CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Careers Insights

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Stay ahead of the fast-moving careers field, with a roundup of the latest research



About Careers Insights

Welcome to Careers Insights, the CDI's bulletin that reports on new research papers and reports that have been published over the past few months that are particularly relevant to the issues in contemporary policy and practice.

Research is critically important, and not just for academics. It helps career professionals to understand the needs of different clients to a greater depth. It describes the implications of political, economic, social or technological trends affecting the field. It also describes different models, theories and practices, and provides evidence on 'what works'.

This is a supplement to the CDI's Research Directory, which you can access in the Resources section of the CDI website. The Directory offers a wide collection of references to thousands of career-guidance related articles, reports, papers, books and open data sets.

(NB: We strive to reference articles that are mainly in the public domain, but include important ones that are behind paywalls. These are denoted with an asterisk (*) in the title)



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Featured articles

We've highlighted four articles that are particularly relevant to current issues in the careers world.

#1. Teachers & school leaders back careers

Dept. of Work & Pensions research into the perceptions of teachers found support for rebalancing the curriculum towards a broader range of employability and life skills. The survey - based on an online survey of 1,004 primary and secondary school teachers - found that teachers generally thought that the curriculum puts too much emphasis on passing exams (74%) and not enough focus on preparing young people for employment (73%) or teaching soft skills for employment (73%). Large majorities of respondents supported all schools providing career advice and guidance (98%), more applied or vocational pathways for children before the age of 16 (92%) and alternative pathways targeted towards young people who struggle with the current curriculum (95%).

A separate study - the "School & College Voice" survey of teachers and schools leaders - gave positive results, but some alarming findings too, related to insights about the use of career hubs: On a positive note, 61% of school leaders said that their school used a career hub, and 75% of these found it useful. However, this also meant that 11% said that they did not use hubs and 28% said they did not know, showing awareness and adoption gaps..

Department for Work & Pensions (2026). Interim Report: Young people and work report - survey with education professionals (Link)

Department for Education (2026) School and college voice: December 2025 (Link)

#2. Mixed graduate career preparedness

The Office for Students published "The Student Insight" report, providing indicators of the career health of graduates who have started making their way in the world of work.

Unsurprisingly in the present labour market context, the survey pointed to concerns: 38% of the graduates surveyed were not confident about achieving their goals after graduation; only half said they felt prepared for life after leaving university or college.

88% of the survey respondents said that university or college support had helped them prepare for life after graduation. While only a third reported that they had used their institution's career service, many more had used specific elements such as careers fairs (72%) or help with CVs and applications (71%). This may mean that the extent of careers support is not widely understood, and also suggests there is a support gap in formative career journeys.

Office for Students (2026). Student Insight Report March 2026. Preparing for the next steps after higher education. (Link)

#3. AI impact on jobs & human necessity

Open AI - the company behind ChatGBT - published their detailed data-driven findings of how the near term job market will be shaped by AI, across 900 occupations.

18% of jobs are at a higher short-term automation risk. 46% of jobs are less likely to experience near-term change. 12% of jobs could grow because of AI Based on a concept of "human necessity" physical and relational types of work remain least affected.

OpenAI (2026). The AI jobs transition framework (Link)



#4. How psychological traits influence careers

We covered several studies this month that related vital psychological traits and outcomes. E.g., Priyashantha (2026) conducted a major literature review and analysis on 82 samples and involving more than 30,000 subjects from 1977 to 2023 on career indecision. Results demonstrated that adaptive person inputs (such as extraversion, conscientiousness, core self-evaluations, and self-esteem) and strong regulatory mechanisms (including career decision-making self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control) serve as key resources that substantially reduce career indecision. However, environmental contexts influence the relationships at play. Implications for career guidance include accounting for such factors in dealing with clients presenting with indecision. Nonetheless, the study reinforced the importance of developing career adaptability.

Gupta and Gautam (2026) addressed the question of whether career choices driven by passion or obligation led to happier outcomes. They found that passion-driven career choices led to higher life satisfaction, but not particularly any greater happiness. They suggested that this is because people can derive happiness in a broad range of ways than through their career. The paper re-emphasised that careers can play different roles in peoples' lives as they achieve happiness in life.

Priyashantha, K. G. (2026). Individual differences and career indecision: a meta-analytic synthesis of person inputs, contextual barriers, and cognitive-affective mechanisms. Cogent Business & Management, 13(1). (Link)

Gupta, S. and Gautam, S.K. (2026), The Impact of Career Choice (Passion vs obligation) on life satisfaction and happiness among working adults. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Psychology, 4(4), 518:531. (Link)

Roundup

General career practice

Theme	Reference	About
Career counselling in the AI era	Maree, J. G. (2026). Constructing Sustainable Futures: Advancing Career Construction and Eco-Awareness in the Counsellocene Perspective. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(1), 24-35. (Link)	J.G. Maree is a prominent South African academic in the career counselling world. In this discussion paper, he offers his perspective on a new paradigm for career counselling in the AI era: "The findings suggested that career counselling practice move towards transdisciplinary approaches that engage people as active authors of their career-lives against the backdrop of social justice and planetary imperatives. The proposed model emphasises agency, hope, and adaptability while helping people recognise their roles in reversing environmental degradation and building equitable futures."
	Sipondo, A., & Terblanche, N. (2026). Designing AI coaches: a scoping review. Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 1–19. (Link)	Although focussed on generic coaching, rather than career guidance, this scoping review nonetheless provides useful insight by examining the effectiveness of AI coaching chatbots. 17 empirical studies were analysed through thematic synthesis. AI enhances interaction quality, usability, and engagement, particularly for structured tasks such as goal setting, reflection, feedback, and intersessional support. However, capabilities to generate relational depth, display cultural sensitivity, and deal with psychological nuance remain relatively weak.
AI in career professional training	Azeroual, A., Azhari, M., Haba, M., & Ahaji, K. (2026). The Contribution of AI Applications to the Training of Career Guidance Counselors: A Latent Class Analysis (LCA) Approach. International Journal of Statistics, Econometrics and Data Analysis Applications, 1(1). (Link)	This empirical study draws on insights from practicing counselors to examine the competencies required for effectively integrating AI applications into both their professional routines and their initial training. The findings highlight AI's potential to improve learner profiling, personalize guidance recommendations, and strengthen counselors' professional skill sets. Statistical analysis identifies two distinct profiles of practitioners regarding AI adoption: Class 1 (43.47%) demonstrates a proactive yet measured openness to AI, whereas Class 2 (56.53%) shows greater hesitation, with predominantly neutral or moderately positive attitudes. The aurhors discuss implications for both postures towards AI.
Career psychology insights	Priyashantha, K. G. (2026). Individual differences and career indecision: a meta-analytic synthesis of person inputs, contextual barriers, and cognitive-affective mechanisms. Cogent Business & Management, 13(1). (Link)	The study provided an extensive meta-review of a critical construct of career indecision, tackled in many ways by career guidance interventions. 65 empirical quantitative studies with correlational analysis (82 samples; N = 33968) published in English academic journals from 1977 to 2023 were included. Results indicate that adaptive person inputs (such as extraversion, conscientiousness, core self-evaluations, and self-esteem) and strong regulatory mechanisms (including career decision-making self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and internal locus of control) serve as key resources that substantially reduce career indecision. Conversely, maladaptive traits like neuroticism, affective distress (state and trait anxiety), external locus of control, and perceived career barriers are associated with increased indecision. The results demonstrate the importance of psychological states in career decision-making.

NB: The NICEC Journal will publish/have published a special edition on ethics in career guidance, due out in Early May. (This will be covered in the next edition of Career Insights for May-June) due in early July.

Primary education

Theme	Reference	About
Parent-child interaction	Yang, Y., Leotti, L., Shafto, P., LoBue, V., & Bonawitz, E. (2026). Parent-child interaction styles relate to preschooler's causal play, learning, and generalization. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 76, 184-194. (Link)	The role of parents in influencing children, particularly in secondary education, has been well researched and career-support interventions exist to help parents. By contrast, interventions to support parents with early career education at primary age are less well-developed. This paper offers interesting insights from education psychology about the potential ways to approach such support: In play activities, parents took different roles, ranging from being a teacher to non-involvement with the child's learning. "Parents' use of questioning and guidance in helping children generate evidence during the interaction predicted better learning outcomes for children. These improved learning outcomes were even observed following children's independent exploration (of toys), suggesting that guidance (particularly in the form of pedagogical questions) supports "learning to learn".
Early years indicators of child development	Seiden, J. (2026). Creating short forms of early childhood development measures: A framework for quantifying statistical, conceptual, and practical tradeoffs in direct assessment. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 76, 301-312. (Link)	Evaluation of childhood development are notoriously complex and expensive. However, in this study, the authors evaluate and proposes a shorter and more practical assessment. The theoretical framework and background of the paper provide a foundation for careers researchers to further develop a framework for testing relevant developmental characteristics at primary age, which are generally missing from our landscape of career measurements.

Secondary education

Theme	Reference	About
English system	Careers & Enterprise Company (2026). Careers education in England 2024/25 (Link) *NB: An orginal publication in March was updated in April.*	An annual review of the CEC's extensive data (over 330k learners contributed to their most recent survey) showed positive trends in all key metrics. Awareness of career options and apprenticeships has been tracked through the school years, and shown to increase. Average schools now attain 6 benchmarks. Gaps were noted.
	UK Government (2026). Interim Report: Young people and work report - survey with education professionals. (Link)	A survey of n=1k educators by the UK Government, using a You Gov panel. found strong support for re-balancing the curriculum towards employability skills: Teachers generally thought that the curriculum puts too much emphasis on passing exams (74%) and not enough focus on preparing young people for employment (73%) or teaching soft skills for employment (73%). The majority of teachers (73%) believed it possible for the curriculum to be adapted to provide a broader set of skills for work and employment while still maintaining high academic standards.
	UK Government (2026) School and college voice: omnibus surveys for 2025 to 2026 (Link)	The Government published their latest tracker survey results from school and college teachers and leaders. providing results from Dec 2025. This survey covered career guidance: Specifically, the survey asked secondary school leaders whether their school received support from their local careers hub to improve the delivery of their careers guidance programme. 61% of secondary school leaders said that they did receive support from their local careers hub, while 11% said that they did not and 28% said they did not know. 75% of secondary school leaders whose school had received careers hub support said it had been very or fairly helpful. While broadly positive, results indicate awareness and adoption gaps.
Career interviews	Lonka, H., Souto, A. M., & Huilla, H. (2026). Ethnographic analysis of school guidance practices that dismiss youth-initiated topics. Ethnography and Education, 1-17. (Link)	This Finish study examined career interviews in secondary schools and found that certain "youth-initiated topics" - often contextual factors to careers - were dismissed: effectively treated as being *out of scope* for the discussion by the career professional (e.g. young people would mention impressions gained from family members' careers). In other cases, issues raised by young people were reframed by counsellors as a positive, but the authors reflected the speed of this reframing could be unhelpful in the discussion Examining the dynamics of the interview, the authors concluded that such practice has downsides for the student, namely because it "limits not only the kinds of topics that can be addressed in guidance {and} also the range of emotions that can be expressed."
Curriculum integration	Smith, E. R., Mayo-Holloway, C., Healy, G., & Jones, R. (2026). The Importance of Connecting Young People, School Geography and Future Careers in Secondary Education. European Journal of Geography, 17(2), 114-S. (Link)	Drawing on a mixed-methods study in a multi-academy trust in England, this article considers how geography teachers can meaningfully embed careers education into the school geography curriculum with the support of professional geographers and their real-world knowledge and skills. Findings from a survey (n=439) and interviews with geography teachers and students who visited a major infrastructure project as part of a school-industry partnership (n=22), indicate that immersive learning opportunities in the real-world can develop understanding of contemporary geographical case studies and help young people to make connections between the geography curriculum and geography-oriented careers

Secondary education *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Gamification	Fazria, N., Daniati, N. H., Ifdil, I., & Daharnis, D. (2026). Integration of Gamification in Career Guidance to Improve Students' Work Skills in the Digital Era: A Systematic Literature Review. G-Couns: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling, 10(03), 2356-2376. (Link)	This systematic literature review of 12 studies explores the potential of gamification to enhance students' employability skills through career guidance interventions. The findings reveal that gamification elements, including simulations, serious games, and metaverse based environments, effectively develop both hard skills (technical competencies, financial literacy) and soft skills (critical thinking, teamwork, communication) aligned with industry demands. Gamification significantly increases students' intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement in career planning, The paper offers useful information and ideas for those planning gamification activities. (Gamification research in the UK, to ground career interventions, remains relatively sparse.)
Access	*Hillman, K., Edwards, B., Edwards, D., Radloff, A., & Arnup, J. (2026). Equity and Participation in Careers Education: Insights from Australian Year 10 Students. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(1), 47-60. (Link)	This Australian study examines equity of access for Year 10 students from n=15,000 Year 10 students in Australian schools, using data from the first wave (2022) of the "GENERATION" longitudinal study. The study provides a useful benchmark and example study of access equity, with student participation in various career education activities. (The study provides an example of what would be a useful data set for the UK).
Parental attitudes	Public First (2026). The Parent Voice Project (Link)	This second Parent Voice study was published by Public First, describing attitudes of the UK's 12m parents: Their top two concerns amongst the survey was for school underfunding (32%) and school behaviour (25%). Attitudes were mixed on attendance and varied across what information the school should share - academic performance was believed the most important information to share (71%). Satisfaction was lower for parents of SEND students. Unfortunately, there was a lack of coverage in the survey for career issues, though the survey provided useful wider context about the landscape in which careers work is carried out.
Data	UK Government (2026). UK Government (2026), Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 16 to 25 in 2025 (Link)	Annual level 2 and 3 attainment figures have been published for the previous 12 months for young people, age 16 to 25, in England. Level 2 attainment was at 83.8%, down 1.4% from COVID. (Full level 2 is 5 GCSEs grades 9-4 or an equivalent qualification). NB: Most but not all level 2 qualifications are achieved by age 16.

Further education, vocational training and apprenticeships

Theme	Reference	About
Policy impact review	Holliday, R. (2026). The impact of policy changes on apprenticeship starts since 2006. (Link). Gatsby.	This paper provides trends and commentary on policy impacts on apprenticeship starts in England over the past 20 years: Apprenticeships have undergone significant reform over this period. The annual number of starts have fluctuated by a factor of about 3 (184k in 2006 c.f. 521k in 2010/11) in ways related to different policies of the time. 17 interviews were conducted with apprenticeship experts from across this time to understand the trends. Spikes and troughs were attributed to policies e.g. the 2010/11 peak coincided with Train to Gain funding removal.
Socio-economic drivers of outcomes	*Martín-Pérez, A., Valls-Figuera, R. G., Miranda-Santana, C., & Castellano-Hernández, M. (2026). Mapping social and economic vulnerability onto the progress of students in vocational education and training. Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 1–19. (Link)	This article analyses the ways in which the perception of financial stress interferes vocational education students' engagement and how this is related to educational intentions and trajectories and intentions to persist or drop out, using data from Spain, but broad relevance to most Western European countries at the moment. The paper gave four student profiles with different levels of academic integration and economic vulnerability, which could used to tailor more specific treatments to students.
Insights from the ATC 2026 conference	City & Guilds (2026). Future-proofing skills: Reflections and insights from the Apprenticeships and Training Conference 2026. (Link)	The Apprenticeships and Training Conference (ATC) 2026 brought together leaders, employers, providers, and policymakers from across the UK in March, with the City & Guilds providing a write-up retrospective. Workshop discussions highlighted the aims of reform as simplifying processes, reducing bureaucracy and giving providers greater control over assessment to create a more flexible system that reflects the realities of modern work and learning
Data - Technical education outcomes	UK Government (2026), Technical education learners survey (Link)	This comprehensive publication provides data from mixed mode research on T Level, T Level Foundation Year (TLFY) and Level 4 and 5 learners' outcomes, destinations, future plans and course experiences. Indicative findings for T-levels included that: Most T Level learners were satisfied with their programme (62%). Students gave the highest ratings for teachers' knowledge and expertise (72% satisfied), but scored course management lower. A lack of study materials (31%) and a lack of in-person teaching (20%) were the most frequently reported barriers to learning.
	Gatsby (2026), Analysis of T-level students' destinations: third cohort (Link)	This report outlines the findings of research conducted February-July 2025 into destinations of the third cohort of T Level students, who received their results in the summer of 2024. Overall, 1,154 students progressed to higher education (43% of the overall sample), 753 students to employment (28%), 435 students to an apprenticeship (16%), 129 students (5%) to further education and 235 (9%) to another destination, which included gap years and students looking for work or an apprenticeship
	Skills Development Scotland (2026). Apprentice Voice (Link)	Skills Development Scotland produce a suite of reports to provide feedback on apprenticeship experiences. The report linked to the left provides a sector breakdown. 94% of those currently in training are satisfied, as are 95% of leavers.

Higher education

Theme	Reference	About
HE expectations	Advance HE (2026). Pre-arrival questionnaire (PAQ) national pilot wave 1 initial results. (Link)	A landmark national pilot in England of more than n=7k students has revealed significant gaps between what students expect from higher education and the reality they encounter on arrival, with implications for how universities design transition support for increasingly diverse cohorts. Students were found to inherit many expectations - especially about feedback and support- from school experiences that don't transpire in HE. Only 39% anticipate making use of their institution's careers and employability services on entry, but 91% anticipate deriving employability benefits - suggesting irrational and unrealistic expectations prior to entry.
HE choices	Poole, J. et al (2026), Should I stay or should I go? Exploring the university choices of Welsh students. ADR Wales (Link)	This analysis paper from Wales shows the relationship between disadvantage, geographic mobility and aspiration: This Data Insight examines the characteristics of university entrants who leave Wales for the purposes of education and compares them to those who stay. Those students who leave Wales to attend university have higher levels of educational attainment than those who remain. The Welsh language, deprivation and social class background also play a role. Welsh speakers and those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to remain in Wales
Career capital	Basilico, N., Pedro-Aznar, P., & Peters, M. (2026). Soft skills as durable-adaptive capital: industry insights for career construction across the lifespan. Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, 16(8), 33-49. (Link)	This study analyses the increasing demand for soft skills from an integrated perspective, aiming to explain their function as durable-adaptive capital and enhance evidence-based career guidance and lifelong learning strategies, thereby supporting work adjustment and career construction across the lifespan. The data was collected from 42 industry representatives in Spain. The results found that: (1) intrapersonal self-management skills are chiefly valued for mitigating adaptive capital depreciation in contexts of accelerated technological change, thereby sustaining organisational competitiveness and (2) interpersonal skills reduce the effort and friction of coordination and improve the efficiency of task handoffs in interdependent work settings. The paper offers practical insights for lifelong learning and education strategies.
	Xia, F., & Huang, Z. (2026). Digital Literacy and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Among University Students. Exploration of Humanities and Social Research, 2(2). (Link)	This paper used a survey of 200 students to derive a better understanding of the various structural components of 'digital literacy' and their relationship with career decision-making. Being digitally literate reduced career decision-making confidence, which was attributed to the fact digital literacy exposes students to the full complexity of careers and careers decisions. While setting in China, the digital literacy constructs and ultimate conclusion provide insights into possible more universal dynamics.
	*Nimmi, P.M. et al (2026), Academic and Career Engagement for Employability - Towards a Moderated Mediation Model. Australian Journal of Career Development. 35(1) (Link)	The two surveys were conducted with a one-year time lag. A total of 231 (Wave 1) and 148 (Wave 2) students participated in the study. The results supported our hypotheses and highlighted the impact of academic engagement activities on management graduate students' perceived employability. The study thereby suggests at another promising intervention or activity for HE students by which they can increase their employment prospects.

Higher education continued

Theme	Reference	About
Career adaptability *continued*	*Oral Atac, L., Koksal, K., Turesin, H., & Gursoy, A. (2026). Does Students' Personality Play a Significant Role in Determining Their Career Adaptability and Employability? Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(1), 73-83. (Link)	This study examines the relationship between career adaptability and employability and the moderating role of personality, while using career construction theory as the framework. The sample comprised 317 students from the economics and administrative sciences faculty at a state university in Türkiye. Career adaptability significantly and positively affects perceptions of employability, and that consciousness and extroversion strengthened this relationship. The authors conclude that tailored career guidance is particularly essential for students low in these traits to navigate challenging labor markets.
HE experience	Office for Students (Link). Student insight report (Link)	The Office for Students published this new research about graduates' perceptions of progression and work prospects. There was particular interest in how well graduates felt their universities and colleges had prepared them for life after graduation Although 62% of the graduates surveyed said they felt confident about achieving their goals after graduation, only half said they felt prepared for life after leaving university or college.
International students	Dong D, Akkermans J, Khapova SN (2026;), "A qualitative exploration of initial career orientation construction during the school-to-work transition". Career Development International, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-09-2025-0480 (Link)	This paper offers a granular and qualitative understanding of the school to work transition of young people leaving HE and moving into the early stages of their life, drawing on data from n=25 Chinese students in Holland. Stages of career a) constructing, b) assessing and c) recalibrating are described, with both established career stage and cross-cultural factors at play. The paper helps to provide evidence for constructing relevant programmes for supporting international students into work.
HESA & Graduate Outcomes data	HESA (2026) Enhancing Graduate Outcomes data quality through targeted cognitive testing (Link)	For those using Graduate Outcomes data, it is worth noting that HESA are testing and updating their survey with the research company IFF.
Data	Advance HE (2026), 2025 Student Equality Data Dashboards (Link)	Advance HE published their 2025 Student Equality Data Dashboards, enablers users to delve into detailed data. This is the 18th year Advance HE has published student equality data for the UK higher education (HE) sector. 2023-24 marks the first instance since 2014-15, in which the overall student population in UK HE shows a decrease (from a total of 2,889,935 in 2022-23 to 2,848,240 in 2023/24). A number of indicators showed areas that need to be tackled, against a general backdrop of improvement over time e.g. specific disabilities. The proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students has been increasing year on year (from 27.1% of the total in 2021/22 to 29.7% in 2023/24)

Adults

Theme	Reference	About
Employment Act	CIPD (2026). Employment Rights Act 2025: key reforms now in effect (Link) and Employment Rights Act 2025: key reforms now in effect (Link)	Major workplace reforms from the Employment Rights Act 2025 took effect on 6 April. These changes affect workplaces across the UK. CIPD analysis of the act produced the finding that more than half of employers (55%) expect a rise in workplace conflict from one or more elements of the Act. Career coaches - who support clients through employment conflicts - would find the analysis of interest.
Early careers	Riachy, W., Sassine, M., & Subrahmanyam, S. (2026). Determinants of Generations Y and Z retention: A Bibliometric analysis of Job Satisfaction as foundational mechanism at the workplace. Enterprise Development and Microfinance, 36(1), 228-251. (Link)	This literature review covers studies on employment retention of Gen Y and Z employees. The paper highlights how HR Management policies, characteristics of work (flexibility), job satisfaction and job retention are linked. The study provides conceptual models that aid with programme development, while highlighting research gaps for Gen Z.
Choices	*Xu, H. (2026). The Reciprocal Relationships Between Career Wisdom and Proactive Career Behavior. Journal of Career Assessment, 34(2), 271-285. (Link)	This study investigated the reciprocal relationship between career wisdom and proactive career behavior, using a sample of U.S. workers (n = 995). The results underscored the reciprocal benefits of career wisdom and proactive career behavior over time.
Sustainable careers	*Paredes-Aguirre, M., Ayala, Y., Karaeminogullari, A., & Peñalver, J. (2026). Measuring Sustainable Career: Validation and Predictive Value of the Spanish Career Sustainability Scale. Journal of Career Assessment, 10690727261440543. (Link)	This study explores sustainable careers - how individuals build meaningful and healthy career paths over time - in Mexico. It thereby covers a different region of the world, but the model and lens offer general insight into the value of considering how different endeavours by people in different economic situations can create sustainable careers.
	*Kapil, Y. et al (2026). Navigating Sustainable Careers: A Review and Conceptual Framework. Australian Journal of Career Development. (Link)	This study presents a systematic literature review to gain deep insights and uncover key trends relating to sustainable careers, providing a body of evidence for policy-makers and organisations - while also being relevant to adult career coaches.
Decent work	*Atay, B., Cingöz-Ulu, B., Autin, K. L., & Allan, B. A. (2026). Work Volition and Decent Work: A Meta-Analysis. The Career Development Quarterly. (Link)	The Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) posits that work volition, a person's perceived freedom of work choice despite barriers, allows people to access decent work. Findings of 43 effect sizes (n = 18,659 subjects) were analysed from across 42 unique publications. A positive and large summary effect size ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$) showed that work volition was strongly related to decent work. Consequently, career support could positively contribute to decent work by increased the perceived choice of clients.
Emotions at Work	Navarro, J., Rueff-Lopes, R., & Otero, M. (2026). It's not Just Business: Frequency and Intensity of Basic Emotions at Work and Triggered Events. Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 42(x), Article-e260769. (Link)	For adult career coaches and employers, this paper provides a useful inventory of "emotions at work". Based on diary entries from n=104 employees, happiness emerged as the most frequent and intense emotion, whereas fear and disgust appeared less often yet could still be powerful. (With a small sample, the research provided an interesting and arguably under-researched line of enquiry to inform career and employment practitioners of ways that powerful emotions emerge in-situ in education or work environments).

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Race/ethnicity/culture

Theme	Reference	About
Cross-cultural measurements	*Carkit, E., Ireland, G. W., & Lent, R. W. (2026). Development and Cross-Cultural Validation of a Measure of Career Exploration and Decision-Making Outcome Expectations. Journal of Career Assessment. (Link)	Existing measures of outcome expectations in career exploration and decision-making tend are argued to potentially miss the full range of anticipated outcomes (e.g., self-evaluative, social) that could motivate or discourage students' engagement in career planning activities. Using a sample of US and Turksih students, this study explored the cross-cultural validity of career outcome measures. A 22-item, four factor questionnaire was found wanting in explaining aspects of the sample of Turkish students showing a potential inadequancy of Western instruments to capture the career motivations and expectations of different cultural groups.
DEI repositioning	Kabigting Jr, F. (2026). Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) gone wrong? Understanding the backlash and reinventing DEI using a positive approach. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 45(9), 156-174. (Link)	From an extensive review of media, the authors posit that "Traditional DEI initiatives, often focused on compliance and deficits, currently face an unprecedented backlash driven by legal, political and systemic implementation failures." In response, they propose "DEI must shift focus from punitive compliance to engagement and empowerment by integrating principles from positive psychology and organizational development."

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Gender

Theme	Reference	About
Women	Parvaneh Shirazi H, Al-Asfour A, Hajjami O (2026), "RISE after interruption: an intersectional framework for women's career interruption and reintegration". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 8 pp. 123–141. (Link)	This literature review examines how women, particularly with marginalised identities or experience, navigate, and recover from career interruptions. Four themes emerged: (1) caregiving demands; (2) economic disparities and deskilling, (3) workplace inflexibility and institutionalized gender bias; and (4) mental health strain and professional identity disruption. The study introduces the RISE model (Reintegration through Intersectional Structures and Equity) as a process-oriented framework that explains how women re-integrate, which could be useful to career coaches and employers.
	Institute of Employment Studies (2026), Webinar recording & slides: Still Climbing: Why women aren't advancing enough, and what organisations can do next (Link)	In this public webinar to mark International Women's Day, Dr Meenakshi Krishnan discusses the wide range of factors leading to the slow progress in improving gender equality in the workplace. The webinar describes the reasons behind the stalled momentum behind women's rise into management positions, from structural and cultural barriers to the lifecycle factors that disproportionately affect women's career. The webinar invited employers and leaders to reflect on using inclusive policies, supportive cultures, mentoring, and equitable opportunities to regain momentum.
Men	*Klarsfeld A, Ng ES, Legacy B (2026), "Unlocking hidden barriers: an overview and a research agenda on career challenges for disadvantaged men". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 2 pp. 211–223, (LInk)	The paper offers a critical approach to reviewing literature into the barriers faced by men from disadvantaged backgrounds: The paper reveals that men from disadvantaged backgrounds face multiple barriers throughout multiple career stages "rooted in gender norms, socio-economic inequities and systemic biases".

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - SEND/Neurodiversity

Theme	Reference	About
School-based support	Sutton Trust (2026). New poll reveals schools facing further painful spending cuts (Link)	Although not explicitly covering careers support - a poll by the Sutton Trust made for concerning reading about support for SEND students in secondary: Two-fifths of school leaders in England have been forced to cut back on support for SEND students due to a financial crisis "more than a decade in the making", according to a poll. Seven out of 10 (71%) leaders say they have cut down on teaching assistants in the past year, while 49% have reduced support staff. The crisis could escalate as 81% warn of further cuts in the year ahead.
University environment	Norman, J. B., Viole, E., & Bird, A. (2026). University Climate and Neurodiversity Accommodations: Associations with Academic and Social-Psychological Student Outcomes. Research in Neurodiversity, 100032. (Link)	This study reported on a survey with US students and their experiences of university: Students (n= 163) who perceived the university climate as more accepting and supportive of accommodations had higher sense of belonging, lower depressive symptomology, were more likely to say they could reach their academic goals, had higher academic self-efficacy, and compared themselves more positively to their peers. The results suggest for career practitioners to consider the students' university environment and experience as part of their interviews, to help overcome barriers to better career-related outcomes.
Autistic women employees	Institute for Employment Studies (2026). Webinar recording & slides: Good work for autistic women: Insights, findings and practical recommendations for employers. (Link)	This resource should provide a useful resource for coaches working with organisations, looking to support autistic employees: A webinar recording and slides has been made available from an evidence-based session exploring what good work looks like for autistic women and how employers, HR professionals and line managers can better understand, support and empower autistic women in the workplace.

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Disability

Theme	Reference	About
Access	Disability Rights UK (2026). Emerging Survey Findings Suggest Overwhelming Support for a New UK Accessibility Act (Link)	The extent to which disabled people find barriers across life was reflected in findings from a survey to inform a new Accessibility Act: 86% of Disabled people and their allies regularly encounter accessibility barriers, and that an overwhelming majority (97%), would support a proposal for new comprehensive accessibility law. Areas highlighted that relate to careers included 'barriers to work access' and barriers to accessible information'.
Academic careers	Donald, W. E. (2026). Paradox, power and positionality: contradictions in research on sustainable academic careers. Disability & Society, 1-7. (Link)	This essay examines five paradoxes shaping academic life for disabled scholars: recognition without redistribution, visibility and exposure, meritocracy and structural privilege, resilience and rest, and autonomy and interdependence. The paper argues for structural redesign to address these barriers.

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - Socio-economics & NEET

Theme	Reference	About
NEETs	Cedefop (2026). Building inclusive futures for NEETs (Link)	The report provides guidance to policymakers and pracititoners in supporting NEETs with vocational education and training (VET) solutions in Europe. Supported by analysis of ten-year trends, one of the main sets of recommendations is to provide more targeted soluions for specific gender- and geographic groups. The report called for "coordinated policy developments from all sides" for the EU to hit 2030 targets.
	Institute for Employment Studies (2026), Self-employment impact evaluation (Link). *NB: The full project, in collaboration with the University of Westminster and Youth Futures, has its own hub here.*	For young people who are NEET, the flexibility of self-employment could be a viable alternative route to move into sustainable and secure work. Yet few of the existing self-employment support schemes for young people have robust evidence to demonstrate their effectiveness. This publications reviews the evidence base.
Impact of school absence	Smith, E. et al (2026). Long term outcomes of student absence. Economic & Social Research Institute (Link)	This study uses data analysis to document the consequences of absence in primary and post-primary education for a range of outcomes in (early) adulthood. Absence leads to a strong educational outcome impact and modest impact on labour market outcomes. Prolonged absence is found to impact on several important dimensions of wellbeing and social connectedness.
Data - Youth Unemployment	Parliament (2026) Youth unemployment statistics (Link)	Parliament provided a compendium of statistics on youth unemployment with commentary, quantifying the present NEET crisis. Youth employment has fallen from c60% to 50% from 1993 to today. The report also chronicled recent challenges with collected enough data for the labour force survey that provides the relevant data.

Economics and labour market influences

Theme	Reference	About
Lifelong learnng	Cedefop (2026). An EU reference framework for lifelong guidance: (Link)	Cedefop, supported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and CareersNet, has coordinated work on a renewed reference framework for lifelong guidance. The first of 18 policy guidelines covers the development of career management skills. Guidelines 10-16 cover the requirements for different client groups, approximately corresponding to career/education stages. The report offers useful comparators to the UK.
	Cedefop (2026). Shaping the future of lifelong learning: policy scenarios for 2040. (Link)	This publication presents a set of five alternative policy scenarios for the future of lifelong learning in Europe: i) Flex Max represents high levels of both flexibility and permeability, ii) Rigid Islands reflects a scenario with low levels of both flexibility and permeability, iii) Fragmented Flexibility illustrates a scenario with high flexibility but low permeability., iv) Rigid but Internationally Connected describes a scenario with low flexibility and moderate permeability, and v) Gated Communities is a scenario with moderate flexibility and permeability. The scenarios points to how different paths provide benefits and drawbacks for learners.
	Cedefop (2026). Beyond skills development: unleashing human potential (Link)	The ETLS interviewed workers in the EU, Iceland and Norway to assess the development of various aspects of the workers' training, learning and ability to do their jobs. The analyses in this report underline the important role of workplaces and workers in supporting Industry 5.0. Findings included that: Skills development is strongly associated with the motivation to learn, the need for learning, the effort put into learning (the participation in learning activities). Motivation to learn, job autonomy and managerial support are strongly associated with a higher participation in all learning activities, both employer-organised and self-initiated. Overall, the results demonstrated a synergistic rrelationship between labour market requirements, workplace policies and environment and employee motivation and rewards.
	Cedefop (2026). Skill development and employment pathways for adults with low skill levels (Link)	This publication examines the characteristics, skills development, employment patterns and challenges of low-qualified and low-skilled adults in the European labour market. The report provides analysis on a relevant issue - whereby lower skilled workers have skills gaps and are also a lower probability to undertake education and training, exasperating the gaps, with a cost to both the economic and individua. Education mismatches are also widespread, but graduates in STEM, ICT, engineering and health fields face lower risks of low-skilled employment

AI and technology in careers

Theme	Reference	About
AI & Job prospects	Open AI (2026) The AI job transition report (Link)	OpenAI (the company behind ChatGBT) have studied 900 occupations and mapped a prediction for the short-term impact of AI on jobs. 18% of jobs are at a relatively higher short-term automation risk. 24% of jobs may see declining employment as task composition shifts while workers remain necessary for key task. 12% of jobs could grow because of AI as lower effective cost may increase utilization, affordability, access, or quality-adjusted output.
AI & Career access	Buchanan, R. (2025) 'Exploring the Role of AI in Career Access Through a Social Justice Lens', Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance, 6(1), p. 1–13. (Link)	The purpose of this paper is to explore the social justice implications for career guidance of the emerging technologies of career access. Emerging recruitment and selection practices – such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) analysis of candidates' social media presence and performance in interview, and the use of bots or virtual agents interacting with prospective candidates to evaluate, shortlist and profile them – demonstrate the complexity of contemporary career access in highly technological societies. This paper compares the uses of AI in career guidance and in human resource management and provides an analysis of emerging practices
AI & Creative Industries	Herath, S. S. A Strategic Review of Career Guidance for Digital Art Students in the AI Era. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Sciences. ISSN No. 2454-6186. DOI: 10.47772/IJRISS. Volume X Issue III March 2026 (Link)	This paper provides a review and discussion on the nature and implications of the rapid adoption of AI in creative industries, and its implications for career choices, careers and career guidance. It points to a "mismatch" between current arts/creative education - with its focus on technical mastery - and the labour market prospects being created by AI. The paper surfaces and discusses an important trend for career practitioners and educators alike.
AI & Work Satisfaction	Lee, E. H., Yin, Y., Jia, N., & Wakslak, C. J. (2026). Relying on AI at work reduces self-efficacy, ownership, and meaning while active collaboration mitigates the effects. Scientific Reports. (Link)	The paper addresses the idea that while Artificial intelligence (AI) promises major productivity gains, it raises fundamental questions about how technology can reshape people's relationship to their work. Across a pre-registered experiment (N = 269) and a follow-up survey (N = 270), we examine how different modes of AI use affect the confidence individuals have in completing work without AI assistance (self-efficacy), their sense of ownership over task output, and the meaning they perceive in their work. passive use undermined self-efficacy, psychological ownership, and work meaningfulness, with declines in efficacy and meaningfulness persisting even when participants returned to manual work. In contrast, collaborative AI use preserved psychological connection to the task, producing outcomes comparable to independent work.
Social attitudes to science and technology	Wellcome Trust (2026), Britain breaks trust with science (Link)	In Britain, science and scientists remain widely trusted. 84% of people say they trust science at least somewhat; 34% trust science 'a lot'; and only two percent don't trust science 'at all'. The UK's scientific expertise, research institutions and the NHS are shared points of pride and optimism. However, there are variations across society and - as we move into an age where technology and science are moving at pace - trust is not ubiquitous: The report shows how trust in science can be maintained through communication - of potential relevance for STEM related CEIAG.

Health and wellbeing

Theme	Reference	About
Career and happiness	Gupta, S. and Gautam, S.K. (2026), The Impact of Career Choice (Passion vs obligation) on life satisfaction and happiness among working adults. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Psychology, 4(4), 518:531. (Link)	The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of passion-driven versus obligation-driven career choices on life satisfaction and subjective happiness among working adults. Passion motivations seemingly have a strong influence on life satisfaction, but much weaker on happiness, suggesting a nuanced end-goal of career choices beyond "happiness". Happiness was achieved to a comporable amount by both groups - the authors proposed that this reflected how happiness can be derived by different people in different ways, with "career" taking a different role.
Absence in older workers	Gero, K., Benken, C. & Dragano, N. The impact of working conditions on sickness absence among older workers: a systematic review. Eur J Ageing 23, 21 (2026). (Link)	To explore factors associated with illness-related absence, this study involved a systematic review assessing the effects of physical and psychosocial working conditions on sickness absence among workers aged ≥ 50 years. Results showed that high physical job demands, physical job hazards, high psychosocial job demands, low job control, low rewards, effort–reward imbalance, low collegial and high managerial social support, low procedural justice, medium role clarity, high role conflicts, skill variety, certain work-time-related characteristics (e.g., shift work, long working hours, and non-flexible work hours), and - among women - sexual violence were all associated with a higher risk of sickness absence among older workers. Interventions were indetified to tackle issues. Results may be of interest to coaches and those working for/with employers.
Studying in employment	*Cao, Y., & Pil, F. K. (2026). Educational pursuits in career development: implications for individual stress. Career Development International, 1-16. (Link)	More employees are pursuing education for career growth, yet research on the emotional impact of engaging in education while working full time is limited. Using longitudinal survey data from working adults pursuing education, we statistically test how educational engagement impacts stress. The effect of pursuing education on stress was mediated by the acquisition of new resources (resilience) but not by the protection against resource loss (psychological detachment from work). Work identity plays a moderating role in this relationship.
Remote work	*Dissanayake, J., Kularatne, I., & Omisakin, O. (2026). The psychological impact of remote working on software professionals in New Zealand. Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health, 1–28. (Link)	This study aims to examine the impact of remote working on the psychological well-being of software professionals in New Zealand, with transferable lessons to other types of telework. The study sample consisted of 128 software professionals who completed an online survey and 15 participants who took part in semi-structured interviews. Findings indicate that remote working software professionals report positive psychological well-being, particularly in autonomy, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Interview findings further suggest that some participants described positive experiences of remote work, although several challenges were identified, including difficulties in environmental mastery, personal growth, and maintaining positive relations with colleagues.

Careers and the environment

Theme	Reference	About
Climate concerns, global issues and career choice	Zammitti A, Russo A, Marcionetti J, Parola A. Validation of a Scale to Measure Career Concerns Related to Perceived Environmental Challenges (the CC-PEC Scale). Behavioral Sciences. 2026; 16(5):636. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs16050636 (Link)	The authors propose that the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and increasing awareness of the climate emergency have introduced new and multifaceted sources of uncertainty that are not adequately captured by existing instruments. his gap highlights the need for a psychometrically sound measure to assess emerging career-related concerns in the contemporary context. Accordingly, the study aimed to develop and validate the Career Concerns related to Perceived Environmental Challenges (CC-PEC Scale). Four studies were conducted to define and validate the scale. The findings support the CC-PEC Scale as a reliable and valid instrument for assessing career-related concerns linked to global environmental challenges. The tool could be a useful one for career counsellors looking to integrate current global issues into assessments and wider practice.
Green careers UK	Nesta (2026). Green jobs: rapid evidence review (Link)	This evidence review, conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team, looks across the evidence so far on green jobs, including how green jobs are defined and what barriers there are to expanding them. The document provides a good overview of definitions, policies, and barriers.
Emerging occupations and sub-sectors for growth	WEF (2026). 50 Investible Opportunities for a New Nature Economy (Link)	This World Economic Forum report examines new economic growth sectors within the broader "new nature economy". While the focus of the publication is on investment opportunity, there is an implicit description of emerging categories of occupation type. 50 investible opportunities are described across 13 sectors. Sectors include (e.g.) chemicals, concrete, household goods and services. The "nature-positive transition" represents a ~$10 trillion annual opportunity by 2030,
Data - green jobs	UK Government (2026). Estimates of green jobs, UK: March 2026 (Link)	The UK Government have published their latest statistical release on green jobs: Using the headline industry approach, we estimate that there were 652,100 full-time equivalents (FTEs) employed in UK green jobs in 2024, an increase of more than a quarter (27.8%) from 510,100 FTEs in 2015, the earliest year with comparable figures.

What we missed last time!

In this section, in future, we'll mention papers or reports that were pointed out to us, and we didn't include last time.

If you see a paper that you want including, then please contact stephen.plimmer@thecdi.net.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Ground Floor,
Copthall House,
1 New Road,
Stourbridge,
West Midlands
DY8 1PH

e: hq@thecdi.net
t: 01384 445627

thecdi.net