

CR&DALL Seminar:**The École Polytechnique as first vocational university? Towards a theory of the power of non-powerful knowledge**

Speaker: Dr Johannes K. Schmees, University of Derby, UK

Date: Friday, December 12th, 2025, 10:00-11:00 AM

Location: Room N307, St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon St, Glasgow G3 6NH

Abstract

In my presentation, I will draw on Herwig Blankertz's latest theory of vocational Bildung, which conceptualises access to general education through specific or vocational knowledge, thereby emphasising the educational potential inherent in vocational learning. An exemplary case in this regard is the École Polytechnique, which embodies the idea of generating new knowledge through particular disciplinary perspectives. Auguste Comte, for instance, was based at the École Polytechnique, where he developed the academic discipline of sociology by applying methods of the natural sciences to the analysis of society.

About the speaker

Johannes Schmees is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Education and Skills, University of Derby, and currently serves as Guest Professor at Berlin University of Technology for the academic year 2025/26. His research focuses on international and comparative studies in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). He has previously held positions as Postdoctoral Fellow at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and Lecturer at the University of Osnabrück. His work explores the comparison and description of TVET systems, the influence of international organisations and global discourses on national TVET policies, and the development of TVET theories.