

Forum : Citizen's forum of Labour

2026

Theme : Empowering the youth to drive/ thrive/ embrace and match the requirements of the future labour market

Name of the citizen : Elena Chuchkova

Family situation ☐ Married / dating ☒ Single ☐ With kids, if so how many _____	Education level ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☒ University
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1. How are you concerned by the subject?

I am a British holder of a PhD in philosophy who is compelled to work as a secretary. If today I am unable to find a job that meets my qualifications it is simply because the labour market is not adapted to the ratio between graduates and high qualification demanding jobs. Over the last 30 years there has been a huge increase in the number of young people going to university, with graduates now making up 42% of the UK workforce. While degree-level qualifications are important for individuals, the growth in graduates has outstripped the creation of highly skilled jobs. This means that more and more graduates are now finding themselves in roles that would previously have been filled by non-graduates. To put it simply, there are more highly educated people looking to enter the labour force than high qualification demanding jobs on the labour market, resulting in mass overqualification.

I would also like to shed light over the fact that the economy suffers greatly from this mass overqualification within the labour force. Indeed, graduates who think that they are overqualified for their role are less likely to be in full-time employment . They are much more likely to be in part-time work (38%) compared with graduates who report that their qualifications are at the right level for their jobs (14%). As a result, companies must increase their cost for recruitment and see their productivity slowed down. On a national level, overqualification is then directly linked to a reduction in the GDP.

Of course in the era of artificial intelligence, one may not forget the fact that according to the World Economic Forum, within the 85 million jobs that may disappear, a significant majority of these disappearing jobs involve routine, low-qualification tasks such as data entry, administrative support, and cashiering often filled by graduates. Losing a job is already hard, but when one must pay off their student loan, it makes them particularly vulnerable.

2. What do you suggest on your scale ?

I propose that we start by putting up to date the careers information, advice and guidance system (IAG). Recent research suggests that current arrangements for career advice and guidance are inadequate. The IAG is able to equip individuals with the support they need to make informed decisions. This requires transparency of how modules and specific qualifications support progression, and information on likely return on investment.

Then, we need to expand incentives for hiring highly qualified graduates. More precisely, the government could provide tax credits or wage subsidies to employers who recruit graduates and PhD holders (instead of using AI for example) into positions that genuinely require advanced skills . This would encourage businesses to create and fill more high-skilled roles rather than relying on lower-qualified positions.

I am not entirely against AI. I do see it can benefit our global productivity if we use it intelligently. Indeed during my long studies without using AI, it would have perhaps given me the chance to accelerate my learning years and hence join the labour force much quicker. However we must regulate AI so that it doesn't increase cognitive offloading and erase more jobs.

We could create a National AI Reskilling Programme. A government-funded programme that provides free or subsidised training in AI, digital literacy, data analysis, and other future-oriented skills for workers whose jobs are threatened by automation. This would help workers transition into occupations where AI complements, rather than replaces, human labour.

Finally, for those unfortunate cases where working alongside AI is not possible and employees would see their job entirely replaced, we need to establish a temporary financial support fund for workers who lose their jobs due to AI-driven automation.