CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Careers Insights

Sep-Oct 2026 edition

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 two months that are particularly relevant to the issues in contemporary policy and practice.

Research is critically important to the profession in several ways: 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 that can contribute to ongoing improvements, 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 a few articles that are particularly relevant to current issues in the careers world.

#1. AI impacts on work and workers

We continue to learn more about the realities of AI in terms of its influence on career guidance, career planning and careers themselves. We've included articles from each of these areas in our round-up this month.

For instance - Skills Development Scotland published the first deliverable from a new dedicated research programme into this area, quantifying how AI is being used in Scottish workplaces.

Harvard published a "best of" series that wrapped up some of the latest research on the impact of AI on employees.

Skills Development Scotland (2026). Spotlight on AI: How AI is changing work in Scotland (Link)

Masinter, A W. (2026). A Collection of HBR's Most Insightful Research on AI at Work. Harvard Business Review (Link)

#2. Work experience best practices

The Careers & Enterprise Company have produced their latest publication into the Career Impact System, with findings focussed on the realities of work experiences.

While it was unsuprising that provision was variable, best-practices were highlighted from stronger approaches: These "demonstrated a clear focus on learner development and progression. Work experience was intentionally designed around learner needs, integrated into wider careers provision and connected to future pathways."

A set of recommendations were provided for educators and Career Leaders, as well as policy makers

Career and Enterprise Company (2026). Careers Impact System: National System Review 3. (Link)

#3. Learning about childhood

"Five to Twelve" is a new longitudinal study led by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) supported by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and funded by the Department for Education (DfE).

Although not directly related to "careers", the project promises to offer transferable insight into the influences that affect formative development stages.

This first report describes a cohort who were 5-6 year olds in 2013, shedding light on a series of challenges and dynamics.

Allen, J., Wood, M. Light, R. et al (2026). Five to Twelve: Year 1 Report: Findings from year 1 of the Five to Twelve longitudinal study of children in primary education. National Foundation for Education Research (Link)



#4. A new green guidance framework

Although there is already a body of work in the field of green guidance, it doesn't often arrive in a form which can be readily applied by practitioners. In this work, a framework is presented to help to close this gap, grounded in five theoretical dimensions, derived through a combination of a literature review and inputs from an expert project group.

Dimsits, M. & Hooley, T. (2026). Environmentally sustainable career guidance (ESCG): A framework for practice. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 183-201. https://doi. org/10.20856/jnicec.5712 (Link)

#5. Ethical frameworks

John Gough provides a paper reviewing ethical frameworks in career guidance, by both examining international approaches and through personal reflection on his long career working in the field. The papers offers a useful resource for reflective practice, as well as a contribution to the area of ethics research.

Gough, J. (2026). Ethical principles in career guidance. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 171-182. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.5711 (Link)

Roundup

General career practice

Theme	Reference	About
Career concepts	Gerdel, S., Dalla Rosa, A., Dik, B. J., & Vianello, M. (2026). Calling Development: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Evidence. Journal of Career Assessment, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727261500055 (Link)	The authors conducted a systematic review of 14 longitudinal studies that analysed the relation between "calling" and other variables, shedding light on the nature of a "career calling". It was found that " calling is more often an outcome of career development processes rather than an initiating cause…. specifically, vocational self-definition, agency, and career feedback and appraisal appear to precede calling, whereas personal resources more often follow calling, and life meaning and values appears reciprocally linked with calling." The results provide insights for all coaches looking to nurture or understand a sense of purpose in their clients.
	Scurry, T., Burke, C. & Daubney, K. (2026). Integrating a relational understanding of resilience into career development: implications for practice. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 84-99. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.5706. (Link)	The authors reposition "resilience" from being a description to process, with institutional enablers. "the paper offers practical ways for career professionals to design more equitable support and to work with institutions and employers. The paper argues for a shift from 'building resilience' in individuals to an approach focused on creating conditions in which resilience can be recognised and developed in more equitable ways."
Ethical practice	Gough, J. (2026). Ethical principles in career guidance. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 171-182. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.5711 (Link)	Taking an international view, this article considers the common features of ethical frameworks within professional career work in different settings - their philosophical basis, and their implications for practice within challenging policy contexts. The author provides a discussion that encompasses a personal reflection, a discussion on the philosophical basis of ethics, the impact of personal values/beliefs/ideologies, and a comparison of international frameworks. The paper offers a useful support to reflective practice.
Practitioner research	Braun, V., Clarke, V., Donald, W.E. and Manroop, L., 2026. Reflexive Thematic Analysis in career development research: in conversation with Braun and Clarke. Career Development International, 31(7), pp.809-819. (Link)	The editorial by Braun, Clarke, Donald and Manroop (2026) explores the development, application and importance of "Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)" in career development research: a technique that is well-suited to practitioner research in which the researcher's subjectivity, interpretive role, and ongoing "reflexive" engagement are central and themes are constructed as patterns of shared meaning. This paper highlights the importance of understanding the philosophical foundations of RTA, particularly the necessity of a researcher's reflexivity and the influence of personal assumptions. The paper is particularly useful for practitioner-researchers by offering methodological guidance from the authors.

Primary education

Theme	Reference	About
Parental roles	*Sihan Liu, Qiandong Wang, Anan Feng, Jiefeng Ying, Zhuo Rachel Han, Longitudinal links between parenting and children's psychological functioning: The role of parent–child interbrain synchrony, Child Development, Volume 97, Issue 5, September/October 2026, Pages 1754–1768, https://doi.org/10.1093/chidev/aacag058 (Link)	The study provides insights for those working with parents and children in careers with a detailed examination of key mechanisms: This study looked at how parenting style might shape children's development through the way parents' and children's brains "sync up" when they interact with parents. Researchers measured brain activity in 105 parent–child pairs (children around six and a half) while they built with blocks together, then checked on the children's wellbeing a year later. Example findings were: Fathers who encouraged their child's independence, and mothers who were especially warm and affectionate, showed stronger brain-to-brain synchrony with their children. Children who were more in sync with their fathers went on to have fewer problems a year later with attention, anxiety or low mood, and behaviour, suggesting mothers and fathers may influence development through somewhat different routes.
Development & disadvantage	Allen, J., Wood, M. Light, R. et al (2026). Five to Twelve: Year 1 Report: Findings from year 1 of the Five to Twelve longitudinal study of children in primary education. National Foundation for Education Research. (Link)	Five to Twelve is a new longitudinal study led by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) supported by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and funded by the Department for Education (DfE). This first report provides results from some recent analysis - The cohort consists of children in Year 1 (aged 5-6 during the 2023/24 academic year) attending state primary schools in England. Participants were randomly selected from the Department for Education's National Pupil Database, with an additional boost sample of children eligible for Free School Meals. Survey interviews were conducted with 8,632 families in their homes between November 2023 and August 2024. Most families (83%) took part in home-learning activities at least a few times a week, but participation was lower among FSM-eligible families, lower-income households, families with lower levels of parental education, and children with SEN. Contextual insights are provided into the home circumstances. Children with SEN were less likely to have regular bedtimes or exercise daily, slept fewer hours on average, and were rated by teachers as having less developed motor skills. Children eligible for FSM were also rated as having less well-developed motor skills. Most families (83%) took part in home learning activities at least a few times a week, but participation was lower among FSM-eligible families, lower-income households, families with lower levels of parental education, and children with SEN.

Secondary education

Theme	Reference	About
	Career and Enterprise Company (2026). Careers Impact System: National System Review 3. (Link)	The Careers Impact System is a process that drives continuous improvement in the quality of careers education in schools, colleges and specialist settings. This briefing summarises key insights from the 2025/26 third National System Review (NSR) conducted by The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC). This latest report focused on how education settings deliver impactful work experience for learners whose needs might otherwise go unmet, examining what works, for whom and how. Four key principles were emphasised from the findings:1) Understanding learner need is essential to effective work experience. 2) Work experience provision remains highly variable 3) Holistic and progressive approaches drive stronger outcomes. 4) Meaningful work experience is a proven lever for engagement, inclusion and progression.
National pictures	OECD (2026), PISA 2025 Results (Volume I): Future-Ready Students, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/73451bc5-en. (Link)	This first report volume detailing the latest PISA results shows the international status of education, generally, within the different national systems covered in the OECD. More than 760 000 students took the PISA science, mathematics and reading test in 2025 across 91 countries and economies, representing around 33 million 15-year-olds across the world. The highest performers in PISA 2025 across these three domains were the Chinese jurisdictions of Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and Singapore. Additionally, Estonia, Japan, Korea, Macao (China), Chinese Taipei and the United Kingdom were among the top 10 performing education systems. The overall performance of OECD countries declined, with the lowest average levels of performance ever observed in science, reading and mathematics. The report provides a good overview of the UK, while also providing a description of what the OECD considers to be a "future-ready student".
Career development	Sadeghi, A., Asgari, Z., & Lo Presti, A. (2026). Navigating the Future: An Overview of Reviews on Career Development Interventions in Childhood. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(3), 361-372. https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162261486649 (Link)	This paper pulls together eight earlier reviews from the past decade to see what is known about helping children and teenagers prepare for their future careers. The paper provides a rounded discussion on understanding career readiness in the modern age, its constructs and the conditions for its existence in young people. There's good evidence that skills like self-control and hopefulness can be developed, and that school programmes boost children's awareness of careers and their confidence, but much less is known about tackling wider barriers such as inequality or helping young people find decent, lasting work. The authors argue that programmes should move away from simply matching children to particular jobs and instead build flexible skills for a fast-changing world of work, linking this to the UN's goals on wellbeing and quality education.

Secondary education *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Confidence	*Antonio, A. A., Sonnenschein, K., & Chiesa, R. (2026). Exploring Young People's Career Uncertainty: A Qualitative Study in Italy and Norway. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(3), 386-394. https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162261486167 (Link)	This study explored how young people feel about, and deal with, uncertainty over their future careers, with sustainability in working life as a guiding theme. Researchers ran eight online group discussions with 52 young people from Italy and Norway. They found that the uncertain felt by young people depended on outside factors (like the job market), their own personal qualities, their past experiences of making career decisions, and whether they felt able to achieve their ambitions. To cope, some people focused on planning for the future while others concentrated on the here and now. The authors suggest how careers advisers can use the insights to help young people feel more secure and build stronger career paths, by accounting for these differences in mindset.
Career readiness	Sulong, N., Mahfar, M., & Zakaria, M. I. (2026). Psychosocial Constructs in Career Development and Readiness Research: A Bibliometric Analysis. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 10(10), 1592-1608. (Link)	This wide literature review examines the concept of career readiness and looks at the recent historical evolution in related research: publication trends, citation performance, influential contributors, and thematic patterns are reviews from research on psychosocial constructs related to career development and readiness from 1990 to 2025, ultimately providing 41 publications. The findings provide a bibliometric overview of the interdisciplinary connections among psychosocial constructs, career development, and readiness, highlighting opportunities for future research across diverse educational and career-related contexts. Findings help with programme development and analysis from a wider psychological appreciation of the idea of "career readiness". The conclusions from the review include that: "{more} longitudinal and applied research is needed to examine how psychosocial constructs relate to career development and readiness across different educational stages and career transitions" A particular call is made for research outside of the West, where it is anticipated different cultures shape different processes.
Social and emotional skills	*Espagolla Santos, A., Leal Melo-Silva, L., & Barbosa Oliveira, J. E. (2026). From Emotion to Action: How Socioemotional Skills Shape Career Engagement Through Adaptability. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(3), 395-406. https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162261458235 (Link)	This study looked at whether "soft" social and emotional skills help university students take charge of their careers in today's unpredictable job market. Researchers surveyed 204 Brazilian students doing internships. Being well-organised and self-disciplined, open to new ideas, and sociable were linked to being better able to adapt in their careers. Students' levels of adaptability, especially caring about their future, being curious about options and feeling confident, were in turn linked to students actively working on their career development. The authors argue that universities should build social and emotional learning into their teaching as a core part of preparing students for work, though since the data come from a single point in time, cause and effect can't be firmly established.

Secondary education *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Career adaptability	Nuutinen, H., Viljaranta, J., Hirvonen, R., Souto, A.-M., & Lappalainen, K. (2026). Career Adaptability in General Upper Secondary Education: The Role of SES, Gender, and Socioemotional Factors. Journal of Career Assessment, 34(4), 724-742. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727251378130 (Link)	The paper reviews how and where career adaptability develops in secondary students, with the research being done in Finland, using a longitudinal study that followed Finnish students (214 boys and 243 girls) through education. Findings included that: "Initial levels were predicted by gender, family income, and school location: males scored higher in curiosity, concern, and confidence; students in rural schools showed lower control, concern, and confidence; and lower perceived income predicted lower control and curiosity.... Females exhibited greater growth in confidence and concern, while emotional difficulties negatively influenced the development of concern." The paper provides an important contribution to understand the development of an important characteristic (adaptability) for dealing with the contemporary labour market.

Further education, vocational training and apprenticeships

Theme	Reference	About
T-Levels & V-levels	Dabbous, A. and Gordon, J. (2026). V Levels - Reflect and Revise. Edge Foundation (Link)	This Edge Foundation report is moticated by England's planned new V Level qualifications for 16 to 19-year-olds, due to start in September 2027 with education, finance and digital options, and asks what can be learned from the rollout of T Levels. Drawing on a survey of further education staff and a June 2026 discussion with teachers, college leaders, employers and exam boards (before the government's updated plan was published in September 2026), it stresses the need for a clear purpose, well-prepared staff, flexible options for students, realistic timescales and good communication. Edge recommends delaying the first V Levels until 2028/29, letting students mix V Levels with other qualifications more freely, and giving clear guidance on which subject combinations work and where they lead. It also calls for extra government funding so that colleges aren't left covering hidden costs, arguing that V Levels could offer benefits if the government revises their approach.
Apprenticeships	Emms, K. and Laczik, A. (2026). National apprenticeship hub network (NAHN): Solent case study. Edge foundation (Link)	This Edge Foundation report is the first in a series of case studies looking at local apprenticeship "hubs" - free and impartial services mostly run by local councils that help businesses, especially small ones, take on apprentices and tackle skills gaps. It focuses on the Solent Growth Partnership, covering Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, drawing on interviews with 13 people including the hub's staff, local employers and training providers. The report describes how the hub works, with one-to-one advice for businesses and free workshops on topics such as inclusive recruitment and AI, to training programmes for young people seeking work; how it builds relationships with employers and local partners. It also considers the benefits the hub brings to the local area and the challenges it faces. A final report is due in late 2026.
	Chadwick, K. and Quew-Jones, R.J., 2026. "Just a tick box exercise?" An analysis of work based tutor intervention in supporting work-integrated learning. Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning, 16(2), pp.362-375. (Link)	The paper looks at how work-based tutors support apprentices through regular reviews, balancing the need to meet official requirements with providing meaningful help. The researchers interviewed seven tutors and surveyed n=34 apprentices at a UK university. They found that tutors check progress, but also offer coaching, guidance and personal support, helping apprentices connect what they learn in class with their jobs. The paper suggests that reviews should be adapted to each apprentice's needs, rather than simply being a box-ticking exercise. It also highlights problems such as limited support from workplace mentors, paperwork and a lack of training and recognition for tutors.
Data - Northern Ireland apprenticeships	Department for the Economy (2026). Higher Level Apprenticeships in Higher Education Institutions, academic year 2024/25	The Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) report covers provision of HLAs at level 6 and 7 in HEIs in Northern Ireland up to academic year 2024/25. This statistical report provides the characteristics of the students enrolled on HLAs in HEIs, along with information on new starts, overall participation and qualifications.

Further education, vocational training and apprenticeships *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
European landscape	Cedefop. (2026). Quality of apprenticeships in Europe: Cedefop comparative analysis of apprenticeship schemes based on the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships. Cedefop research paper. Publications Office of the European Union. DOI: 10.2801/ 8976480. (Link)	This Cedefop report reviews how well European apprenticeship schemes meet the EU's framework for quality and effective apprenticeships, five years after the last assessment. Most schemes are deemed to cover the basics on learning and working conditions, with steady if modest improvements since 2021, but the wider system conditions, such as governance, regulation and funding, are met more unevenly and in less depth. A key finding is that where employers' organisations, trade unions and chambers of commerce have a real say in running apprenticeship schemes, they also invest more in delivering them, which tends to raise quality across the board. The report urges countries to cover all the quality criteria more fully and in greater depth, and especially to give these partners a fair and equal role in decision-making, as this is the foundation for better apprenticeships overall, even if such changes take time to show results.
	Cedefop. (2026). Policy approaches to strengthening VET-business partnerships: insights from national policy monitoring and analysis. Cedefop Insights. Publications Office of the European Union. DOI:10.2801/ 3242917 (Link)	This Cedefop briefing looks at how countries across the EU, Iceland and Norway are strengthening links between vocational education and training (VET) and businesses, in response to skills shortages, new technology and the shift to a greener economy. It finds that cooperation is growing beyond simply offering work placements to include employers helping predict future skills needs, shape courses, train teachers and support regional development, with examples such as a French regional skills network reaching thousands of learners and a Spanish free digital skills programme where most of those gaining certificates were women. The most successful approaches include centres of vocational excellence, sector skills councils and regional partnerships. Small businesses often need help from chambers of commerce or industry bodies to get involved. The report suggests moving away from one-off projects towards long-term partnerships that give employers a "real role", benefiting them, learners and trainers alike.
	Cedefop. (2026). Inclusion at the core of future-proof VET in Europe: insights from national policy monitoring and analysis. Cedefop Insights. Publications Office of the European Union. DOI: 10.2801/8795040. (Link)	This Cedefop briefing looks at how countries across Europe are making vocational education and training more inclusive, so that everyone, including early school leavers, unemployed young people and adults, disabled people, migrants and refugees, can benefit from learning throughout their lives. Countries are using approaches such as flexible, bite-sized courses and qualifications, recognising skills people already have (especially helpful for newly arrived migrants), personalised careers guidance, online services, and sharing data to spot learners at risk of dropping out early. It also highlights campaigns and role models encouraging more women into science, technology and other fields where they are under-represented, while stressing that teachers need training to support diverse learners and that digital tools must not leave some people behind. The report argues that inclusion should be built into the whole system rather than treated as an add-on, and that making VET more inclusive goes hand in hand with improving its quality and appeal.

Higher education

Theme	Reference	About
Career adaptability & other capabilities	Mazzetti, G., Van Der Heijden, B. I. J. M., Chiesa, R., Mariani, M. G., & Guglielmi, D. (2026). "I'M IN CONTROL!" Toward a Moderated Mediation Model Predicting Graduates' Employability. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(3), 325-337. https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162261486653 (Link)	Data were collected from 5,310 graduates of a large university in Northern Italy to explore the interplay between attitudes related to "employability" concepts. Political skill was positively associated with self-perceived employability, both directly and indirectly through job search self-efficacy. Internal locus of control strengthened the positive relationship between political skill and job search self-efficacy. These findings clarify how interpersonal and personal resources jointly enhance graduates' confidence in navigating the labor market and their perceived employability under challenging employment conditions.
	* Eryılmaz, A., & Kara, A. (2026). A longitudinal examination of the time-lagged pathways between career adaptability, career engagement, and life satisfaction. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 54(4), 654–664. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2026.2619844 (Link)	This study followed 168 university students from Turkey at two points in time to see how being adaptable in their career, actively working on it, and feeling happy with life are all inter-connected. Students who were more adaptable at the start went on to be more actively engaged in their career development later. In turn, students who were more engaged in their careers at the start went on to feel more satisfied with their lives. Put simply, being adaptable seems to lead to more effort on your career, and that effort appears to be what boosts overall life satisfaction.
	Santos, A.E., Melo-Silva, L.L. and Oliveira, J.E.B., What Drives Career Engagement? The Predictive Role of Socioemotional Skills and Career Adaptability. Canadian Journal of Career Development. 25(2), pp164-176 (Link)	This study based in Brazil looked at what helps university students take an active role in building their careers in an uncertain, fast-changing job market. Researchers surveyed 204 students on internships and found that social and emotional skills were clearly linked to how much effort students put into their career development. However, career adaptability, especially caring about their future, feeling confident and being curious about options, made an even bigger difference, and together these factors explained around 60% of the differences in the levels of student career engagement. The authors conclude that social and emotional skills lay the groundwork, while being adaptable is the more direct driver of student career activity.
	*Underwood, J. J. B., Li, L. P., & Yahya, A. N. B. (2026). Career Adaptability in Higher Education Across Asia: A Systematic Literature Review. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(3), 443-459. https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162261476846 (Link)	This literature review examined the factors associated with career adaptability within the context of higher education in Asia. A total of 52 peer-reviewed publications were analysed. The source provides a useful resource for researchers by way of a comparison with European-centric studies in how career adaptability is seen to arise and manifest itself.

Higher education *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Outlook, hope and self-efficacy	Kara, A. (2026). Unravelling the chain link between hope, self-reflection, career adaptability, and career future: a hope-centered model of career development perspective. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2026.2741338 (Link)	This study tested a chain of links between hope and how positively students see their career future, based on a model of career development that puts "hope" at its centre. Researchers surveyed 310 Turkish university students. Results found that hope didn't directly lead to a brighter career outlook on its own. Instead, more hopeful students tended to reflect more on themselves, which made them more adaptable in their careers, and that adaptability was linked to feeling more positive and prepared about their career future. The findings suggest this hope-based approach to career development works well in a Turkish context.
	Maeba, K., 2026. Characteristics of Sources of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Based on the Personality Traits. Canadian Journal of Career Development, 25(2), pp.176-188. (Link)	This study explored whether students' personalities affect how confident they feel about making career decisions, and where that confidence comes from. Researchers surveyed 248 Japanese university students and sorted them into four personality types: resilient (well-balanced and emotionally stable), undercontrolled (more impulsive), overcontrolled (more anxious and inhibited) and reserved (quieter and more cautious). The resilient group scored highest on everything, feeling most confident about career decisions and drawing most on the usual sources of confidence: their own past successes, seeing others succeed, encouragement from others, and how calm or anxious they feel. The authors suggest careers support could be tailored to different types of student presentation - as per those described by the study - to help students build confidence in their career choices from different starting-points.
	Dozier, V.C., Leierer, S.J., Li, Q. and Reardon, R.C., 2026. The Relationship between the Career Decision State and Ambiguity Tolerance: Implications for Career Decision-Making Readiness. Canadian Journal of Career Development, 25(2), pp.190-198. (Link)	This exploratory study from the US looked at whether how well people cope with uncertainty affects how ready they are to make career decisions. Researchers surveyed 107 university students taking a career development class, measuring how certain, satisfied and clear they felt about their career choices, and how uncomfortable they felt when faced with unclear or unpredictable options. Students who felt more anxious or uneasy about ambiguity tended to feel less certain, less satisfied and less clear about their career decisions. The authors suggest that helping students become more comfortable with uncertainty could be a useful focus for careers support and future research.

Higher education *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
International students	Gupta, K. (2026). The sunk-cost trap in study-abroad decisions. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 68-83. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.5705 (Link)	With increasing amounts of international study, the paper provided a review of the decision to study a degree abroad, and highlights how the increased investment in such decisions can lead to biases in subsequent subject decisions. This article argues they are unusually prone to sunk-cost effects and escalation of commitment, amplified when families rather than individuals decide. Loss aversion makes withdrawal feel like defeat; status acts as a social sunk cost that raises the price of changing course; and study abroad is above all an investment in an anticipated career, whose perceived loss operates as a further potent sunk cost. The article connects these mechanisms to family decision-making and develops de-biasing strategies for careers practice before commitment, during study and at reconsideration." Implications are provided for career advisers who support clients involved in such decisions.

Adults

Theme	Reference	About
National systems	Hooley, T. and Staunton, T. (2026). International approaches to career development for working people. International Centre for Guidance Studies. University of Derby (Link)	"The report explores how nine countries support the career development of people already in work, examining the systems, services and delivery models used. It draws out examples of practice that could inform the development of career guidance for working adults in England." The case studies were gathered from eight European countries, Canada, South Korea and New Zealand. The report extracts seven principles that the authors believe could be useful for developing the English system: 1) Awareness schemes are needed to drive success, 2) Services need visible, recognisable access points 3) Place-based, workplace-based and online delivery each play a role, 4) Targeted and universal provision work together, 5) Engagement is critical with the employment sector, 6) The link between guidance and lifelong learning is critical and 7) Though technology is important, services need to be human centric.
Career orientations	Kim, T., Lee, J. M., & Chang, K. (2026). Career Orientations, Career Management, and Adaptability Under Career Constraints. Journal of Career Development, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453261502984 (Link)	Protean and boundaryless careers remain of interest in modern career settings: This study examines how boundaryless and protean career orientations relate to career management behaviors (career planning and career learning) and career adaptability in the setting of those pursuing sports careers in South Korea. Survey data were collected from 310 athletes. "Protean career orientation was positively associated with career planning and career learning, whereas boundaryless career orientation was associated only with career planning. Both career management behaviors were positively related to career adaptability. The findings suggest that self-directed, values-based career orientations are more consistently associated with sustained engagement than openness to opportunities." The results shed further light on the dynamics that relate career orientations, beliefs and behaviours.
Adaptability & other skills	Avanesian, G., Shipitko, O. & Borovskaya, M. Beyond wages: the role of non-cognitive skills in job satisfaction of young workers. J Labour Market Res 60, 22 (2026). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12651-026-00441-5 (Link)	This study from Russia examines the estimates the effect of non-cognitive skills on job satisfaction among young adults aged 15–29 - and as such, reviews similar past studies on the relationship between personality factors and job satisfaction and other outcomes. The research in this paper assesses whether noncognitive skills, approximated by the Big Five taxonomy (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability), influence job satisfaction across several dimensions: overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with working conditions, satisfaction with pay, and satisfaction with career development opportunities. It was found that extraversion, emotional stability, and conscientiousness have significant positive effects on overall job satisfaction. Moreover, the effects of extraversion on job satisfaction is strongest among low-paid workers. The study draws the relationships together into a set of recommendations for employers aiming to maximise the job satisfaction of younger workers.

Adults *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Career satisfaction	Walker, L., Swift, H.J. & Sutton, R. (2026). The lived experience of work fulfilment: A qualitative examination across groups. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 135-153. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.5709 (Link)	The paper explores the idea of work fulfillment - addressing "how is it experienced?" : "60 participants were interviewed to explore how work fulfilment is experienced, within and across groups (midlife women, midlife men, and women in their 20s). Thematic analysis identified six themes: work fulfilment is making a positive difference, energising, authentic, connected, freeing, and life enabling, forming a model (the PEACeFuL framework), which can be used by adult career coaches/counsellors.
Working life in Ireland	Department for the Economy (2026). Working in Ireland Survey 2025 (Link)	This report describes results of a survey that examines working situations across Ireland on a range of themes related to the Good Jobs agenda e.g. work conditions, trade union activity, pay, job security, flexibility, work intensity, artificial intelligence and meaningful work. Three separate reports are produced: GenAI use, a health and wellbeing report and a low pay in Northern Ireland report. GenAI use was found to be strongly determined by occupation status and, to a lesser degree, salary, and most used by the 25-34 year old age group. The health and wellbeing report found sectoral differences with elevated risks in sectors such as human health, transport and hospitality, and wholesale and retail, particularly in NI. The low pay report found that, on the conventional hourly measure, low pay in Northern Ireland has fallen sharply, from around one in five employee jobs a decade ago to 3.4% (based on ASHE data). However low pay and manifests as a result of both the rate of pay and workers' terms and conditions.
Gen Z	Magá AL, Silva LHGD, Passos APPD (2026), "Generation Z in the periphery: career prospects for young people from the periphery in the job market". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 7 pp. 885–901, doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-05-2025-0229 (Link)	The study examined career concerns from young people in Brazil via semi-structured interviews with 16 Generation Z youths participating in a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Rio de Janeiro. Initially, these young people take informal and precarious jobs out of necessity. Over time, they seek qualifications, financial stability, and better working conditions. After achieving this stability, many wish to migrate to areas more aligned with their affinities, maintaining an optimistic outlook and aspiring to positions they identify with.

Adults *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Older workers	Børing, P. Do older employees have lower adaptive problem-solving skills than younger employees?. J Labour Market Res 60, 19 (2026). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12651-026-00443-3 (Link)	In light of the rapid pace of technological change, the paper examines the relationship between employees' age and their adaptive problem solving (APS) skills i.e. abilities relating to "engaging in cognitive and metacognitive processes to define problems, search for information, and apply solutions across diverse information environments and contexts." European-level survey data was used from 31k subjects across 11 countries, with respondents 55 years old or older. "The oldest employees have lower APS skills than the middle-aged employees both within each country and in the combined sample of all countries." However forms of workplace flexibility help to improve APS scores. Results are of interest to employers or those working with older employees.
	Hooley, T. & Brown, C. (2026). Careers in later life. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 154-170. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.5710 (Link)	A discussion article on rethinking later careers: "This article discusses career issues for individuals over 60. It challenges the idea that later life is a period of 'decline' and encourages thinking about how people make decisions regarding work, learning, and life in their 'third age'."

Equity, diversity and inclusion in careers - General

Theme	Reference	About
State of nation	Office for Equality and Opportunity (2026). Call for evidence outcome: Equality law call for evidence analysis: findings related to pay discrimination (full report) (Link)	A review of responses to a government consultation into equalities within pay was carried out by Fortia Insight (formerly RSM UK Consulting). 176 submissions were received, of which 147 were included in the final analysis following the removal of duplicates and ineligible responses. Respondents submitted that pay discrimination persists across sex, race, and disability, and most submissions pointed to wider structural disparities as the root cause. Some respondents mentioned examples that could be considered instances of unequal pay for equal work under the Equality Act 2010. However, most referred to broader inequalities such as occupational segregation, differences in valuing roles, and the availability of flexible working, which are not classified as unlawful within the current legal framework. Disabled and ethnic minority workers were shown to be particularly disadvantaged.
State of knowledge	Kuknor S, Saadan S (2026), "Advancing diversity research: a systematic literature review for hypotheses development on inclusion and organisational outcomes". Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, Vol. 45 No. 7 pp. 1236–1275, doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-04-2025-0246	The paper provides a good overview of the state of literature for diversity and inclusion within organisations: "An extensive review of the literature helped conceptualize and develop a theoretical model and hypotheses, focusing on the interaction between diversity characteristics, organizational outcomes; and the moderating role of climate for inclusion." The paper provides some focus on the difference between surface level and deep diversity: "The study aids management development by highlighting the significance of a strong, inclusive climate to maximise positive outcomes of diversity whilst minimizing the negative consequences."

Equity, diversity and inclusion - race/ethnicity/migrant

Theme	Reference	About
Class and race	Berglin, J. (2026). "Behind the Beautiful Music is a Person": The Intersections of Race and Class on the Path to Careers in Music Education. International Journal of Education and the Arts. (Link)	The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine the experiences of music education students in several places: when they participated in education settings, identified music teaching as a career goal, and entered collegiate music education programs. Factors relating to racial identity and social class were examined. The interviews revealed key themes around race and social class, particularly regarding family's role, church and community in musical development, and money and/as ways to access education and thereby the profession. Although based in the US, there are useful considertations raised for the combined effects of race and class, and also how this plays out in arts education, where characteristics of the field compound the challenges of exclusion.
Migrants	Rengifo, V. and Dorceus, S., 2026. Educational and Career Aspirations and Expectations of Young People in Quebec: An Overview and Links to Perceptions of Discrimination Based on Immigration Status. Canadian Journal of Career Development, 25(2), pp.69-108. (Link)	This study looked at the hopes and expectations young people in Quebec have for their education and careers, comparing those from immigrant families (born abroad or children of immigrants) with those whose families have been in Canada for longer. Earlier research suggested young people from ethnic minorities often aim high but expect to achieve less. This study found that young people from immigrant backgrounds actually had higher hopes and expectations overall, and the gap between what they hoped for and what they expected was no bigger than for other young people. Experiencing certain kinds of discrimination, such as being ignored or belittled, or facing physical or verbal abuse, was linked to expecting less prestigious jobs, but this was true regardless of migration background. The authors discuss what this means for careers guidance.

Equity, diversity and inclusion - gender

Theme	Reference	About
Women in work	*Greenberg, D. and Murphy, W., 2026. Women leaders in the "room where it happens": Gendered legitimation on male-dominated boards. Journal of Vocational Behavior, p.104269. (Link)	In light of under-representation of women in boardrooms, the study examines how women leaders pursue legitimacy on prestigious nonprofit boards, which are male-dominated. Data were collected from n=40 women directors. The authors find women oscillate between so-called gender-congruent and gender-deviant tactics to gain board access and garner legitimacy among the board elites. Through this process, women secure individual legitimacy yet simultaneously reproduce entrenched gendered norms. The legitimisation process is described as gendered, hindering women's progression overall.
	World Economic Forum (2026). Global gender gap report 2026. Insight report (Link)	The World Economic Forum's Gender gap index is given by a global tracking project. it continues to offer a consistent measure of the present state of gender parity, as well as the long-term evolution of global efforts to close the gender gap. The latest report provides a statistical review of trends, allowing UK data to be benchmarked against other nations (for best practices) as well against historic data. Twenty years after the index was first introduced, the global gender gap stands at 69.2% closed. The UK data (p366) shows a marked gap in the area of "equal pay for equal work", where the UK ranks 60th. The report also shows the disaparities in representation by sector, allowing benchmarking.
	Michaelides, A. and Van der Heijden, B.I., 2026. When productivity prevails: Governing trade-offs in women managers' career sustainability. Journal of Vocational Behavior, p.104280. (Link)	The paper explores career sustainability and uses the The sustainable careers framework. where career sustainability describes the ongoing maintenance of productivity, health, and happiness over time. This study is set in Scandanavia and draws on in-depth narrative accounts of 43 women managers in a large organisation to understand the nature of career sustainability over time. The context comes from the high demands of today's workplaces. The research describes five ways that the research subjects manage sustainability trade offs over time, called Productivity-driven focus, Adaptation through regulation, Endurance under constraint, Externally regulated optimization, and Relationally enabled sustainability. Women dynamically adjust the prioritization of their productivity, health, and happiness amid changing work demands, relational arrangements, and life course circumstances.
Transgender experience	Lee, B., & Lee, J. (2026). Pushed Out, Pushing Back: Korean Transgender and Nonbinary People's Job Search Experiences. Journal of Career Assessment, 34(4), 839-861. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727251379448 (Link)	This research specifically examines career challenges of transgender people remains relatively sparse. This relatively rare study from Korea provides insights into resilient and proactive strategies that Korean transgender and nonbinary (TNB) people utilize in face of barriers and discrimination in their job search process - aged 24-37. The paper found TNB individuals demonstrate notable resilience and resistance in the face of their barriers, "actively paving their career pathways". Implications are provided for supporting this group against the challenges they face.

Equity, diversity and inclusion - disability

Theme	Reference	About
	Parry, J., Beigi, M., & Veliziotis, M. (2026). Equality at work: flexible working and disability: Written evidence from the Southampton Business School and Work Futures Research Centre. (Link)	The document pools evidence on the role that flexible working can play in increasing accessibility and inclusion for disabled workers: Flexible working is a vital tool for improving disabled people's employment outcomes and those of staff with long-term health conditions. It can help employees manage chronic illnesses, neurodiversity, fatigue, medical appointments, and commuting challenges, and to remain in work. Flexible working can be particularly beneficial for people with fluctuating conditions, neurodivergent workers, and older workers managing health issues.
Support in workplaces	Garner, O., Lanceley, L., Gloster, R., Dave, A., Campbell, B., Plowden Roberts, C., Hewitt, D. (2026). Supporting employers to recruit disabled people and people with health conditions. Institute of Employment Studies (Link)	This report came from the results of a rapid evidence review and is part of the Labour Market Evidence Programme. It presents findings from a rapid evidence review on what works to support employers to recruit disabled people and people with health conditions. The review covered evaluations of employer recruitment practices and active labour market policy (ALMP) interventions across UK and OECD countries. Case studies showed good practices such as "specific tools, access to external support, senior leadership commitment, employer knowledge and communication with potential employees." Inclusive recruitment practices were also described. The role of Active Labour Market Policy Practitioners was defined within the ideas that were offered.

Equity, diversity and inclusion - SEND/neurodiversity

Theme	Reference	About
Autism	Harrison, S. and Matthew, D. (2026). Navigating Career Development for Autistic Individuals with Lower to Moderate Support Needs: Integrating Evidence and Practice. Canadian Journal of Career Development. 25(2), 234-246. (Link)	The paper provides a range of considerations on the factors affecting career barriers, and associated career counselling interventions, for students with autism: "As awareness of neurodiversity grows, so does recognition of the unique considerations and strengths that autistic individuals with lower to moderate support needs bring to the workforce." Career counselling plays a crucial role in helping these individuals navigate the complex employment landscape and achieve their career goals. While many demonstrate strengths such as creativity, attention to detail, analytical thinking, and dedication, they also face challenges like social communication differences, sensory sensitivities, discrimination, and a lack of workplace accommodations. By adopting a client-centred, strengths-based approach tailored to each individual, the authors propose that career counsellors can assist autistic adults in identifying suitable career paths and requesting support." Practical suggestions are provided for career counsellors.
Best practices	Fogg, H. (2026). Career sensemaking for SEND learners: Developing an inclusive practitioner framework. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 21-43. https://doi.org/10.20856/ jnicec.5703 (Link)	This paper addresses the gap in clear best practices for SEND career clients: "Whilst contemporary career development theories have expanded understandings of how individuals construct career identities and make occupational choices, many careers interventions continue to rely upon assumptions of verbal reflection, future orientation and linear decision-making. Such assumptions may not adequately reflect the experiences of many SEND learners. This article presents the Career Sensemaking Framework for SEND Learners (CSF) - "an inclusive practitioner framework developed through qualitative practitioner research involving 24 professionals working across careers guidance, further education, specialist provision and SEND leadership roles." Findings suggest that practitioners frequently observe career understanding developing through experience, emotional response, observation and supported interpretation before learners are able to articulate preferences."
Insights from teaching	Isidro, M. J. (2026). Coping Mechanisms and Challenges Encountered by Selected Teachers in Handling Learners With Special Educational Needs. The Educators' Link, 6(9). (Link)	This paper is from the teaching profession, but may offer insights for some career professionals where the situations described are also found: This study explored the profile, coping mechanisms, and challenges of early- to mid-career educators handling learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Teachers employ coping strategies, including instructional adaptations, emotional regulation, peer collaboration, and self-care. Key challenges centered on lesson adaptation, behavior management, limited resources, and low parental involvement.

Economics and labour market influences

Theme	Reference	About
Government policy	Work and Pensions Committee (2026). Youth employment, education and training: Government Response. Fourth Special Report of Session 2026–27. (Link)	This is the fourth report of a series which focusses on youth participation. The report outlines the steps government are taking in response to the high NEET rates, "by investing an additional £2.5 billion through the YouthGuarantee and Growth & Skills Levy to create 500,000 opportunities for young people." Other change include "rebalancing Universal Credit to improve incentives to work", "removing the fear of immediate benefits reassessment for disabled people who want to try work or volunteering", and building personalised support structures and changing job-centres. The government gave their responses to the Milburn report, agreeing or partly agreeing with its various recommendations.
	OECD (2026), Mapping Skill Shortages in OECD Countries: New Evidence from the Updated Skills for Jobs Database, Getting Skills Right, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/735f9485-en. (Link)	The report gives a statistical snapshot of the international supply and demand for skills in various economies: It uses the OECD Skills for Jobs database, which provides a harmonised and objective measure of skill imbalances in 38 countries. Results reveal persistent and widespread occupational imbalances across OECD labour markets. Shortages are particularly pronounced in high-skilled occupations, such as ICT specialists, science and engineering professionals, health professionals, and teachers. By contrast, lower-skilled occupations are more frequently characterised by labour surpluses. Gaps were shown in the UK situation in areas of teaching, health professionals. science and engineering, and business and admin professionals.
Skills	OECD (2026), Policies for Developing Advanced STEM Skills in Higher Education, OECD Publishing, Paris. (Link)	The report focusses on the development of advanced STEM skills that are seen as critical for the economy. "The report identifies five bottlenecks: entry into STEM higher education; persistence and completion; progression to advanced levels; career entry and effective skills use; and skills renewal across working life." Policy priorities are outlined, with the report offering insight for career professionals into supporting relevant clients to overcome the barriers. Ultimately, "the report offers a framework for strengthening the development and use of advanced STEM skills and supports implementation of the European Union's STEM Education Strategic Plan: Skills for Competitiveness and Innovation."
	Public First (2026). Ready to Work. Insights from UK Employers on the Skills Young People Need for Work (Link)	Public First - commissioned by WorldSkills UK - provided a study that offered insights into the employer's perspective of young people and work: n=2,008 UK employers were surveyed between 30 April and 29 May 2026 to understand their views on young people and work, employability and technical skills. Most employers agree young people face a tough route into employment. Nearly 6 in 10 (59%) say it is harder for young people to get a job today than for previous generations. Almost all employers (95%) think that the 'right mindset' is important when they're making a hiring decision. Teamwork, attention to detail, work-quality and adaptability are the skills which are valued most.

Economics and labour market influences - *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Data - Scotland	Skills Development Scotland (2026). Economy, People and Skills (Link)	The latest statistical release has been provided by SDS on the Scottish labour market. "The UK labour market shows little change but remains weaker than a year ago, while conditions in Scotland continue to soften." Youth employment continued to rise, reaching 13.8%. However, since 2010, trends have shown a slight increase in employment rate (from 70% to 75%)
	Skills Development Scotland (2026). Regional Skills Assessments (Link)	Skills Development Scotland produced a series of statistical skills assessment reports, which are of potential interest to career professional looking to help people to find work in their local economies - "Regional insight is essential to show how planned investments, strategic developments and emerging opportunities could shape future skills demand. It is important that this and other local knowledge is considered alongside the forecasts included in this report, which are policy neutral and neutral to planned investment." In parallel SDS has also produced a cut of the data by different sectors to show the opportunities and trends (e.g. Digital technologies, Energy etc).

AI and technology

Theme	Reference	About
AI in career practice	Trottier, M. and Andraos, A. (2026). When AI Meets Academic and Career Guidance in Quebec: Changes in the Workplace and New Professional Challenges. 25(2), 8-41. (Link) *NB: Article in French*	This study looked at how AI is changing the work of careers advisers in Quebec, with the context that the profession is already dealing with staff shortages, fairness issues and a shifting job market. Researchers surveyed 314 registered careers advisers and found that many are using AI, mostly for everyday tasks like writing, creating visuals or handling audio (about 44%), while few use it to take over tasks or help make decisions (about 10%). Advisers said AI gives them more independence and makes some work easier, but it also makes the job more complicated and raises fears that the profession could lose its human touch, along with raising ethical concerns. Overall, AI is reshaping the job "gradually but significantly", bringing both opportunities and risks, while amplifying inequalities across work-settings and client groups.
AI-generated career advice	Williamson, J. and Milewski, S.D., 2026. AI-Inferred Personality Profiles of Occupations: Implications for Career Counselling and AI Literacy. Canadian Journal of Career Development, 25(2), pp.199-217. (Link)	This US study checked whether AI chatbots give students accurate information about the personality traits suited to different jobs, and also whether that information reflects gender stereotypes. Researchers asked three chatbots (GPT-4, Claude 3 and Gemini) to describe the personality traits needed for 92 occupations, then compared their answers with expert assessments. The chatbots were accurate in some respects but not others; for example, they never suggested that a job might suit someone low in conscientiousness or emotional stability. Their answers also echoed gender stereotypes, particularly about women's personalities, so the authors recommend that careers counselling can usefully help students understand such limitations of using AI chatbots when exploring careers.
AI in Work	Masinter, A.W. (2026). A Collection of HBR's Most Insightful Research on AI at Work. Harvard Business Review (Link)	This article contains a collection of papers that provides a round up of some preceding research articles on different aspects of AI's impact on the workplace. It covers how people are actually using AI in the workplace, why AI is not translating into productivity, the over-confidence placed in AI, health-related impacts and the ongoing need for domain experts to supplement AI outputs.
AI and skills	European Training Foundation, Bardak, U., Pouliakas, K., Hippe, R., Sostero, M., Tasiovasilis, M., Kizu, T., Tumurchudur-Klok, B., Strietska-Ilina, O., Martin Lataix, J. I., Iriarte, R., & Zhang, W. (2026). Changing landscape of skills in the age of AI. Publications Office of the European Union. DOI: 10.2816/7083675 (Link)	This joint report, produced by an international group of agencies working on vocational education and training, looks at how the growing use of AI at work is changing the skills people need across many different jobs. It finds that workers increasingly need higher-level thinking and people skills, alongside general digital and data skills, while a small but fast-growing number of specialist jobs are emerging to build and maintain AI systems. The report argues that understanding and using AI tools safely and ethically is becoming a new basic skill that everyone needs - an extension of reading or using a computer. Given how uncertain and unstable the job market is becoming, it calls for skills policies to focus less on narrow, job-specific training and more on helping people become adaptable, resilient and able to take charge of their own working lives.

AI & technology *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
AI and skills *continued*	Skills Development Scotland (2026). Spotlight on AI: How AI is changing work in Scotland (Link)	Through employer engagement, labour market analysis and ongoing research, a collaborative research programme will generate the evidence Scotland's skills system needs to help understand and respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by AI. In this report, there are early insights from Scottish employers and marks the beginning of the Spotlight on AI series and the development of SDS's AI Workforce Intelligence Hub. AI is already being used by 87% of businesses. One third (34%) of organisations reported using AI across some business functions, while 12% were still planning its rollout, and 2% said it was fully embedded across most business functions. At present, 70% of businesses report no material change in headcount. However, employment change is expected to become more visible over time, with just under a fifth (18%) of employers anticipating AI-related headcount reductions of at least 10% over the next three years.
AI-assisted lesson planning	Roy, P., Poet, H., Staunton, R., Aston, K., Thomas, D., and Styles, B. (2026). Lesson planning using AI lesson assistant, Aila - A Teacher Choices Trial. National Foundation for Educational Research (Link)	This paper provides an AI application from teaching ("lesson planning") that could be of interest to careers professionals who run classroom-based sessions. An AI tool - Aila is a lesson assistant that supports teachers with lesson planning and resource creation. The Education Endowment Foundation commissioned NFER to evaluate the impact of Aila on teachers' lesson planning workload. A school-randomised controlled trial, conducted over ten weeks during autumn term 2025, involved 464 Key Stage 2 teachers from 108 schools. Teachers in the Aila group were encouraged to use Aila while those in the non-Aila group were asked not to use it. Both groups could use other Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools. The lesson and resource preparation time spent by the Aila group was 76% of the time spent by the non-Aila group during the ten weeks of the trial. In this trial, teachers in the non-Aila group spent 3.3 hours per week preparing lessons and resources for their class, while teachers in the Aila group spent around 2.5 hours per week, saving 0.8 hours (or 48.6 minutes) per week on average. This reduction in teacher workload was achieved without compromising the lesson resource quality. Further analysis showed that the quality of the lesson resources in the Aila group was no worse than that in the non-Aila group.

Health and wellbeing

Theme	Reference	About
Uncertainty & anxiety	*Parola A, Marcionetti J, Russo A, Zammitti A (2026), "Dealing with career concerns in the contemporary scenario: the role of hope and intolerance of uncertainty". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 7 pp. 902–917, doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-05-2025-0233 (Link)	"In the face of a number of concurrent growing global concerns – specifically those related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the climate emergency – the researchers explored how they interact with key psychological resources, namely hope and intolerance of uncertainty, in relation to young adults' career concerns and life satisfaction. Respondents were n=536 young adults from Italy aged 19-30. Four distinct profiles emerged based on different levels of career concerns, hope, intolerance of uncertainty and life satisfaction. These ranged from a "High concern" profile characterised by high worry, low hope, high intolerance of uncertainty and low life satisfaction to a "Low concern" profile with low worry, high hope, low intolerance of uncertainty and high life satisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of considering"hope" as a protective resource and intolerance of uncertainty as a risk factor for career development and well-being." Results offer general implications for career counselling in uncertain times.
Health during transitions	*Bae, I. and Kim, J., 2026. Decent work as a pathway to well-being during the school-to-work transition: The roles of economic constraint and psychological career barriers. Journal of Vocational Behavior, p.104270. (Link)	This study from Korea on a nationally-representative sample gives longitudinal panel data on school-to-work transitions. The study was grounded in the Psychology of Working Theory. It examined the longitudinal associations between economic constraints during the school-to-work transition (STWT) and young adults' early career outcomes, focusing on decent work attainment and well-being. Higher economic constraints at one measurement point were associated with higher psychological career barriers and lower rates of decent work attainment at a later measurement point. The direct association between economic constraints and decent work attainment was not significant, whereas the indirect association through psychological career barriers was significant. Pre-employment financial strain and psychological career barriers are linked to young adults' later decent work and well-being. Psychological career barriers may be one pathway connecting economic constraints to later decent work attainment and well-being in career practice.
Health impacts of AI	*Baltacı, H., Yanikoglu, Ö., Can, B., Tosun, B., & Çetin, F. (2026). AI-Related Job Demands, Resources, and Job Crafting: An Integrated Perspective. Australian Journal of Career Development, 35(3), 407-419. https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162261475647 (Link)	This paper describes mixed results of the effect of AI on work: This paper analyses relationships between job demands, job and personal resources, and how they impact exhaustion, engagement, job crafting, and basic psychological need satisfaction. Data collection for this study involved surveys of 221 professionals. The results indicated that AI-related job demands do not directly lead to exhaustion, but effective use of AI increases work engagement. System resources only indirectly influence engagement and exhaustion through job crafting and engagement. Engagement reduces exhaustion and increases job crafting, while exhaustion hinders it. AI-induced crafting fulfills the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. However, high AI demands weaken the positive impact of resources.

Health and wellbeing *continued*

Theme	Reference	About
Health impacts of AI *continued*	Vasiakina, M., Dudel, C. The hidden costs of technological change: investigating pathways through which highly automatable jobs undermine workers' health in Germany. J Labour Market Res 60, 21 (2026). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12651-026-00444-2 (Link)	The paper addresses the health implications of AI and automation through e.g. "the risk of job displacement and the pressure to acquire new skills and qualifications." German panel survey data was used to review the relationships between employee heath and exposure to automation risks in their work. Results included that "the negative impact of high automation risk on health in Germany primarily operates through indirect pathways (related to mediators) for both genders", but "economic concerns – particularly job insecurity and worries about one's future financial situation – emerge as more significant mediators than automation-specific factors."

Careers and the environment

Theme	Reference	About
Pro-environmental attitudes in career choices	*Adjanor-Doku C, Mensah PO, Iddris F, Ellis FYA, Kwofie AA (2026), "Green futures: exploring perceptions, motivations and barriers to green career choices". Career Development International, Vol. 31 No. 6 pp. 649–669, doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-06-2025-0310 (Link)	This study explores the dynamics of green career choices i.e. "the perceptions, motivations and barriers influencing green career choices among National Service personnel in Ghana, highlighting green careers as key to addressing environmental sustainability and youth unemployment in lower-middle-income contexts. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 National Service personnel in Ghana to provide an in-depth understanding of green career choices. The study found green careers to be understood as value-driven roles focused on sustainability and environmental impact. Participants' perceptions were shaped by academic exposure, social networks, workshops and social media. Motivations included environmental commitment, social and global impact, innovation and international prospects. Barriers such as financial constraints, limited opportunities, unsupportive cultural attitudes and lack of awareness" also shaped how individuals made green career choices.
	Lessard, M., & Busque-Carrier, M. (2026). Linking Career Calling Profiles to Ecological Considerations in Vocational Behaviors, Ecological Worries and Nature Connectedness. Journal of Career Assessment, 34(4), 803-820. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727251380684 (Link)	The authors note the lack of attention given to "career calling" in relation to pro-environmental attitudes. This study aimed to identify distinct career calling profiles and to examine their association with ecological considerations, using results from n=622 French-Canadian adults. Results revealed four quantitively and qualitatively distinct profiles: Participants from two profiles characterised by an above-average level of calling reported more positive environmental attitudes than those profiles with below-average level of calling, as expected. These results support the importance of adopting a person-centered approach, and not assuming that ecological concerns should be integrated into career counselling in the same way for all.
Green guidance	Dimsits, M. & Hooley, T. (2026). Environmentally sustainable career guidance (ESCG): A framework for practice. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 57(1), 183-201. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.5712 (Link)	The paper offers a framework for the practice of environmentally sustainable career guidance (ESCG). A new definition of ESCG is presented, with rationale, and a framework grounded in five theoretical dimensions was developed. The paper, more generally, offers a brief review of the history of green guidance since the late 1990s, reflecting how the evolution of environmental education. The framework is developed from a literature review and discussion within a project group, consisting of guidance researchers, career guidance educators, guidance managers, and stakeholders from policy and practice.

What we missed last time

We sometimes spot things late and wish we'd included them, but not this time. However, if you spot any articles, reports, conference presentations or papers conveying new knowledge from the past two months that you think should be included, drop us a line. Similarly, if you see any work you'd like to see included over the next couple of months, please do likewise. Contact: stephen.plimmer@thecdi.net.

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