

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

How Innovative Is Your VET?

Dr Rob Dalitz, Professor Tim Turpin and Dr Phil Toner from CiNIS (Industry and Innovation Studies) are examining the interrelationship between Vocational Education and Training (VET) and innovation. This research is funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research through its National VET Research and Evaluation Program.

'In our modern culture, changes are happening at a rapid rate driven by innovation', says Professor Turpin. 'Innovation is not necessarily new technology. Rather it can be a new or changed product, process or organisational structure, which may vary from sector to sector. Innovation needs the specialised skills of workers but it also changes the very skills that are needed to be taught. However, exactly how one affects the other is not well-understood. This project will research VET and innovation in various sectors to provide knowledge on how to improve innovation performance in various organisations, VET providers and Australian Industry Skills Councils. Methods to keep VET training up to date and in step with industry innovation will be determined and policy input will also be provided to help make VET more relevant and influential for industry innovation.'

The team will develop a questionnaire and interview schedule through a pilot process. This will be revised and used for the main data collection – 45 interviews in the mining, solar energy and computer games sectors. The mining sector has strong formal links to the VET system, while the solar energy and games sectors have changing skill needs and variable or less formal links to the VET system.



Understanding how a VET system links to innovation will help organisations develop their capabilities and maximise the skills required to both manage change and innovate within their sectors. Building a more skilled, highly innovative workforce bodes well for economic and labour development in both new and established industries across Australia.

Project Title: VET and the Diffusion and Implementation of Innovation.

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