Country:	Global
Member/Company	IBM
Initiative	Multiple Initiatives

Overview

IBM Initiatives and Policy recommendations

Skills-First Approach to Education and Hiring

At IBM, we have been rethinking for a while now how to address the mismatch of in-demand skills and a workforce with the right skills to work in high-tech roles. In 2016 we coined the term "new collar jobs" to refer to a surging number of careers that don't necessarily require a traditional bachelor's degree, but instead need a specific set of in-demand skills. This focus on new collar jobs has allowed us at IBM to open the aperture when it comes to training and hiring for some of our most innovative and high-tech roles. IBM has now stripped bachelor's degree requirements for more than half of our US job openings, and we're continuously reevaluating our roles to prioritize skills over specific degrees. As our internal work continues, a successful reimagining of skills systems is going to require collaboration and innovation between government and industry to ensure students and job-seekers have access to opportunities to reach their full potential.

Skills

In October 2021, IBM made a groundbreaking commitment and released a global plan in to provide 30 million people of all ages with new skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow by 2030. This ambitious initiative kicked off with more than 170 new academic and industry partnerships, utilizing IBM's existing programs and career-building platforms to expand access to education and in-demand technical roles. Partnerships extend to NGOs, particularly those focused on underrepresented and historically disadvantaged communities. IBM's combined education initiatives reached 3.5 million participants in 2021 via IBM SkillsBuild, STEM for Girls, our Global University Programs, P-TECH, free courses offered on edX and Coursera, Cognitive.ai, IBM training, and other initiatives.

Apprenticeships

The IBM Apprenticeship Program – first of its kind in the tech industry – provides an entry point into IBM for people with relevant skills but without advanced degrees—what we call "new collar" talent. Our registered, competency-based program enables apprentices to be paid while they learn skills for various strategic roles. Launched in 2017, the program began with software engineering and has expanded to more than 20 occupations, including data science, cybersecurity, and design. We expect to surpass 1,000 apprenticeship hires by year-end 2022, and more than 90% of past program graduates have become full-time IBMers. We believe apprenticeship model can help close the opportunity gap as well as narrow the skills gap in IT. To promote this approach, IBM has committed to investing $250 million in apprenticeship and new collar programs by 2025. These efforts work to improve opportunities by scaling new collar programs and encouraging more companies to adopt skills-first
talent strategies.

IBM SkillsBuild

IBM SkillsBuild is a free, digital training program that helps students and adults develop skills, explore career options, and connect to potential job opportunities, regardless of their background or education. As of 2022, IBM SkillsBuild operates in 159 countries, offering over 1,000 courses in 19 languages in technical disciplines such as cybersecurity, AI, quantum computing, or data analysis, as well as workplace skills. Participants can earn IBM-branded digital credentials to certify their relevant skills, and a global network of 90 nonprofit
partners helps connect learners with local job opportunities. Most learners start with no experience and

can be ready to apply for IT jobs within six months through project-based learning and mentoring support. As of February 2022, 1.72 million students and job seekers worldwide have joined IBM SkillsBuild and completed nearly 4 million learning hours. Teachers also access additional resources to help lead hands-on projects and classroom discussions, as well as an educator dashboard to track students' progress.

Key Messages

Policy Recommendations To complement industry efforts and scale skills-based initiatives, IBM also actively advocates for policies that shift the focus from traditional degrees to verifiable competencies and skills and to modernize programs for students, job-seekers, and mid-career professionals to attain in-demand skills needed for good jobs of today and tomorrow. Specifically, we have been calling on policymakers to establish the following skills-based policies that would:

- increase investments for reskilling and upskilling programs to assist worker transitions, including incumbent workers
- allow the use of certain grant programs to go toward skills education initiatives such as apprenticeships, internships or other short-term college and university courses
- encourage work experience programs like internships during post-graduate studies to build career-relevant skills
- eliminate restrictions on online-only quality learning programs
- create a modernized Learning and Employment Records infrastructure to reduce friction in the talent marketplace

BUSINESSatOECD

Business at OECD (BIAC)
13-15 Chaussée De La Muette
75016 Paris
France
contact@biac.org | @BusinessAtOECD | www.businessatoecd.org

Established in 1962, *Business at OECD* stands for policies that enable businesses of all sizes to contribute to growth, economic development, and societal prosperity. Through *Business at OECD*, national businesses and employers' federations representing over 7 million companies provide and receive expertise via our participation with the OECD and governments promoting competitive economies and better business.