The LEAD Graduate School & Research Network at the University of Tübingen invites you to attend the lecture by

Prof. Dr. Uschi Backes-Gellner
University of Zurich, Department of Business Administration

Measuring Occupational Specificity and its Labor Market Outcomes

Thursday, May 18th, 2017, 11.00-12.30 hrs
IWM, Schleichstr. 6, Conference Room

Abstract: The presentation is based on Eggenberger/Rinawi/Backes-Gellner (2016) „Labor Market Outcomes with More or Less Specific Occupational Training: An Analysis based on Skill Bundles“. The paper proposes a new measurement of the specificity of human capital investments based on Lazear’s (2009) skill weights approach. Using the skill bundles contained in training curricula, we calculate specificity degrees for 111 occupations and examine their impact on labor market outcomes of graduates. We find that workers in occupations with more specific skill bundles receive a specificity wage premium when staying in their original training occupation. However, at the same time these workers have a smaller probability of changing occupations and longer unemployment durations because of potential wage losses when changing occupations. Thus, our results reveal a trade-off between the returns and risks of more specific occupational skill bundles.

Biography: Uschi Backes-Gellner is Prof. for Business and Personnel Economics at the University of Zurich since 2002. She is also Co-Director of the Swiss Leading House on the Economics of Education, Firm Behaviour and Training Policies (joint with Prof. Wolter, University of Bern) since 2006, and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Informatics of the University of Zurich since 2008. She was a member of the Swiss Federal Committee on "Vocational Education and Training" (2004-2015), and of the Steering Committee for the Continuing Training Law of the Swiss Federal Government (2008-2013). Since 2011 she is a member of the German Commission of Experts for Research and Innovation of the German Federal Government (EFI), and since 2017 she is Swiss National Science Councilor. Her research focuses on Business, Personnel and Innovation Economics, and on the Economics of Vocational Education and Apprenticeship Training in particular.

Important Publications:

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