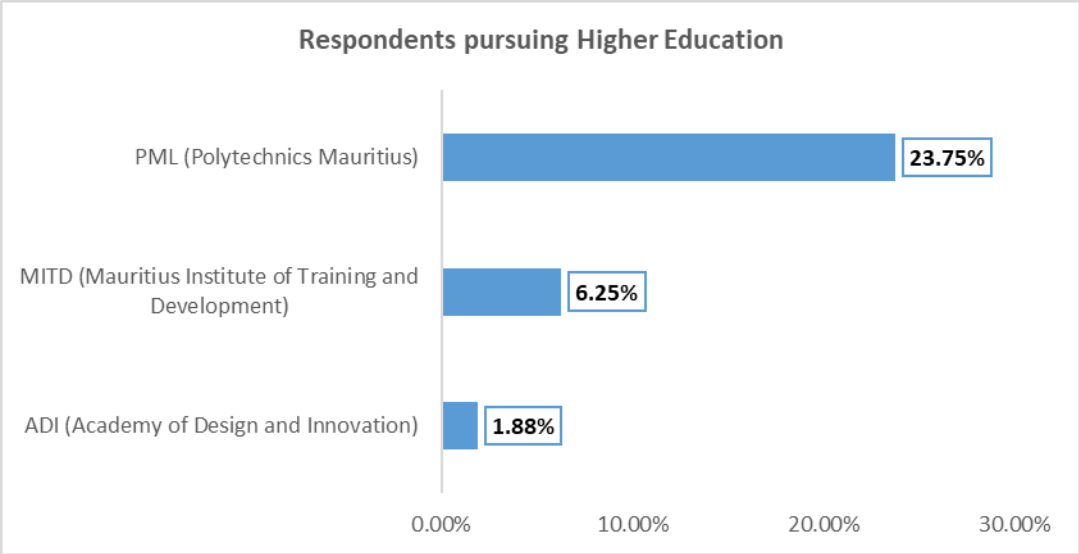
Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD)	Polytechnics Mauritius (PML)	The Academy of Design and Innovation (ADI)
10	**38**	**3**

ADI: **1.88 %** transition, albeit with 3 respondents.

MITD: Higher education pursuit at **6.25 %,** reflecting perhaps stronger articulation agreements or program design conducive to further study.

PML: **23.75%,** possibly indicating its strong vocational orientation.

Other institutions: 0% (insufficient data to infer trends).



This raises important questions about how institutional culture and guidance affect post-TVET educational decisions.

Transition to Higher Education

The responses to the question “What motivated you to pursue higher education?” reveal that the dominant motivation among participants is the pursuit of career advancement opportunities.

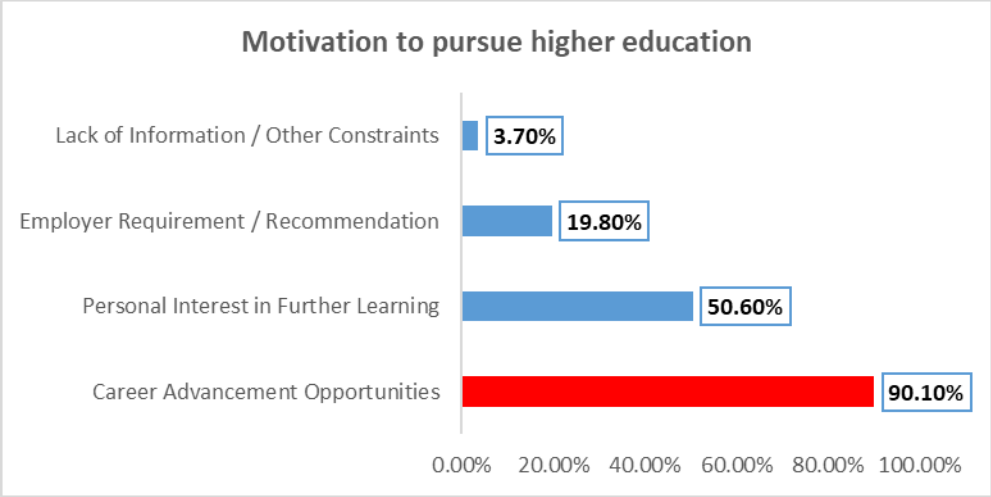
This reason appeared in almost every response, underscoring the perception of higher education as a key driver for professional growth and better employment prospects. A significant number of respondents also indicated a personal interest in further learning,

reflecting intrinsic motivation and a genuine desire to expand knowledge and skills. While less common, some responses also included employer requirements or recommendations as a factor, suggesting that workplace expectations or support also influence the decision to pursue further studies.

The table below presents a summary of the frequency of each motivation mentioned:

Motivation Category	Frequency	%
Career Advancement Opportunities	73	90.1%
Personal Interest in Further Learning	41	50.6%
Employer Requirement / Recommendation	16	19.8%
Lack of Information / Other Constraints	3	3.7%

N= 81 out 161 Valid responses



Overall, the analysis shows that while career development remains the strongest motivator, a notable portion of learners also value education for personal growth and respond to workplace-driven incentives.

Career Advancement Opportunities clearly dominates as the primary motivator, aligning with the practical and career-focused nature of many TVET programs.

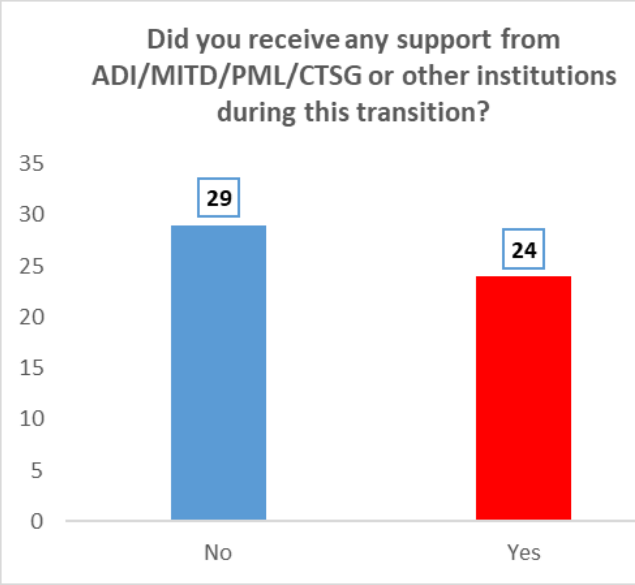
Personal interest in further learning is also a significant motivating factor, highlighting a strong demand for lifelong learning among respondents.

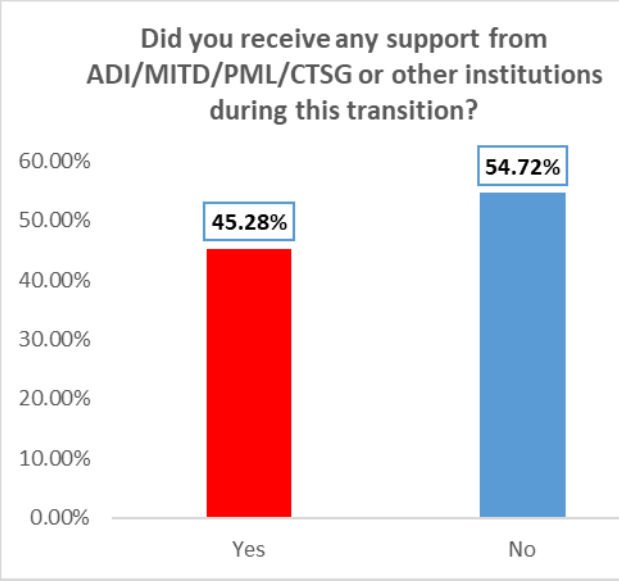
Employer requirement or recommendation reflects the influence of professional expectations and workplace demands on individuals' decisions to pursue higher education.

Lack of information or other constraints, although less frequently reported, still represent important barriers that may hinder access to or progression in higher education..

Support Structures

More than half (54.78%) of those transitioning to higher education did so without institutional support. This suggests a reactive rather than proactive approach to progression planning within many TVET institutions. Strengthening these support systems could significantly improve educational continuity.





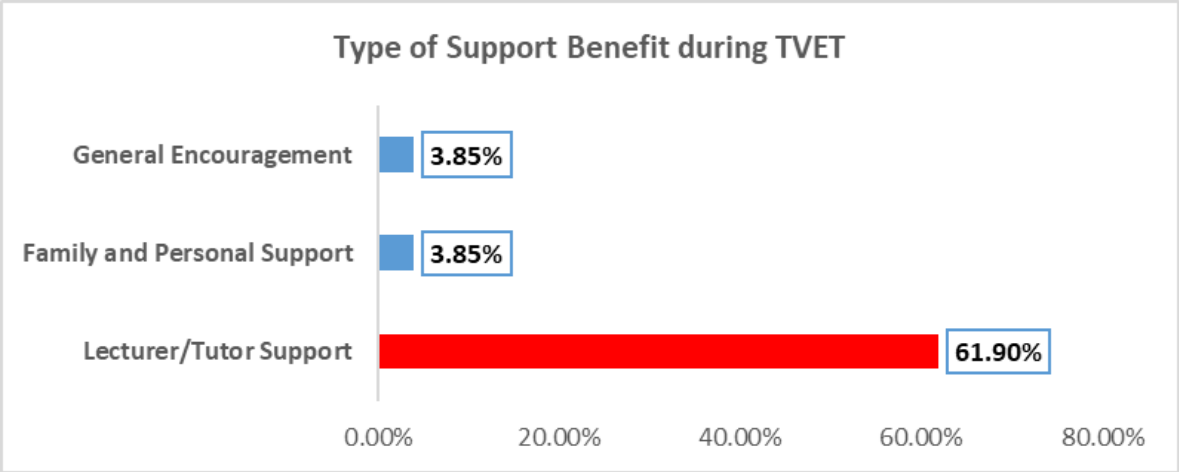
Nature of Support received

A total of 21 individuals responded to the question regarding the nature of the support they received. The responses indicate that support came in multiple forms, ranging from academic guidance and emotional encouragement to financial assistance and family involvement.

A significant number of respondents highlighted the positive role of lecturers at Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd (PML), especially in understanding the challenges of working

students and providing motivational and academic support. This included accommodating shift work, offering psychological support, and being generally attentive and helpful. Financial support was mentioned in the form of payment flexibility and installment options, which helped ease the burden of tuition fees. A few responses also pointed to emotional and motivational encouragement, with students expressing deep appreciation for the personal growth they experienced. Additionally, some respondents mentioned family and peer support as contributing factors.

Type of Support	Examples from Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lecturer/Tutor Support	"Lecturers' support", "Lectures were attentive and helpful", "All tutors supported us"	13	61.9%
Guidance and Motivation	"Help and guidance from lecturers and friends", "Lots of advice", "Boost energy level"	5	23.8%
Financial Support (Payment Flexibility)	"Ability to pay on instalment", "Payment"	2	9.5%
Family Support	"Family support"	1	4.8%



This analysis reflects that out of 26 respondents, the **lecturers' support** was the most frequently cited and appreciated, underscoring their crucial role in the learners' academic journey.

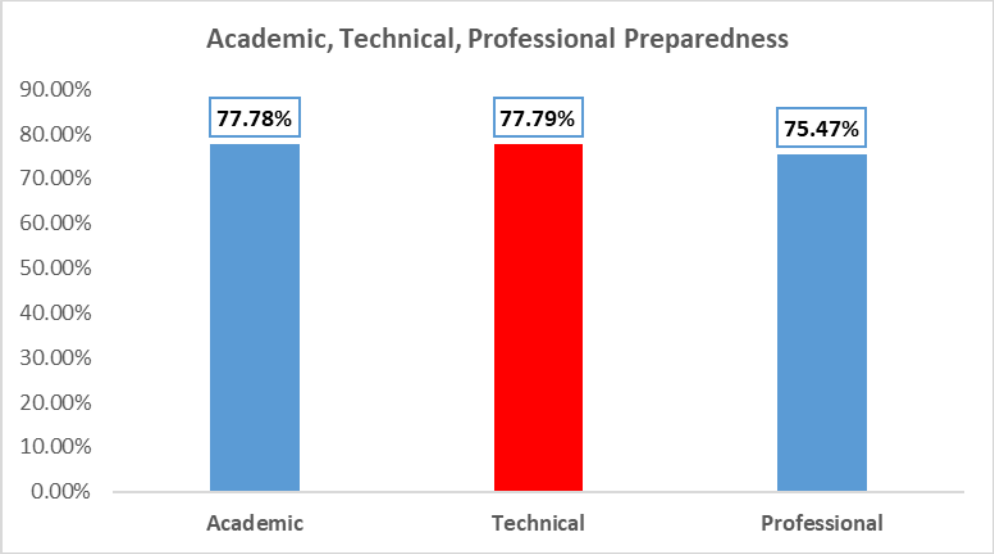
Academic, Technical and Professional Readiness

The data indicates strong confidence among respondents regarding their preparedness for higher education across three key areas: technical readiness (77.79%), academic readiness (77.78%), and professional readiness (75.47%). These consistently high percentages reflect a solid foundation for further studies, with technical readiness slightly leading. The close alignment between academic and professional preparedness suggests that learners feel capable of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application—an essential feature of TVET programs. Overall, the results imply that respondents consider themselves well-equipped to meet both the academic challenges and the practical demands of higher-level education.

The synergy between these competencies highlights the effectiveness of TVET in bridging vocational training with academic aspirations. However, sustaining this preparedness requires ongoing support, such as mentorship, career guidance, and opportunities to refine technical skills through real-world projects. Strengthening institutional partnerships and integrating interdisciplinary approaches could further enhance this readiness, ensuring students not only meet current standards but also adapt to evolving industry and academic demands.

Academic (77.78%) & Technical (**77.79%):** Respondents felt at least adequately academically and technically prepared, showing that most TVET curricula are aligned with foundational university-level expectations.

Professional (**75.47%)**: Respondents felt similarly prepared professionally, validating the job-readiness ethos of TVET programs.



Nevertheless, a small but noteworthy proportion felt underprepared, highlighting inconsistencies in delivery quality or student preparedness.

Reasons for Not Pursuing Further Education

Based on the survey responses from 161 graduates, 118 individuals provided valid reasons for not pursuing further studies. The findings highlight a variety of barriers, with Time Constraints and Workload emerging as the most frequently cited challenge, reported by 32 respondents (27.10%). These individuals indicated that demanding work schedules, long hours, and lack of time prevented them from engaging in further academic pursuits.

Financial Issues were the second most common barrier, mentioned by 28 respondents (23.70%), who pointed to tuition costs, financial instability, or lack of funding opportunities as significant obstacles to continuing their education.

A notable group of 21 respondents (17.80%) cited Waiting for Opportunities or Top-up Courses, such as the availability of new programs, institutional responses, or progression pathways, particularly in specialised fields.

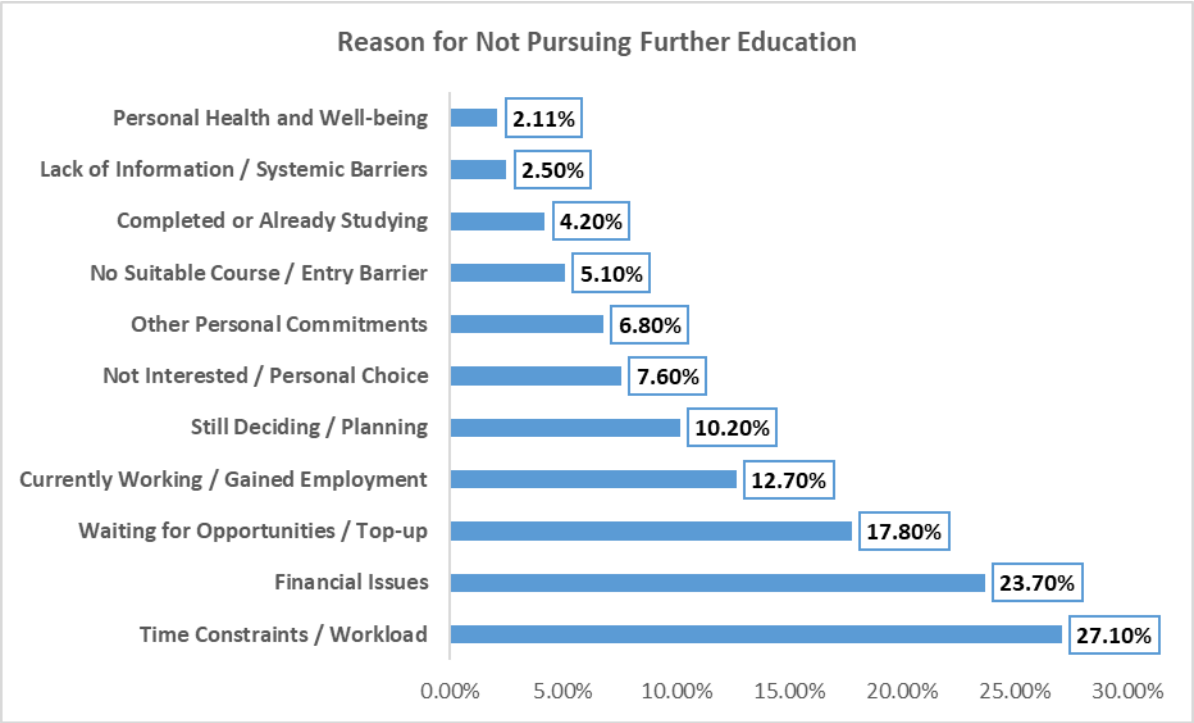
Employment-related factors also played a key role, with 15 respondents (12.70%) stating that they were already employed or satisfied with their current jobs, which reduced the perceived need or motivation for further studies.

Additionally, 12 respondents (10.20%) indicated they were Still Deciding or Planning, expressing intentions to pursue higher education in the future but not having committed yet.

Other barriers included Lack of Interest or Personal Choice (9 respondents, 7.60%), Personal Commitments such as family obligations (8 respondents, 6.80%), and No Suitable Course or Entry Barriers (6 respondents, 5.10%), especially where diploma qualifications did not meet minimum university requirements.

Smaller groups mentioned being Already Qualified or Studying (5 respondents, 4.20%), facing Systemic Barriers or Lack of Information (3 respondents, 2.50%), and experiencing Personal Health or Well-being issues (2 respondents, 2.11%).

These insights underscore the importance of providing accessible, affordable, and flexible learning options that align with adult learners' diverse circumstances—particularly those balancing employment, family, and financial constraints. Enhancing communication, expanding top-up options, and recognising prior learning could also support smoother transitions into higher education.



Key Strengths of TVET

An analysis of 65 valid responses from TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) graduates reveals a diverse set of strengths that positively influenced their transition to higher education. The findings highlight the importance of vocational training in equipping learners with practical, technical, and transferable skills that support academic performance and career development.

The most frequently cited strength, reported by 18.5% (n=12) of respondents, was Time Management & Discipline. Graduates emphasised how juggling practical and theoretical components during their TVET training helped them develop strong organisational skills, self-discipline, and the ability to meet deadlines—essential traits for navigating the demands of higher education.

This was followed closely by Practical / Hands-on Experience, cited by 16.9% (n=11). Respondents valued the opportunity to work with real tools, equipment, and industry simulations, which provided them with a solid foundation for understanding complex concepts and contributed to better academic engagement in technical subjects.

Confidence & Readiness and Soft Skills were each mentioned by 12.3% (n=8) of respondents. TVET graduates noted improved self-confidence, communication, teamwork, and customer service skills. These competencies were considered essential for thriving in academic settings that require group collaboration, presentations, and professional conduct.

Research & Academic Preparation (9.2%, n=6) was also highlighted, with respondents appreciating their early exposure to research proposals, referencing, and academic writing—skills that eased the transition into university-level coursework.

Technical Knowledge / Skills and a Foundation for Further Studies were both reported by 7.7% (n=5). Graduates credited their TVET programs for building strong theoretical and technical bases, allowing them to grasp advanced content more effectively.

Additional strengths mentioned include:

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving – 4.6% (n=3): Skills in analytical thinking and applying solutions in real contexts.

Career Clarity / Direction – 3.1% (n=2): Gaining insight into career pathways and making informed study choices.

Industry Exposure / Internships – 3.1% (n=2): Learning gained through placements or clinical practice.

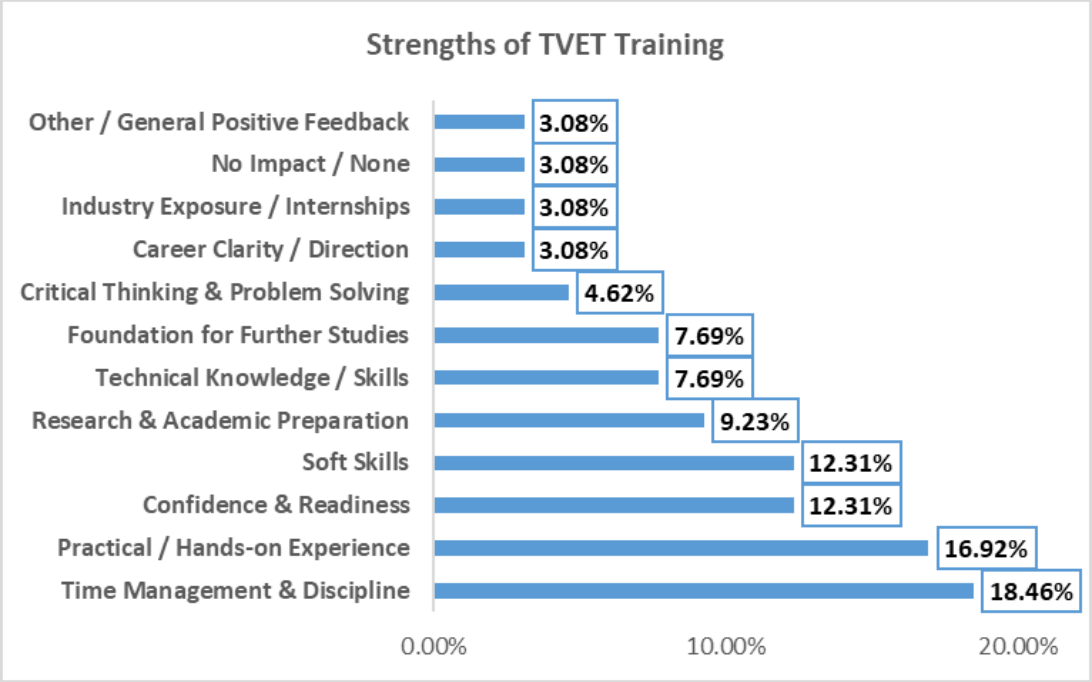
Other Personal Competencies – 3.1% (n=2): Including general adaptability, motivation, and personal growth.

No Impact / None – 3.1% (n=2): A small number of graduates did not perceive significant strengths from their TVET experience.

Strengths of TVET Training

Category	Example Responses	Frequency	%
Time Management & Discipline	"Time management", "Discipline and work ethic", "Self-motivation and self-disciplined"	12	18.46 %
Practical / Hands-on Experience	"Hands-on experience", "Use of tools and equipment", "Lab sessions", "Practical classes"	11	16.92 %
Confidence & Readiness	"Confidence in group work", "Workforce readiness", "More confident in the work I do"	8	12.31 %
Soft Skills	"Teamwork", "Communication", "Customer service", "Professionalism", "Planning and presentation"	8	12.31 %
Research & Academic Preparation	"Research proposal", "Referencing", "Writing assignments", "Presentation skills"	6	9.23%
Technical Knowledge / Skills	"Strong technical foundation", "Use of software", "Understanding systems"	5	7.69%

Foundation for Further Studies	"Strong theoretical foundation", "TVET helped me understand complex concepts", "Prepared me for degree-level work"	5	7.69%
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	"Critical thinking", "Problem-solving", "Think critically"	3	4.62%
Career Clarity / Direction	"TVET helped me know which field to pursue", "Got a job through diploma which clarified my path"	2	3.08%
Industry Exposure / Internships	"Internship experience", "On-the-job training helped understand field", "Clinical placement"	2	3.08%
No Impact / None	"None", "No response", "N/A"	2	3.08%
Other / General Positive Feedback	"Very good experience", "Good learning experience", "Helped me understand from a different point of view", "Land of personal responsibilities", "New objective"	2	3.08%



This analysis shows that TVET programs offer a diverse range of benefits, with a particular emphasis on practical application, soft skill development, and workplace readiness, equipping learners with the tools to successfully navigate the demands of higher education.

Limitations and Gap

An analysis of responses from 65 valid participants highlighted a range of limitations in their Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) experience that affected their transition to higher education. While a minority (9.2%, *n*=6) explicitly stated that they faced no significant barriers and considered TVET a strong foundation for further studies, the majority shared meaningful concerns, which clustered around several recurring themes:

1. Lack of Academic Writing & Research Skills (20.0%, *n*=13)

This was the most frequently cited gap. Respondents reported difficulties with referencing, in-text citation, research methodology, and plagiarism awareness (e.g., Turnitin use). These skills are critical for academic success, particularly in coursework, dissertations, and academic presentations at the tertiary level.

2. Lack of Theoretical / Academic Rigor (13.8%, *n*=9)

Many graduates felt underprepared for the theoretical depth required in higher education. Their TVET experience often focused heavily on practical skills, resulting in a weaker foundation in conceptual thinking, abstract reasoning, and interdisciplinary understanding.

3. Time Constraints and Workload Challenges (10.8%, *n*=7)

Respondents frequently mentioned the difficulty of balancing family responsibilities, employment, and academic obligations. These constraints often limited their capacity to fully engage in higher-level academic work.

4. Teaching Quality and Tutor Support (7.7%, *n*=5)

Some participants raised concerns about inconsistent teaching standards, lack of subject matter expertise among tutors, and limited academic support, which hindered their preparation for more rigorous academic environments.

5. Limited Practical Exposure / Lab Work (7.7%, *n*=5)

Despite the vocational nature of TVET, a few respondents reported insufficient practical exposure or laboratory work, which negatively impacted their confidence and skill application in both academic and workplace settings.

6. Lack of Guidance and Course Clarity (6.2%, *n*=4)

Several graduates noted that they lacked proper orientation or academic guidance during their TVET studies. In some cases, the content was misaligned with industry realities, leaving students unsure about their career path or further academic options.

7. Limited Communication and Teamwork Preparation (6.2%, *n*=4)

Participants indicated that there were not enough opportunities for presentations, group discussions, or collaboration. As a result, they felt unprepared for the interactive and group-oriented nature of university-level learning.

8. Financial or Logistical Issues (4.6%, *n*=3)

Some students faced transport difficulties, financial constraints, or rigid work schedules, all of which presented barriers to both their TVET and higher education experiences.

9. Administrative Delays (3.1%, *n*=2)

Delayed release of results and exam scheduling challenges were identified as demotivating factors that affected academic planning and progression.

10. Language Barriers (1.5%, *n*=1)

One respondent specifically noted the challenge of transitioning from a French-medium TVET program to an English-medium university, affecting comprehension and performance.

11. Perceived Degree Progression Limitations (1.5%, *n*=1)

There was concern from one participant about the efficiency of the diploma-to-degree path, suggesting that the time spent on a diploma could have been better utilised toward a more advanced qualification.

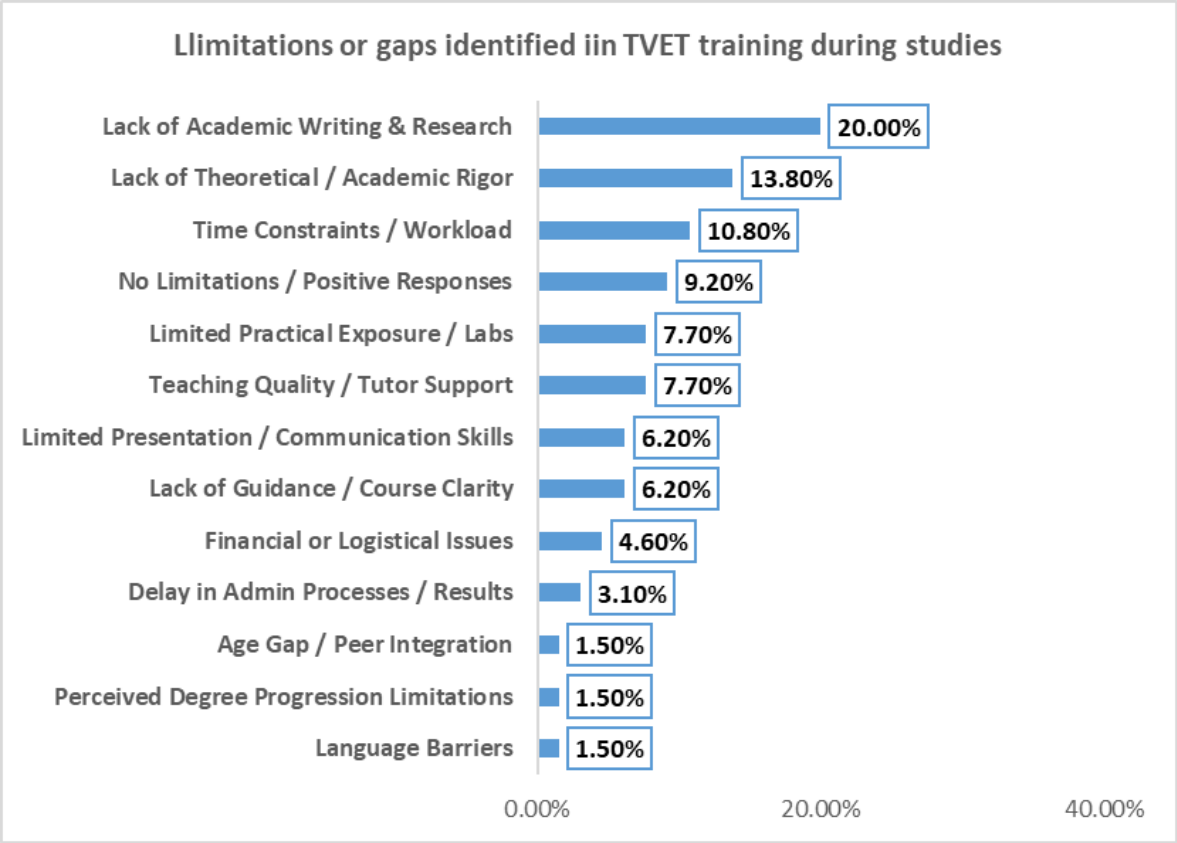
12. Age Gap / Peer Integration (1.5%, *n*=1)

One student mentioned age differences as a barrier to social and academic integration in higher education settings.

Despite these challenges, many respondents acknowledged that their TVET background provided a meaningful foundation for further study. However, the findings indicate a critical need for improved academic preparation, enhanced soft skills training, and better alignment with industry needs to ensure a smoother and more inclusive transition to higher education for all learners.

Category	**Example Responses**	**Frequency**	**%**
Lack of Academic Writing & Research	“Did not learn referencing”, “No exposure to academic writing or research”, “Did not prepare for dissertation”, “Plagiarism issues (Turnitin)”	13	20.00%
Lack of Theoretical / Academic Rigor	“Focus more on practical, less on theory”, “Difficulty adapting to academic content”, “No interdisciplinary exposure”	9	13.80%
Time Constraints / Workload	“Time and family constraints”, “Lack of time”, “Heavy workload”, “Time bound”	7	10.80%

Teaching Quality / Tutor Support	“Tutors didn’t know topics”, “Lack of explanation from tutor”, “Lecturers’ way of teaching”	5	7.70%
Limited Practical Exposure / Labs	“Lack of practical classes”, “No practical lab”, “More theory than practice”	5	7.70%
Lack of Guidance / Course Clarity	“Didn’t get guidance before starting course”, “Not enough information”, “Mismatch between course and real work”	4	6.20%
Limited Presentation / Communication Skills	“No group discussions”, “Lacked confidence in presenting”, “Communication skills not taught”	4	6.20%
Financial or Logistical Issues	“Transport”, “Financial issues”, “Work schedule”	3	4.60%
Delay in Admin Processes / Results	“Delay in obtaining results”, “Had to chase for exams”	2	3.10%
Language Barriers	“Language transition to French at university”	1	1.50%
Perceived Degree Progression Limitations	“Diploma took 2.5 years but now need 2.5 more for degree”	1	1.50%
Age Gap / Peer Integration	“Age gap”	1	1.50%
No Limitations / Positive Responses	“None”, “No limitations”, “It was a gateway to further studies”, “Not really”, “Good experience”	6	9.20%



Challenges faced during Higher Education

Analysis of responses from 85 valid participants revealed several key challenges faced by learners transitioning from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to higher education.

The most frequently reported challenge was balancing work, family, and academic responsibilities, cited by 63.5% (n=54) of respondents. This reflects the reality that many TVET graduates are adult learners managing multiple roles, underscoring the need for more flexible and accessible learning options, including part-time, blended, and online programs, to accommodate their complex schedules and competing priorities.

Financial constraints were the second most commonly cited challenge, affecting 30.6% (n=26) of participants. This finding highlights the persistent financial barriers that can deter learners from pursuing further education. It signals the need for expanded financial

support mechanisms, such as scholarships, income-contingent loans, grants, or affordable tuition pathways, to ensure that cost is not a limiting factor.

Close behind, 29.4% (n=25) of respondents reported a lack of information or guidance on educational pathways. This points to a critical gap in academic and career advising, which may leave learners unaware of available options or unprepared to make informed decisions about their future studies. Strengthening career counseling and progression planning—starting at the TVET level—could support smoother transitions and better educational outcomes.

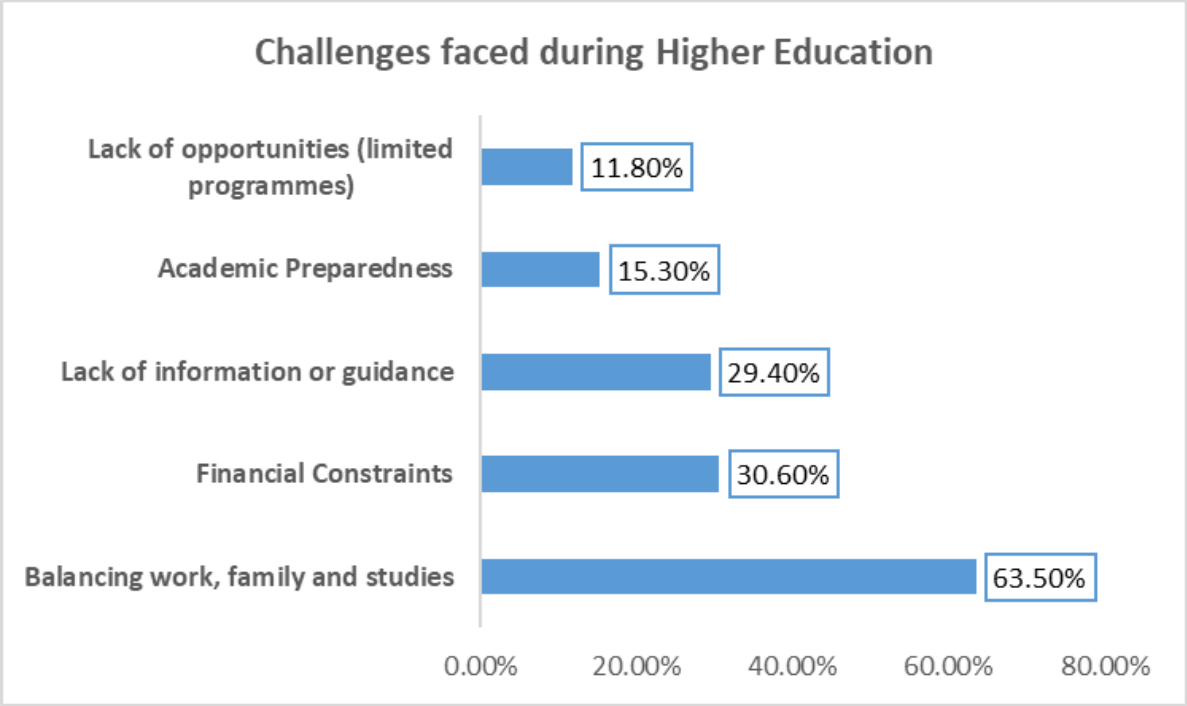
Academic preparedness was identified by 15.3% (n=13) of respondents, reflecting difficulties in adapting to the demands of higher education. Challenges included limited exposure to academic writing, research, and critical thinking. This highlights the importance of bridging programs or academic support services to help students build the foundational skills necessary for success in tertiary education.

Finally, 11.8% (n=10) of respondents noted a lack of opportunities in terms of available programs aligned with their career goals. This suggests that some learners perceive a disconnect between what they want to pursue and the options provided by institutions. Expanding and diversifying program offerings to better match industry needs and learner aspirations could improve both access and motivation.

While no respondents in this dataset explicitly mentioned “Other” challenges, the overall findings underscore the importance of learner-centered transition strategies. These should address academic, financial, logistical, and informational barriers to ensure that TVET graduates are fully supported in their pursuit of higher education.

Challenge	Example of responses	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)
Balancing work, family and studies	"Work, family and studies", "Time constraints", "Managing personal responsibilities"	54	63.50%

Financial Constraints	"Financial constraints", "Cost of higher education", "Tuition too high"	26	30.60%
Lack of information or guidance	"No guidance on courses", "Lack of awareness of academic pathways", "Unclear next steps"	25	29.40%
Academic Preparedness	"Not ready for university-level study", "Difficulty with academic writing or content"	13	15.30%
Lack of opportunities (limited programmes)	"Few relevant programmes", "Limited choices for progression"	10	11.80%

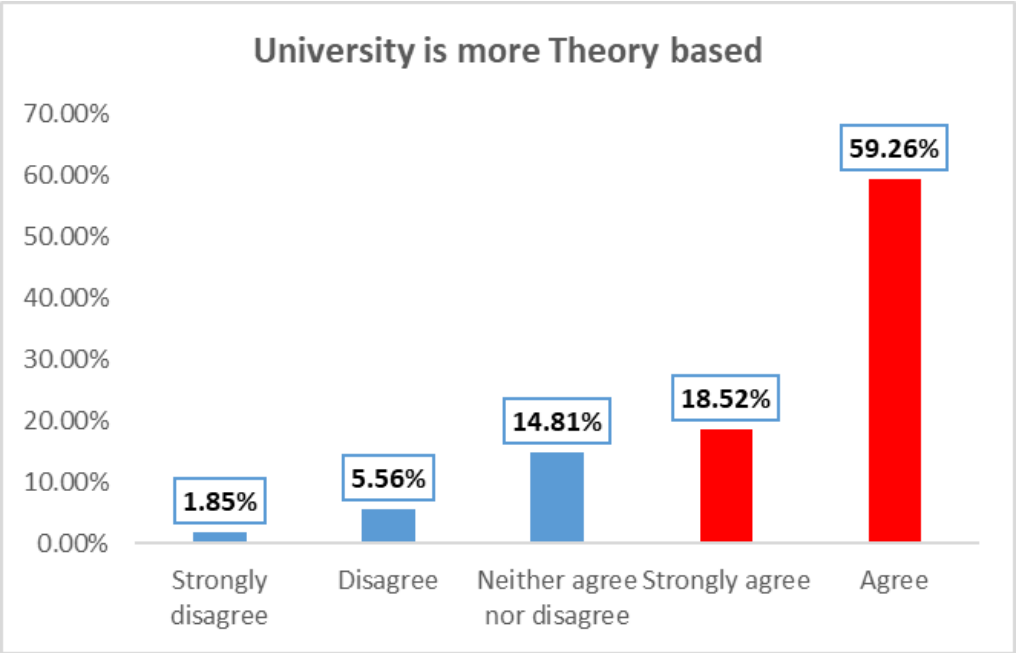


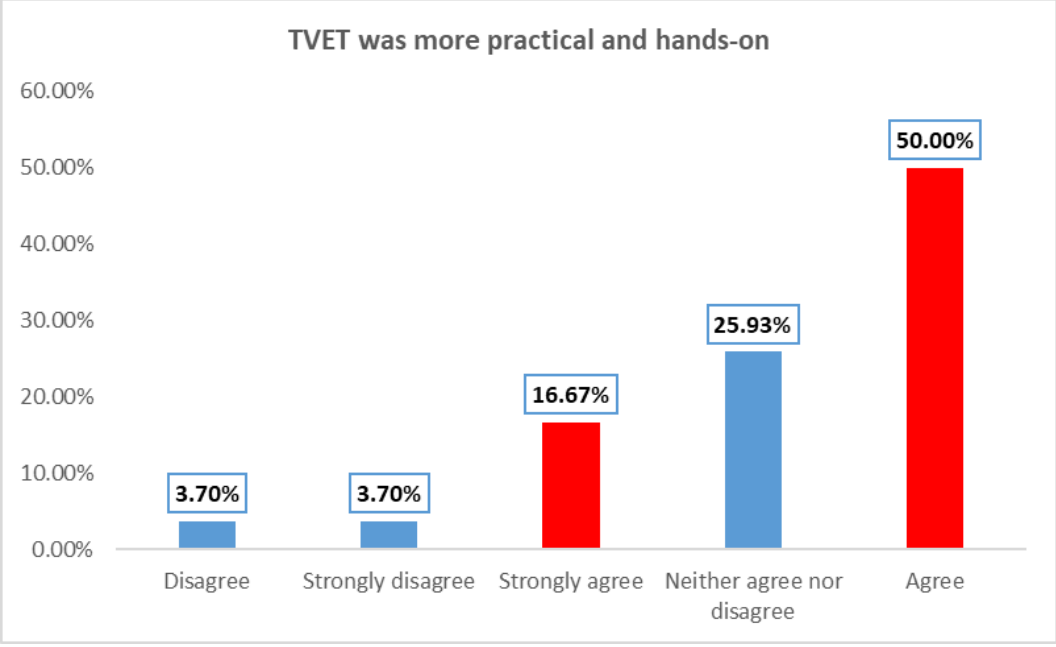
TVET vs Higher Education -Complementarity of Models

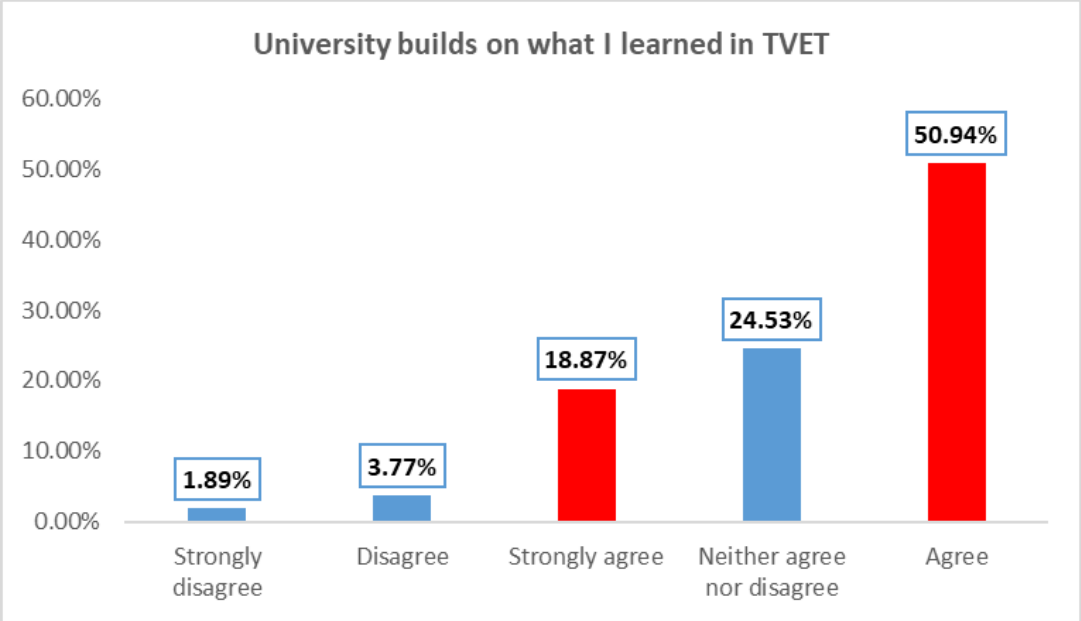
Survey responses affirm the distinct value propositions of both systems:

Theory vs Practice: University education was viewed as more theoretical **(77.78%),** while TVET was practical and hands-on **(77.79%).**

Building Blocks: Two-thirds **(75.47%)** saw university as building on their TVET knowledge base.



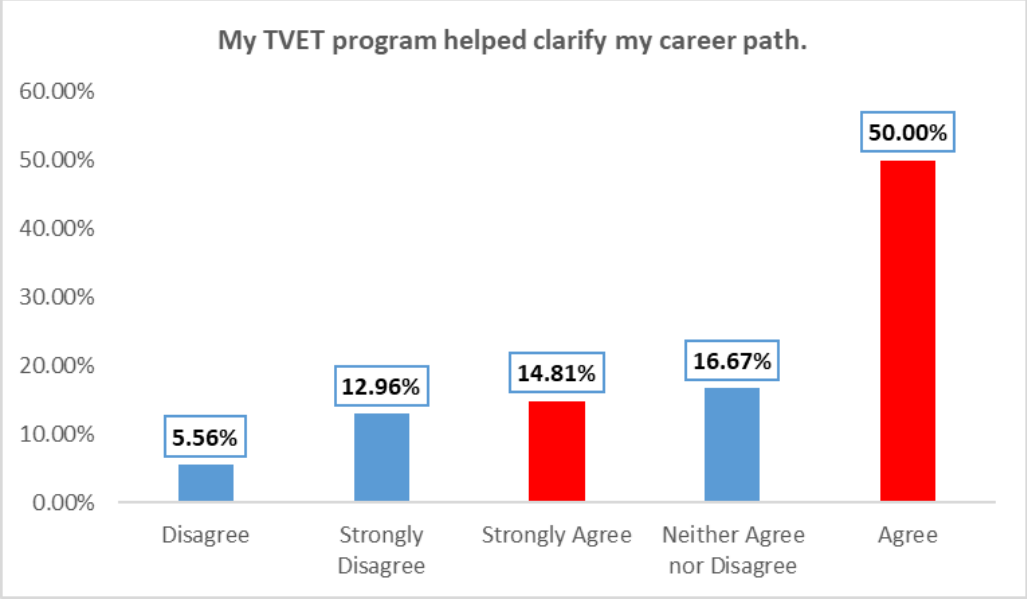




These findings support the case for a dual-track system, where learners can fluidly move between practical training and academic advancement depending on career goals.

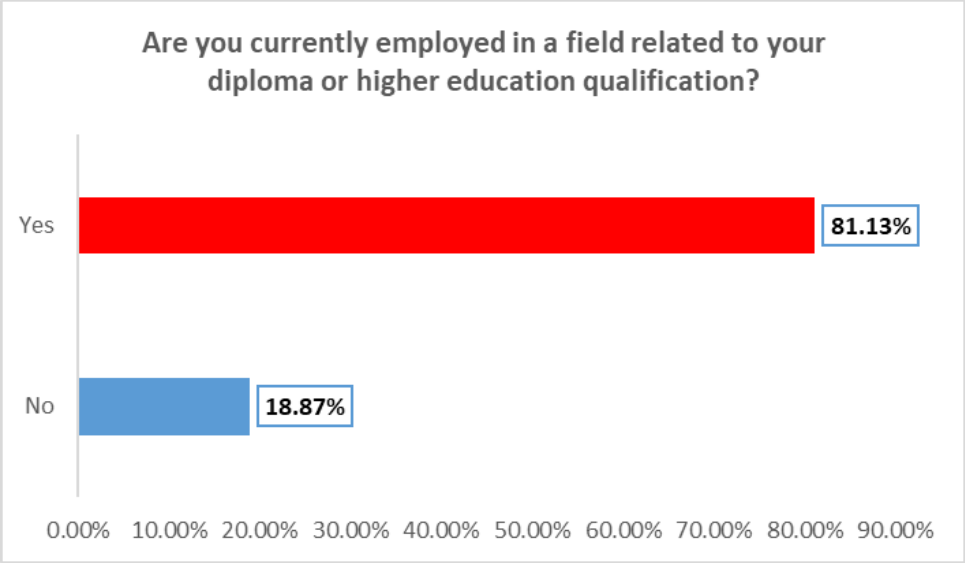
Clarity of Pathways

While **64.81%** felt there was a clear pathway to higher education, **18.52%** disagreed. This ambivalence points to a need for better-structured articulation frameworks and clearer communication about available options



Career Outcomes - Employment in Field of Study

Only **81.13%** are employed in a field directly related to their qualifications. While some misalignment is expected due to labour market dynamics **(18.87%),** this figure raises concerns about the relevancy of some TVET programs or the availability of matching jobs.



Occupational Diversity - Current Job Titles/Roles

Responses from 69 valid participants reflect a broad spectrum of job roles, showcasing the diverse career trajectories enabled by Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. This diversity underlines the adaptability of TVET in addressing workforce needs across multiple sectors and reinforces the importance of industry-aligned curricula and learner support systems to enhance employability and long-term professional growth.

Healthcare roles emerged as the most prominently represented category, comprising 34.8% (n=24) of respondents. This strong presence highlights the vital contribution of TVET to the healthcare workforce, particularly in nursing and midwifery, where training and qualifications are directly aligned with sector demands. Institutions such as Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd (PML) play a central role in equipping healthcare professionals and bridging ongoing skills gaps.

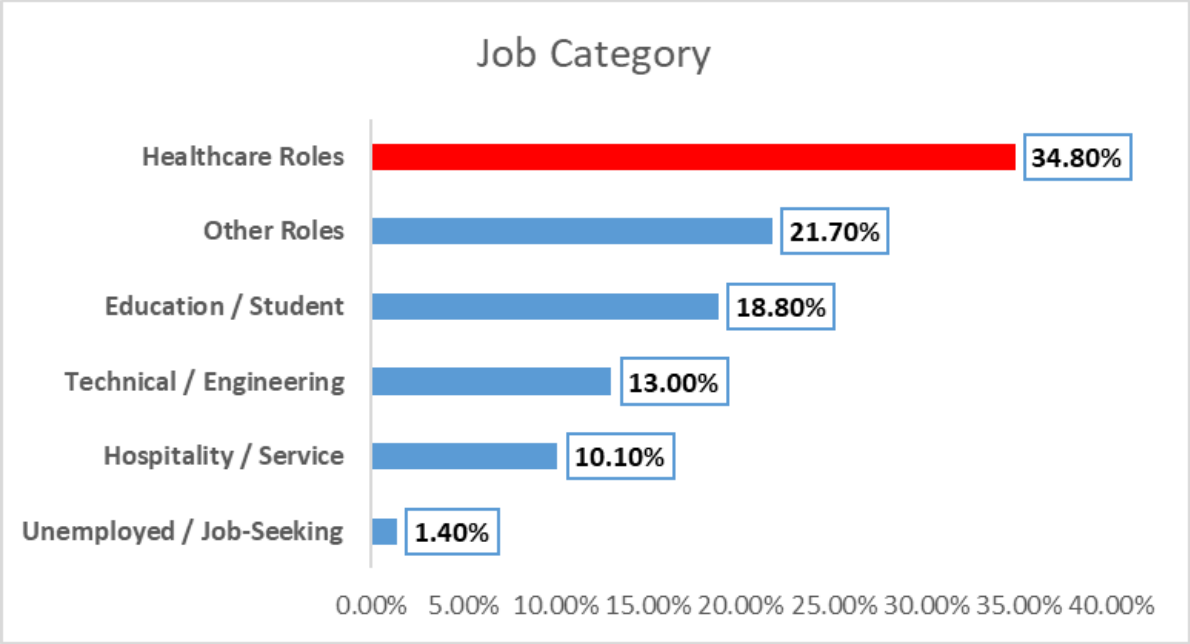
The Education / Student group accounted for 18.8% (n=13) of participants. This includes current students and those pursuing further studies—many at institutions like the Open University of Mauritius. These findings reflect a strong culture of lifelong learning and continued academic advancement among TVET graduates.

Technical and engineering roles represented 13.0% (n=9), with respondents employed in areas such as draughtsmanship, CAD design, site engineering, and biomedical technical support. This demonstrates the importance of TVET in supplying qualified technical personnel across infrastructure, manufacturing, and healthcare-related fields.

The hospitality and service sector comprised 10.1% (n=7) of the sample, with job roles including room service management, reception, and customer service. These outcomes illustrate how TVET equips graduates with practical, service-oriented skills suitable for frontline roles in tourism and hospitality—a vital sector in the Mauritian economy.

Only 1.4% (n=1) of respondents identified as unemployed and seeking work, indicating a relatively low unemployment rate within the sample. However, this still underscores the importance of strengthening employment support mechanisms and responsive career services for TVET learners.

Participants categorised under Other Roles made up 21.7% (n=15), encompassing a wide array of positions such as software developers, HR executives, police inspectors, pattern makers, sales coaches, and event assistants. This broad distribution speaks to the cross-sector applicability of TVET qualifications and their role in enabling workforce adaptability across traditional and emerging industries.



Category	Example Responses	Frequency	%
Unemployed / Job-Seeking	Currently unemployed and seeking opportunities	1	1.40%
Hospitality / Service	Cabin Crew, Executive Housekeeper, Room Service Manager, Bartender, Receptionist, Customer Service Analyst	7	10.10%
Technical / Engineering	Draughtsman, CAD Technician, Assistant Biomedical Engineer, Technical Officer, Site Engineer	9	13.00%
Education / Student	Student, Pursuing BSc at Open University, Associate Lecturer, Educator	13	18.80%
Other Roles	Software Developer, Police Inspector, HR Executive, Pattern Maker, Sales Coach, Event Assistant	15	21.70%
Healthcare Roles	Registered Nurse, Nursing Officer, Senior Midwife, Principal Midwife, Community Psychiatry Nurse, Ministry of Health MSO	24	34.80%

This classification shows how TVET backgrounds support employment across a **wide array of industries**, while also enabling continued **academic advancement** for many.

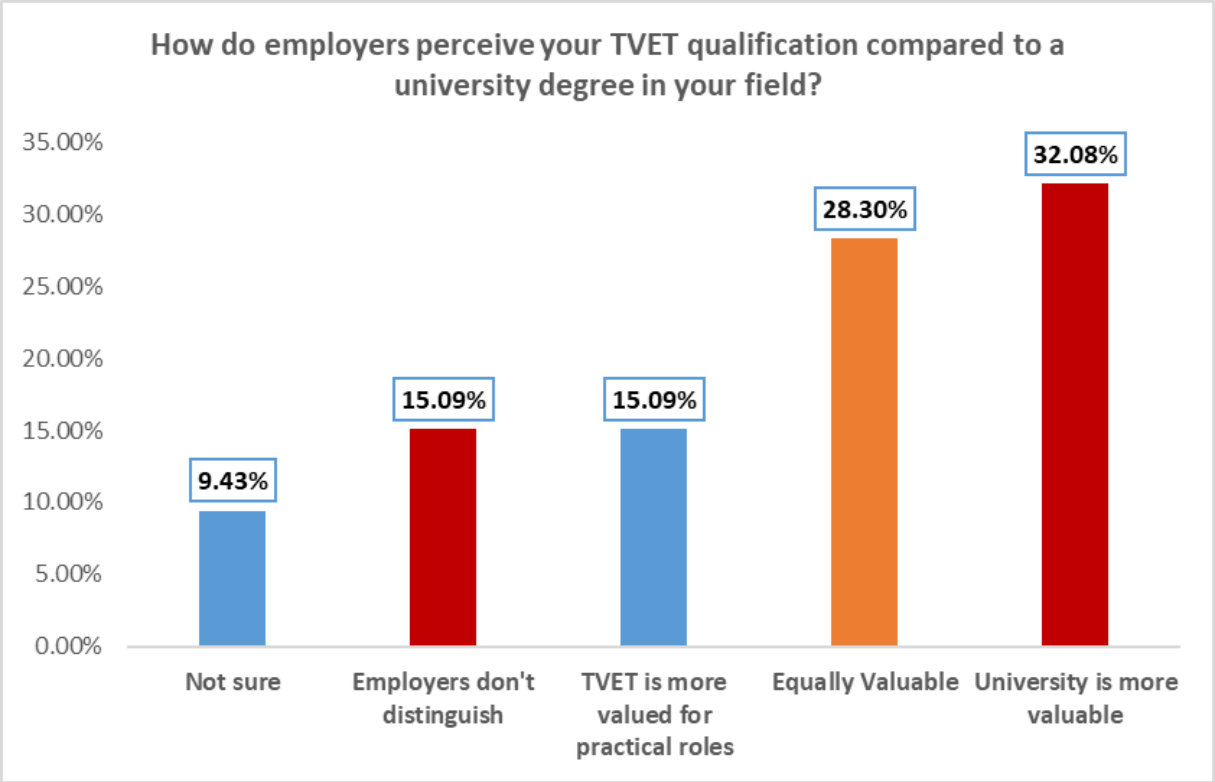
Perceived Value of Qualifications

Among those who transitioned to university:

28.30% felt TVET and university education are equally valued by employers.

32.08% felt university was more valued by employers.

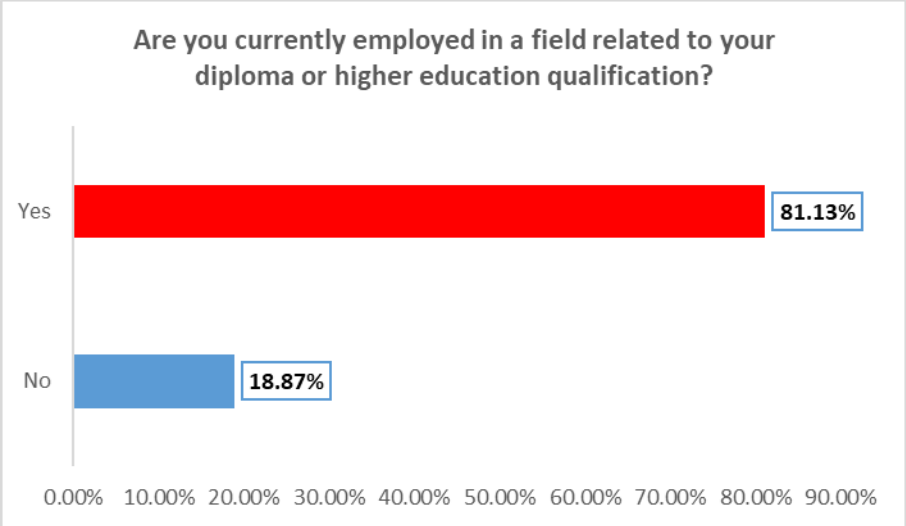
15.09% said TVET was more appreciated in practical roles.



This mixed perception emphasises the need for stronger employer engagement to elevate the perceived market value of TVET credentials.

Impact on Career Aspirations

Most **(81.13%)** who pursued higher education felt it helped achieve career goals. This indicates that for motivated students, higher education serves as a powerful lever for professional mobility.



Impact of Higher Education on Career Aspirations

Insights from 68 respondents reveal that the majority perceived higher education as a valuable contributor to their professional growth and career advancement. The most frequently cited benefit, reported by 27%, was academic preparation and skills development. Respondents highlighted critical thinking, research skills, and technical expertise in fields like nursing, midwifery, civil engineering, and management as key outcomes.

Approximately 15% mentioned personal motivation and encouragement as a significant benefit, including boosted confidence, continuous learning, and aiming for higher goals. This group felt that higher education instilled a sense of purpose and ambition, motivating them to pursue more challenging roles.

Career and academic guidance, cited by 12%, was another important benefit. Respondents emphasised that higher education clarified career paths, provided direction in their chosen fields, and deepened their understanding of their professional environments.

Networking and peer/mentor support, including connections through internships and access to industry professionals, accounted for 6% of responses. Similarly, improved access and flexibility, as well as institutional and administrative support, each represented 6% of responses, reflecting the importance of flexible learning environments and supportive academic structures.

Technology and learning tools, along with infrastructure and resources, were noted by 4% of respondents. These individuals highlighted the value of learning to use specialised software, gaining practical experience, and accessing real-world projects.

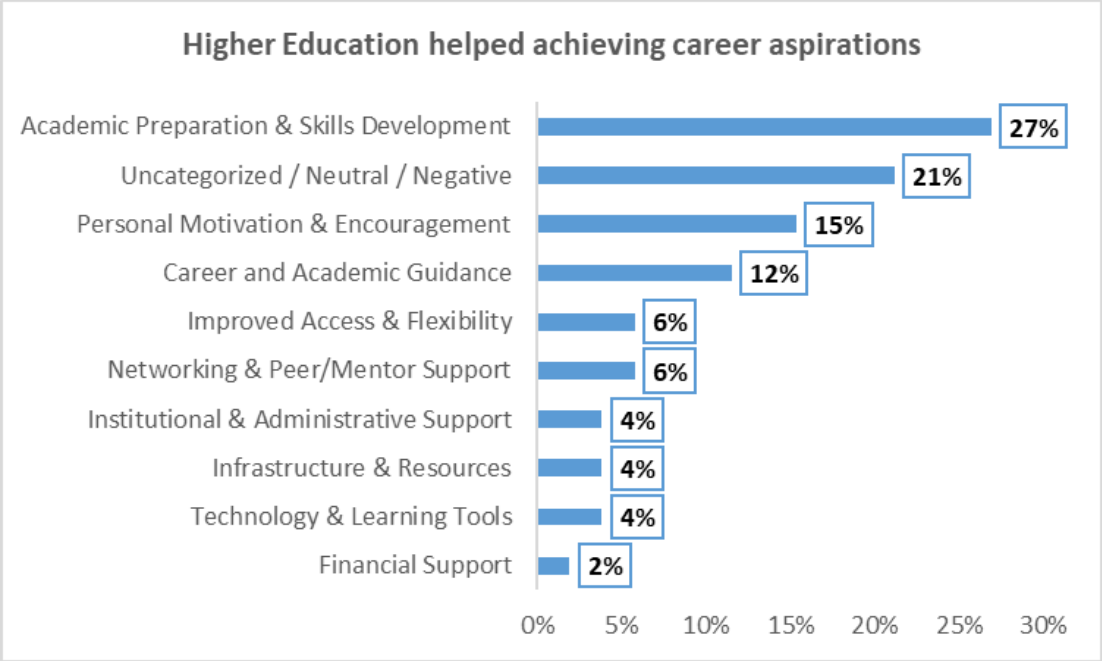
Financial support was cited by 2% of respondents as a critical factor, reflecting the impact of higher salaries and financial stability associated with advanced qualifications.

Despite these positive perspectives, 21% of respondents expressed neutrality, uncertainty, or dissatisfaction, indicating that higher education did not always meet their career expectations. These respondents included those who felt unsupported or found the curriculum misaligned with their career goals.

Overall, the findings suggest that higher education plays a critical role in building professional competencies, expanding career opportunities, and fostering personal development. However, the varied responses highlight the need for more personalised, goal-aligned educational experiences to maximize value for all learners.

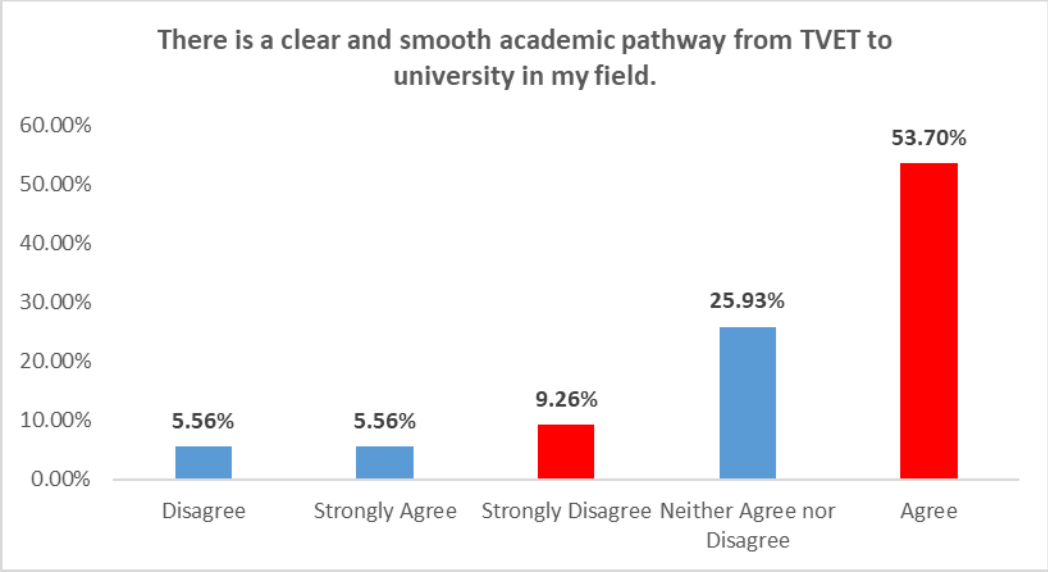
Benefit	**Number of Responses**	**Frequency**	**(%)**
Financial Support	"Maybe it has allowed me to have a higher salary"	1	2%
Technology & Learning Tools	"Helped me learn to use Turnitin"; "Gained exposure to new technologies and software"	2	4%
Infrastructure & Resources	"Availability of real-world projects and labs"; "Exposure to learning environments that simulate workplace scenarios"	2	4%
Institutional & Administrative Support	"Course content aligned with job market needs"; "Support from university in applying for higher roles"	2	4%
Networking & Peer/Mentor Support	"Built connections through internships"; "Access to mentors and industry professionals"	3	6%

Improved Access & Flexibility	"Studying at the Open University while working"; "More flexible learning options"	3	6%
Career and Academic Guidance	"It provided clearer insight of what's waiting"; "With the knowledge in education, I better understand the field I stand in"	6	12%
Personal Motivation & Encouragement	"Helped me to aim higher"; "Boosted my confidence"; "Encouraged continuous learning"	8	15%
Uncategorised / Neutral / Negative	"It did not help me at all"; "I achieved my aspirations by myself"; "n/a", "0", "."	11	21%
Academic Preparation & Skills Development	"Higher education helped me develop critical thinking and research skills"; "Better patient care"; "More technical knowledge acquired"	14	27%

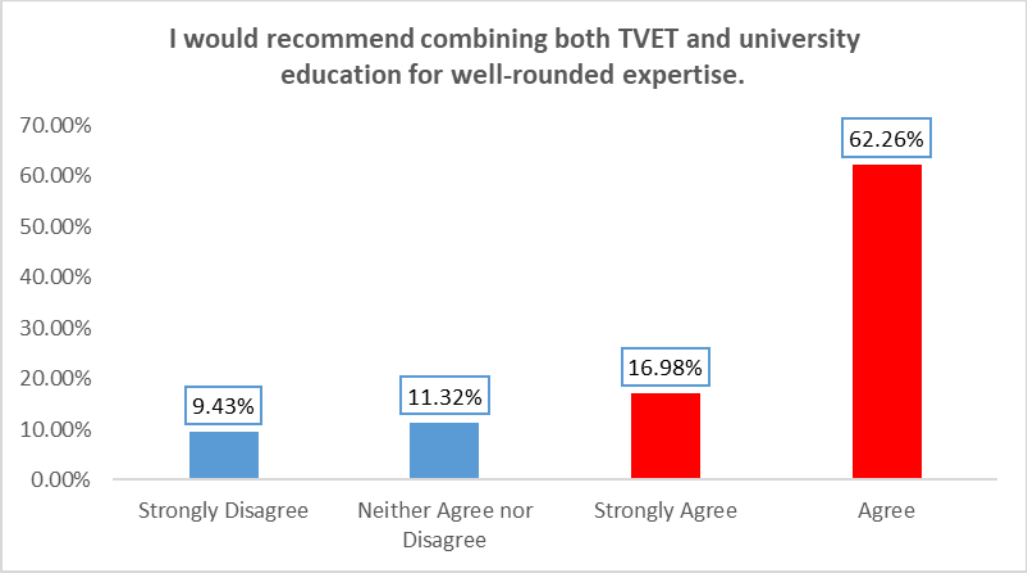


TVET to University Transition

53.70% believes there is a clear and smooth academic pathway from TVET to university in my field.



79.25% would recommend combining both TVET and university education for well-rounded expertise.



Additional Relevant Considerations

The data indicates that Career Guidance & Programme Access (33%) is the most critical need among respondents, underscoring the importance of clear career pathways, timely programme information, and informed decision-making. This aligns with prior findings that highlight the challenges many students face when transitioning from TVET to higher education.

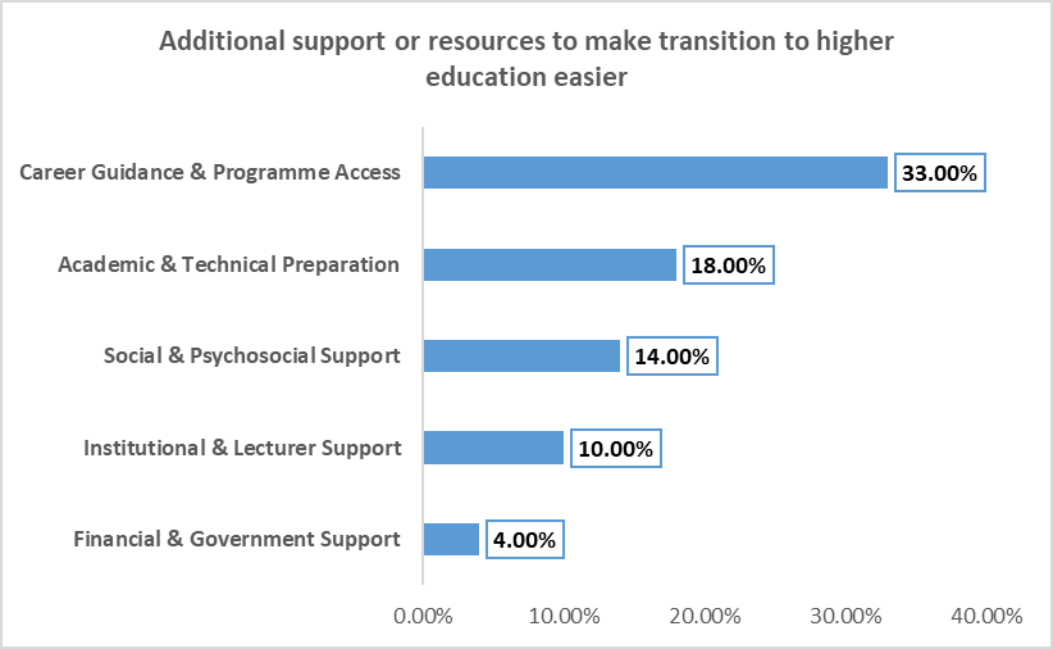
Academic & Technical Preparation (18%) also stands out as a significant area of concern, reflecting the need for stronger foundational knowledge, practical learning experiences, and access to advanced technical resources, including bridging courses and e-learning tools.

Institutional & Lecturer Support (10%) remains a priority, emphasizing the need for effective communication, mentorship, and supportive academic environments that foster positive student outcomes.

Financial & Government Support (4%) continues to be a pressing issue, highlighting the need for financial aid, government scholarships, and economic support to ease the financial burden on learners.

Finally, Social & Psychosocial Support (14%) underscores the importance of emotional support, peer networks, and mentorship, reinforcing the human element in successful educational transitions.

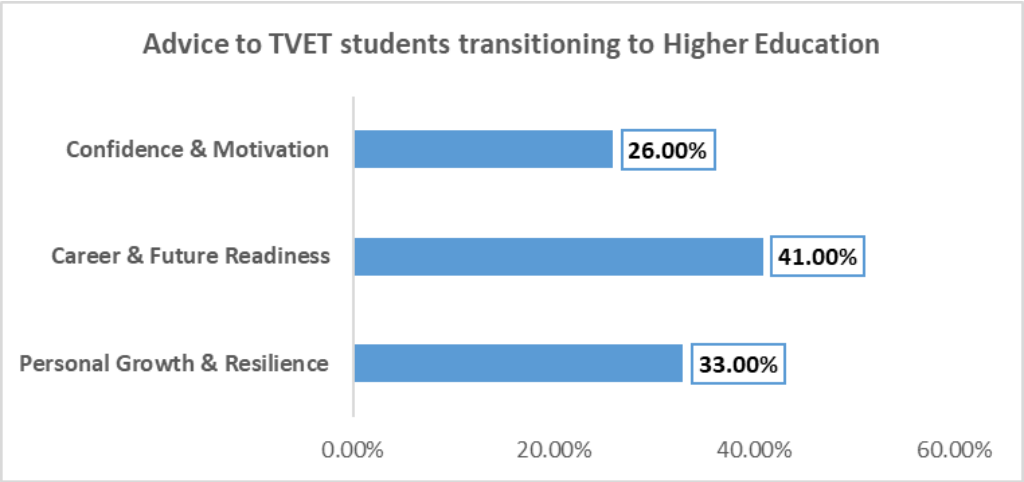
Together, these insights highlight the need for a comprehensive, learner-centered approach that integrates academic readiness, career guidance, institutional support, financial stability, and psychosocial well-being to promote equitable access to higher education.



The data reveals that Career & Future Readiness (41%) is the most frequently mentioned advice theme, emphasising the importance of long-term planning, market awareness, and career-oriented decision-making. This includes selecting relevant fields of study, building professional networks, and aligning educational choices with industry demands to enhance employability.

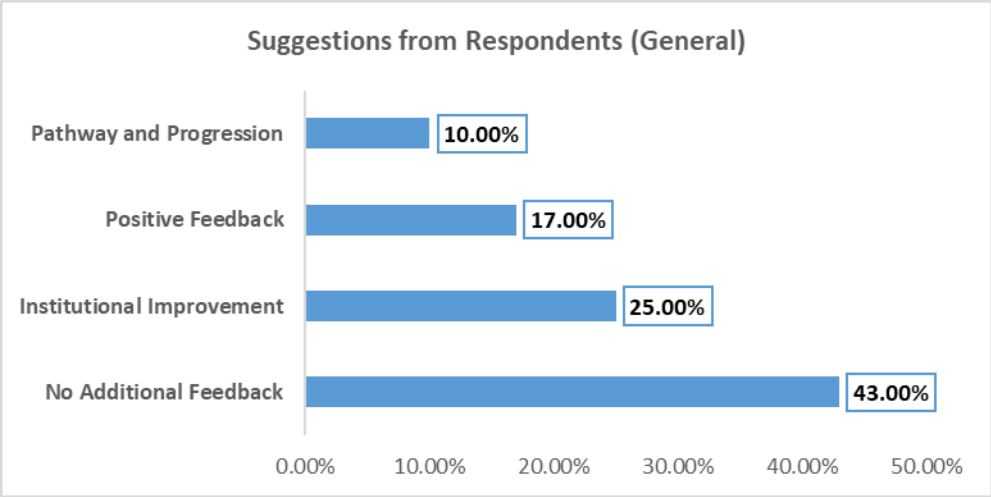
Personal Growth & Resilience (33%) emerged as the second most significant theme, highlighting the importance of self-directed learning, continuous improvement, time management, and perseverance. This reflects the need for students to develop the

resilience and adaptability necessary for success in higher education, where independent study and self-motivation are critical.



Confidence & Motivation (26%) also featured prominently, reflecting the need for students to believe in their abilities, seize opportunities, and remain committed to their goals despite challenges. This theme underscores the psychological and emotional aspects of the transition, reminding students of the value of their foundational TVET skills and the potential for future growth.

Together, these insights highlight the importance of a balanced approach to student preparation, combining practical skills, career planning, and self-confidence to support successful transitions to higher education.



The findings indicate that TVET students encounter a range of challenges when transitioning to higher education, with key priorities including Career & Future Readiness (41%), Personal Growth & Resilience (33%), and Confidence & Motivation (26%). Students highlighted the need for clearer pathways to further studies, practical labs, professional networking, and stronger collaboration between TVET institutions and universities.

Additionally, many respondents emphasised the importance of continuous learning, self-improvement, and building professional confidence as critical factors for long-term success. Notably, nearly half of the responses (43%) reflected a lack of additional feedback, suggesting the need for more targeted program development and supportive learning environments.

Coordinated interventions that address these themes can significantly improve the transition experience, fostering successful educational and career outcomes.

Key Insights

TVET is a Viable Launchpad: With 31.68% moving to higher education, TVET clearly supports lifelong learning trajectories.

Institutional Gaps Exist: Disparities in transition support and outcomes highlight inconsistent institutional performance (PML: 23.75%, MITD: 6.25%, ADI: 1.88%).

Employability Disconnect: Only 23.5% of respondents are employed in fields directly related to their TVET qualifications.

Perception and Value Challenges: Survey results show that 29.27% of respondents felt employers value university degrees more highly than TVET qualifications, while only 26.83% felt both were equally valued.

Recommendations

Formalise Transition Pathways: Establish articulation agreements and recognition frameworks between TVET and universities.

Invest in Career and Academic Counseling: Integrate structured guidance programs to support student decision-making.

Enhance Curriculum Relevance: Conduct regular reviews to ensure alignment with evolving industry demands.

Engage Employers: Promote TVET through employer partnerships, internships, and sector-wide awareness campaigns.

Track Outcomes Continuously: Institutionalise graduate tracer studies to inform continuous improvement.

Comparison with International Trends in TVET

The findings from the Mauritius TVET Graduate Survey can be contextualised within broader international trends, highlighting both common patterns and unique local challenges. By aligning reforms with international best practices and addressing context-specific gaps, Mauritius can solidify TVET as not just a terminal qualification but a launchpad for lifelong learning, career advancement, and national economic development.

The findings from the Mauritius TVET survey can be contextualised within broader international trends, highlighting both similarities and unique challenges faced by the local TVET ecosystem. Below is a comparative analysis of key themes:

TVET as a Pathway to Higher Education

International Trend

Globally, TVET systems are increasingly designed as stepping stones to higher education, supported by articulation agreements, top-up programs, and structured pathways. Countries like Germany, Australia, and Singapore have established seamless progression models that value vocational learning as an academic foundation.

Mauritius Context

In Mauritius, 31.68% of TVET graduates have pursued or are pursuing higher education. Key barriers include time constraints (27.10%), financial limitations (23.70%), and limited availability of top-up programs (particularly in fields like Logistics and Hospitality). These barriers mirror global challenges but indicate the pressing need for stronger articulation pathways and systemic support to facilitate upward mobility.

Employer Perceptions of TVET vs. University Qualifications

International Trend

While international efforts aim to elevate TVET's profile, a persistent preference for university degrees remains, especially for leadership and managerial roles, across both developed and developing economies.

Mauritius Context

Survey results show that 29.27% of respondents felt employers value university degrees more highly than TVET qualifications, while only 26.83% felt both were equally valued. This perception gap mirrors global attitudes but also highlights the urgent need for employer advocacy campaigns to enhance the status of TVET in the Mauritian job market.

Alignment with Labour Market Needs

International Trend

Highly effective TVET systems are those that maintain close linkages with industry, ensuring curricula evolve with labour market demands. The dual education model of Germany, blending workplace training with academic instruction, is a prime example.

Mauritius Context

Only 23.5% of respondents are employed in fields directly related to their TVET qualifications. This signals a significant misalignment between training and job market

needs, suggesting that regular curriculum reviews and closer employer engagement are necessary to improve relevancy and employability.

Focus on Practical Skills and Soft Skills Development

International Trend

Globally, TVET programs are praised for developing practical competencies and essential soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving—key factors in workforce adaptability.

Mauritius Context

The survey confirms that practical skills (16.92%) and soft skills (12.31%) are considered major strengths of Mauritian TVET programs. However, notable gaps were identified in academic writing and research skills (20%), which are critical for students aspiring to transition into higher education or technical professional roles.

Barriers to Transitioning to Higher Education

International Trend

Barriers such as financial hardship, lack of suitable programs, and difficulty balancing work and study are widespread across TVET systems globally, particularly in developing economies.

Mauritius Context

The Mauritian context closely parallels these challenges: 27.10% of non-pursuers cited time/work commitments, 23.70% cited financial constraints, and 17.80% highlighted a lack of suitable progression programs. These figures underscore the urgent need for more flexible, accessible higher education options for working TVET graduates.

Perception of Complementarity Between TVET and University Education

International Trend

Countries like Australia explicitly view TVET and university education as complementary, promoting pathways that combine both practical and theoretical learning for holistic career preparation.

Mauritius Context

In Mauritius, 77.4% of respondents perceived university education as building upon their TVET foundation, and 78.05% recommended a combined TVET-university model for stronger career outcomes. This positive view provides a strategic opportunity to design dual-track educational models locally.

Institutional Support and Guidance

International Trend

Strong institutional support systems—including mentoring, career counseling, and structured articulation agreements—are vital for smooth transitions from TVET to higher education. Finland and Sweden are notable benchmarks in this regard.

Mauritius Context

In Mauritius, 54.78% of those transitioning to higher education did so without institutional support. This significant gap points to the need for more proactive and structured guidance systems within TVET institutions.

Workforce Readiness and Employability

International Trend

TVET systems are recognised for producing work-ready graduates equipped with certifications, technical skills, and industry exposure, contributing immediately to economic productivity.

Mauritius Context

Mauritian TVET graduates reported strengths in time management & discipline (18.46%) and practical / hands-on experience (16.92%). However, the relatively low employment alignment rate (23.5%) suggests that while technical training is strong, broader economic factors and industry collaboration need strengthening to optimize employability.

Conclusion

While Mauritius' TVET ecosystem shows considerable strengths—particularly in developing practical competencies, soft skills, and foundational workplace readiness—it also faces persistent challenges: financial barriers, limited program progression options, and employer biases towards university degrees. These challenges are consistent with international experiences but are intensified by local systemic gaps.

Unlocking the full potential of TVET in Mauritius requires:

- Strengthening structured transition pathways;
- Enhancing institutional guidance and mentorship;
- Expanding industry partnerships for curriculum relevance;
- Promoting flexible, accessible, and affordable learning models;
- Advocating for the recognition of TVET qualifications in the labour market

Annex 3: Terminologies

Articulation - process of forming possibilities of connection between qualifications and/or part qualifications to allow for the vertical, lateral and diagonal movement of learners through the formal education and training system and its linkages with the world of work.

Articulation arrangements - enable students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and / or credit in a defined qualification pathway.

Competency based education - is an approach to vocational education and training in which skills, knowledge and attitudes are specified to define, steer and help to achieve competencies standards.

Credit - is a measure of the volume of learning required for a qualification or part qualification, quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification or part qualification.

Learning society - is a community that promotes a culture of learning by developing effective local partnerships between all sectors of the community and supports and motivates individuals and organisations to learn.

Micro-credentials - are most simply defined as a small volume of certified competencies acquired through life experience, work, or study. Micro-credentials can be awarded to learners after they have taken a short course or through recognition of prior learning.

National Credit Value and Transfer System - means the National Credit Value and Transfer System developed and issued under section 18 of the Higher Education Act.

National Qualifications Framework - means the Mauritian Qualifications Framework. It is the national policy for regulated qualifications in the Mauritian education and training landscape. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

Open badges - defined as ‘visual digital tokens of achievement, affiliation, authorization or some other trust relationship shareable across the web’. Unlike digital badges, which are defined as ‘online representation of skills and achievements of an individual’, open digital badges are verified ‘through credible organizations’ by ‘attaching the information about gained skills and achievements to the badge image file, hard-coding the metadata for future access and review’. Open badges comply with a technical specification and set

of associated open-source software designed to enable the creation and issuing of verifiable credentials across a broad spectrum of learning experiences.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, Open badges: new opportunities to recognize and validate achievements digitally (accessed 8/2023)

Pathway - is the sequencing of qualifications that allows learners to move vertically, diagonally and, in some cases, horizontally, through National Qualifications levels, giving learners recognition for full or partially completed qualifications or part qualifications.

Qualification - means the formal recognition by the Authority of the achievement of the required number and range of credits and includes any requirement at specific levels of the National Qualifications Framework that may be determined by the relevant bodies registered for such purpose by the Authority.

Skill forecast - refers to the Process of predicting skill demand (jobs) and skill supply (labour force) in the short, medium or long term, as well as the corresponding qualification requirements (type and level), using quantitative or qualitative model-based projections.

Standard - means a registered statement of desired education and training outcomes and its associated assessment criteria.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) - non-academic technical education and practical training that develop the skills and knowledge of apprentices (learners of trades or crafts) working in different sectors of industry and trainees / students trained in different TVET Institutions (TVET Institutes, Centres & Schools). The TVET is that part of the education system that provides courses and training programmes related to employment with a view to enable the transition from Secondary

Education to work for young trainees / students (social objective) and supply the labour market with competent apprentices (economic objective). The TVET is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

Vocational Education - education designed to develop occupational skills

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