NORWAY

Spotlight on VET

Further information

- Information on and reports from the research-based evaluation of the knowledge promotion reform [in Norwegian]: http://www.udir.no/Tilstand/Evaluering-av-Kunnskapsloftet/

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes % of all students in upper secondary education, 2011

Tertiary education % of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2012

Lifelong learning % of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2012

Early leavers from education and training % of early leavers from education and training, 2012


Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, data of extraction 20.9.2012.

Source: Eurostat, ENS data collection on education systems, data of extraction 20.9.2012.

All young people leaving compulsory school have a statutory right to three years of upper secondary education. They may choose from three general studies programmes and nine VET programmes. Upper secondary education, VET included, is provided by 19 regional county authorities.

Upper secondary VET is conducted both in schools and in public and private enterprises.

Training establishments must be approved by the county authorities. The standard two plus one model normally includes two years in school, followed by two years of formalised apprenticeship training. The first year consists of general education and an introduction to the vocational area.

During the second year, VET students choose specialisations and courses more trade-specific. While in school, students participate in practical training in workshops and enterprises. During the latter two years, apprentices are engaged in one year of training and one year of productive work.

Upper secondary VET is normally completed by a practical-theoretical trade or journeyman’s certificate. Successful candidates are awarded a certificate (Fag- og svenneprøve) for industrial and service trades or a journeyman’s certificate (Svennebrev) for traditional crafts.

There are many possibilities for transition to higher education from upper secondary VET:

(a) by completing the third year of upper secondary education qualifying for higher education, comprising the six key common subjects: Norwegian, math, English, natural sciences, social sciences and history;
(b) after completion of a trade or journeyman’s certificate:
(i) one-year course in the six key common core subjects
(ii) direct admission to certain specially-designed programmes notably, but not exclusively, in engineering (Y-xW)
(iii) applicants aged 25 or above with at least five years’ work experience in the field of study, and who have successfully passed a course in the six key common core subjects;
(d) based on individual assessment of relevant formal, informal and non-formal qualifications for applicants aged 25 or more, who do not meet the general entrance requirements.

Adults over 25 have on application a statutory right to upper secondary education and training. Education should be adapted to the individual’s needs and life situation. Adults also have a right to have their prior learning assessed towards national curricula. The process may result in exemption from parts of training. The experience-based trade certification scheme gives adults the right to sit a trade or journeyman’s examination upon proof of long and relevant practice. The candidate must demonstrate comprehensive experience in the trade or craft, normally a minimum of five years. Matures who have education in VET for holders of a relevant trade or journeyman’s certificate with several years’ work experience. The training, which combines general business management, marketing and vocational theory, is a public certification arrangement under the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Many of these programmes are provided by vocational colleges at ISCED level 4. Such colleges also offer a range of short VET programmes for students with an upper-secondary qualification. Providers design their own courses and curricula. Each programme must be recognised by a national authority for quality assurance.

In higher education there is no formal or other distinction between vocational and non-vocational core subjects: Norwegian, math, English, natural sciences, social sciences and history. The Ministry of Education and Research has overall responsibility for education and training at all levels. For upper secondary VET, curricula and the VET structure are laid down in regulations, and providers are required to comply with them.

The county authorities are responsible for the volume of school and VET provision; dispensing VET financing provided by the State budget (including apprenticeships); providing apprenticeship placement and supervision.

VET in Norway

VET in the Norwegian education and training system

Distinctive features of VET

At upper-secondary level, Norway has a long-standing unified educational system combining general and secondary education. National authorities own a major say in the planning and evaluation of the programmes. The results, published in 2012, show that there are two major challenges:

(a) encourage students to choose VET;
(b) encourage persons to complete VET with a formal qualification.

The findings state that the reform has not contributed significantly to increase either recruitment to VET or the participation rate. Although more than half the students who embark on upper-secondary education choose a vocational programme, only a minority complete with a VET qualification. Also, applicants for VET have decreased in recent years. Many students drop out or choose another year which prepares them for entrance to higher education. There is still about 40% of VET learners complete their upper-secondary education successfully within five years.

Research shows that there are remarkable gender differences in drop-outs; boys constitute a larger portion of drop-outs than girls. Drop-out is of great concern, and measures have been and are still being implemented. ‘No possibilities’ (‘Kviv’) is a major reason for student transfers, contributing to completion rates in upper secondary education.

The most critical point in completing VET is the transition from school to apprenticeship training. Supply of apprenticeships does not meet demand from enterprises. Entrepreneurs do not consider all students as qualified. The system depends on enterprises’ willingness to take on apprentices, and some researchers have referred to this as a structural defect in the system. The social contract on VET, signed by social partners and the authorities in 2012, aims to increase the number of apprenticeships.

Challenges

In 2006, Norway launched a comprehensive curriculum reform that included primary and secondary education. National authorities own a major say in the planning and evaluation of the programmes. The results, published in 2012, show that there are two major challenges:

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VET in Norway

All young people leaving compulsory school have a statutory right to three years of upper secondary education. They may choose from three general studies programmes and nine VET programmes. Upper secondary VET, introduced in 1990, provides courses for a total of 90,000 students in public and private enterprises.

Upper secondary VET is conducted both in schools and in public and private enterprises. Training establishments must be approved by the county authorities. The standard two-plus-two model normally includes two years in school, followed by two years of formalised apprenticeship training. The first year consists of general education and an introduction to the vocational area. During the second year, VET students choose specialisations and courses that are more trade-specific. While in school, students participate in practice in workshops and enterprises. During the latter two years, apprentices are engaged in one year of training and one year of productive work.

Upper secondary VET is normally completed by a practical-theoretical trade or journeyman’s examination (Fag- og svenneprøve). Successful candidates are awarded a trade certificate (Svennebrev). Successful candidates are awarded a trade certificate (Svennebrev). The examination is conducted by an examination board established by the municipality or county authorities.

Candidates aged 23 or above who have successfully passed a course in a relevant trade or journeyman’s certificate with at least five years’ work experience and/or education, and applicants aged 23 or more, who do not meet the general entrance requirements, are entitled to proceed to the third year of a VET programme. Adults over 25 have on application a statutory right to complete a trade or journeyman’s certificate (Svennebrev) for their own courses and curricula. Each programme gives adults the right to sit a trade or journeyman’s examination upon proof of long and relevant practice. The experience-based trade certification scheme gives adults the right to sit a trade or journeyman’s examination upon proof of long and relevant practice.

VET in the Norwegian education and training system

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Distinctive features of VET

- VET is a statutory right for all young people leaving compulsory school.
- VET is a major national project that aims at increasing the number of apprenticeships.
- VET has a unified educational structure, and VET is integrated as an equal part of upper secondary education.
- Most education at this level is provided by public schools. There are clear and consistent pathways and provision is mainly organised the same way. Since students have a right to attend upper secondary education, most choose the paths. In 2006, Norway launched a comprehensive strategy (‘New possibilities’ (Ny GIV)) to integrate upper secondary education, and VET is integrated as an equal part of upper secondary education.

Challenges

- In 2006, Norway launched a comprehensive strategy (‘New possibilities’ (Ny GIV)) to integrate upper secondary education, and VET is integrated as an equal part of upper secondary education.
- The most critical point in implementing VET is the transition from school to apprenticeship training.
- Supply of apprenticeships does not meet demand from enterprises.
- In 2008, Norway launched a comprehensive strategy (‘New possibilities’ (Ny GIV)) to integrate upper secondary education, and VET is integrated as an equal part of upper secondary education.
School-based VET is conducted both in schools and in public and private enterprises. Training establishments must be approved by the county authorities. The standard two-plus-two model normally includes two years in school, followed by two years of formalized apprenticeship training. The first year consists of general education and an introduction to the vocational area. During the second year, VET students choose specialist courses and programs that are more trade-specific. While in school, students participate in practice workshops in enterprises and during the latter two years, apprentices are engaged in one year of training and one year of productive work.

Upper secondary VET is normally completed by a practical-theoretical trade or journeyman’s examination. Successful candidates are awarded a trade certificate (Fagpremie) for industrial and service trades or a journeyman’s certificate (Sveermenn) for traditional crafts.

There are many possibilities for transition to upper secondary from lower VET: (i) one-year course in the six key common core subjects; (ii) after completion of a trade or journeyman’s higher education from upper secondary VET: traditional crafts.

Upper secondary VET and upper secondary education is normally completed by a student, who must have completed lower secondary education, vocational area. During the second year, VET programmes may normally be five years. Many specialized programmes in VET require holders of a relevant trade or journeyman’s certificate with several years’ work experience. The training, which combines general business management, marketing and vocational theory, is a public certification arrangement under the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Many of these programmes are provided by vocational colleges at ISCED level 4. Such colleges also offer a range of short VET programmes for students with an upper-secondary qualification. Providers design their own courses and curricula. Each programme must be recognised by a national authority for quality assurance.

In higher education there is no formal or other distinction between vocational and non-vocational courses. The Ministry of Education and Research has overall responsibility for education and training at all levels. For upper secondary VET, curricula and the VET structure are laid down in regulations, and providers are required to comply with them. The county authorities are responsible for the volume of school and VET provision; dispensing VET financing provided by the State budget (including apprenticeships). Providing apprenticeship placement and supervision.

VET in the Norwegian education and training system

TERTIARY LEVEL

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NON-FORMAL ADULT LEARNING

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SECONDARY LEVEL

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Distinctive features of VET

At upper secondary level, VET in Norway has a long-standing tradition as a national and regional cooperation between educational authorities and the social partners. At national level, cooperation is organised in the National Council for VET (Yrkessamenvirken), comprising representatives of trade organizations, private sector enterprises, labour market organizations and social partners. At regional level, cooperation is organized in the National Council for VET (Yrkessamenvirken), comprising representatives of trade organizations, private sector enterprises, labour market organizations and social partners. At upper secondary level, VET is integrated as an equal part of upper secondary education. Most education at this level is provided by public schools. There are clear and consistent pathways and provision is mainly organised the same way. Since students have a right to attend upper secondary education, most choose one of the three programmes of their choice.

Challenges

In 2005, Norway launched a comprehensive curriculum reform that is becoming the model for secondary education. National authorities ordered a major reform of the upper secondary education structure. The results, published in 2012, show that there are two major changes: (a) encourage students to choose VET; (b) encourage all students to complete VET with a formal qualification.

The findings state that the reform has not contributed significantly to increase either recruitment to VET or the participation rate. Although more than half the students who embarked on upper secondary education choose a vocational curriculum, only a minority complete with a VET qualification. Also, applicants for VET have decreased in recent years. Many students drop out or choose another year which prepares them for entrance to higher education. Only about 80% of VET learners complete their upper secondary education successfully within the years. Research shows that there are remarkable gender differences in drop-outs, boys constitute a larger portion of drop-outs than girls. Drop-out is of great concern, and measures have been and are still being implemented. ‘New possibilities’ (Ny GIV) is a major research and development project aiming at completing upper education for secondary education. The most critical point in completing VET is the transition from school to apprenticeship training. Supply of apprenticeships does not meet demand from enterprises. Enterprises do not consider all students as qualified. The system depends on enterprises’ willingness to take on apprentices, and some researchers have referred to this as a structural defect in the system. The social contract on VET, signed by social partners and the authorities in 2012, aims to increase the number of apprenticeships.
Further information

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Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research
Norwegian Ministry of Labour
Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry
Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training
Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education
Norwegian Centre for Lifelong Learning
National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
Statistics Norway

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes % of all students in upper secondary education, 2011

Tertiary education % of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2012

Lifelong learning % of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2012

Early leavers from education and training % of early leavers from education and training, 2012


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