



5 – 7 June 2026

Cambridge , United Kingdom

Enabling Mid-Career Transitions through Lifelong Learning Frameworks

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Abstract

Mid-career transitions are an increasing challenge in dynamic economies, as technological change, evolving industry demands, and longer working lifespans require workers to continuously update their skills. In ageing societies, lifelong education systems play a critical role in enabling sustained employability and career mobility. This study examines how lifelong learning policies and programmes can effectively support mid-career individuals aged 40 and above in navigating career transitions. Using a systematic policy review approach, the study analyses national lifelong learning initiatives in Singapore, drawing on government policy documents, programme guidelines, administrative records, and official reports. The review focuses on SkillsFuture initiatives, including career transition programmes, course fee offset credits, training allowances, training subsidies, employer-led reskilling pathways, and career guidance and job placement services. The analysis synthesises programme objectives, funding mechanisms, eligibility criteria, and implementation strategies to assess how these initiatives facilitate adult participation in learning and reskilling. Findings indicate that well-coordinated lifelong learning frameworks enhance employability and sector-relevant skills among mid-career learners. However, persistent challenges remain, including limited programme awareness, resource constraints faced by enterprises, and time pressures experienced by adult learners balancing work, training, and family responsibilities. The study highlights the importance of flexible programme design, integrated career guidance, and cross-sector collaboration in improving accessibility and learning outcomes for mid-career adults. By demonstrating how education and workforce policies can be aligned to support meaningful lifelong learning pathways, this study offers practical insights for policymakers, education administrators, and adult education practitioners seeking to strengthen lifelong education ecosystems and workforce adaptability.

Keywords: Adult Education; Career Mobility; Employability; Policy Design; Workforce Development