

Peer Review

Review of: "Enhancing Vocational Education and Training in the UK Through Youth Mobility Schemes"

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This manuscript tackles the persistent challenges in the UK's vocational education and training (VET) sector—stigma, skills mismatches, and unequal quality—by proposing the expansion of Youth Mobility Schemes (YMS) to include EU countries.

Major Strengths

Timeliness & Policy Relevance

In the post-Brexit context, linking educational reform to migration policy fills a critical debate gap and aligns with current governmental priorities on skills shortages and international collaboration.

Comprehensive Literature Integration

The authors synthesize decades of VET scholarship, engaging both competence-based (CBET) and “liberal vocationalism” critiques, and situating UK reforms alongside established European dual-system models.

Clarity and Organization

Well-structured with clear section headings that guide the reader logically from the diagnosis of UK VET shortcomings, through comparative insights, to the policy proposal itself. The writing is accessible to both academic and policy practitioners.

Major Weaknesses

Lack of Empirical Evidence

The proposal remains largely conceptual: there are no original data (surveys, pilot-study results, or quantitative projections) demonstrating how expanded YMS would concretely improve learner outcomes,

employer engagement, or skills-gap metrics.

Absence of Implementation Framework

While benefits are well articulated, the manuscript omits critical details on rollout mechanics—funding mechanisms, visa and accreditation alignment, stakeholder responsibilities, and measures to ensure equitable access for disadvantaged learners.

Limited Comparative Scope

By focusing primarily on Germany and Finland, the paper misses broader lessons from other high-performing VET systems (Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland) and from non-EU mobility arrangements (e.g., Trans-Tasman mobility). This narrower lens constrains the generalizability of its recommendations.

Overall, this manuscript provides a thoughtful and timely policy proposal backed by a strong literature review but would benefit substantially from the inclusion of empirical case studies, a detailed implementation roadmap, and a wider comparative analysis to strengthen its evidence base and practical applicability.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.