


White Paper on professional studies

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 NORWAY

Timeline

2023 Design

2024 Approved/Agreed

2025 Completed

ID number 43665

Background

Norway is expected to face great needs for competence and manpower within a number of disciplines, especially within professional studies, considering the demographic calculations for Norway. This is particularly true in the fields of health, welfare and education, but also in engineering, as in location development and spatial planning, where the need for skilled manpower continues to grow.

Some studies in higher education qualify students for specific professions, such as teacher. Many of these professions are regulated by law and require authorisation, or they have certain formal requirements in their studies. Others do not, but still qualify students for a specific profession.

A White Paper on professional studies is a government measure to meet the need for more skilled manpower within these professions (such as lawyer, doctor, nurse, engineer).

Objectives

The government's aim is to have quality education in these professional studies and to ensure that Norway has enough employees with the right skills, at the right time, across the country.

Description

The government has high ambitions for these professional studies, which will be collected in a White Paper, expected in 2024.

Feedback meetings are organised to identify the challenges from the municipalities' perspective and listen to local and regional actors about what is needed to strengthen the capacity, quality and diversity of the studies in these specific fields of higher education.

The Ministry of Education and Research is planning six feedback meetings around the country in the period January – March 2023 on a draft White Paper on professional studies to be published in 2024. Universities and colleges, students, representatives from the labour market, etc., will be invited to the meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to map the most important challenges and discuss proposals for solutions. After the feedback meetings, from around Easter time until the summer, everyone will have the opportunity to

submit written input.

2023 Design

The Ministry's first step was to organise feedback meetings. Stakeholders, including universities and university colleges, students, labour market representatives, and the National Council for Higher VET, were invited. The meetings mapped out the most important challenges and discussed potential solutions. Following the information meetings, written contributions were received from Easter to summer 2023.

2024 Approved/Agreed

On 5 April, the Ministry of Education and Research published the White Paper on professional studies in higher education, and the government approved it on the same day. The Norwegian Parliament approved it on the 4 June, 2024.

The White Paper focuses mainly on studies with framework-governed study plans, like teaching, engineering, and health and social studies. Measures from the White Paper aim to make education more flexible and practice-oriented. Changes in the admission rules were also foreseen, and the government planned to open up pilot projects where craft certificates as admission requirements for health studies are to be tested. The government also improved the information for individuals applying for approval of foreign education or vocational education.

2025 Completed

White Paper 19 (2023-2024): Profession-oriented education across the whole country was concluded in 2024, and there was no further public follow-up after October 2024. Follow-up and oversight of the implementation of the measures set out in the White Paper rest with the government.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research (KD)

Target group

Learners

Adult learners

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

European priorities in VET

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

Further reading

[Fact sheet from Utdanningsforbundet about the White Paper](#)

[White Paper on professional studies](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Completed

Reviewing the admission regulation to higher education

The Norwegian government has appointed a committee of stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive review and assess the regulations for admission to higher education.

 NORWAY

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). White Paper on professional studies: Norway. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/43665>