

# Oil Worker of the Future: A NEW TYPE OF CV?

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**E** Industry and Academia in Oman need to become better aligned to enhance vocational education and meet future labor market requirements. Currently, vocational education is viewed as an alternative educational pathway. Instead, it should be viewed as a complementary style of learning that can work hand-in-hand with traditional education. Rebranding the image of vocational education and enhancing the current mindset around its reputation in Oman needs improvement. Society needs to move away from the commonly held view that vocational education is not up to par or not as prestigious as a university degree. Industry, Academia, and Government need to work together to encourage the younger generation with incentives. Improving accreditation and standards for vocational education through new legislation in Oman would be a pathway to further credibility. Young professionals need to be assured that their training is transferable and fully accredited. It is crucial that individuals are recognized both in-country and internationally.

One of the top recommendations harvested from the 2017 Oman Energy Forum was that Industry should work with Academia throughout the entire period of a student's university career to develop vocational qualifications. Having a structured framework and learning process to guide students as they go from university or college into the workplace will resolve at least some of the challenges in meeting Oman's future labor requirements. Vocational qualifications can be established from entry university level through to PhD level. An example of a vocational PhD would be a medical doctor who gains hands on experience while completing a theoretical degree.

Internships and apprenticeships are the bedrock

of skills training. They encompass all three stages of learning: watching, participating and doing. The culture and environment surrounding apprenticeships or internships in Oman needs to be greatly enhanced.

Applied skills in technology and real-world learning will be particularly crucial in today's 4th Industrial Revolution and would allow for diverse skills and knowledge and provide the required tool kit for future success. The new world of technology is a key pillar in creating entrepreneurs, self-employment and contributes to the growth of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This is a critical factor in the growth trajectory of developing economies.

Given the rapidly changing environment brought on by digital disruption, energy stakeholders should strive to work with technology companies to ensure that standards and accreditation in technical education are always improving and up to date. By establishing this closer collaboration, they can learn better and faster about how technological infrastructure is developing and introduce that into current and future vocational standards and frameworks.

The rapid rate of technological advancement renders what we learn today obsolete in a very short period of time. So, learning and re-learning continuously has to become an important skill that is cemented into society. Popular estimates show that 65% of children entering school today will graduate to work in jobs that do not yet exist. The education system can only go so far and energy stakeholders have to understand this. Organizations need to actively direct their staff on how to transfer knowledge and teach their employees to be efficient learners. ■

