

Political agreement on better pathways to education and jobs (2017): Preparatory Basic Education (FGU)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 DENMARK

Timeline

2021 Implementation 2022 Implementation 2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation 2025 Implementation

ID number 43042

Background

Nearly 45 000 young people under the age of 25 have not completed general (EQF level 4) or vocational upper secondary education (VET programmes with apprenticeship, EQF-levels 3-5), and are not in education or employment (NEETs), according to 2020 data. Young people who do not start educational or job-related activities immediately after compulsory schooling have a harder time gaining a foothold in the education system and the labour market later in life.

Objectives

The ambition of the Danish Parliament is that at least 90% of 25-year-olds should complete general or vocational upper secondary education after compulsory schooling (lower secondary programmes, EQF level 2) and the percentage of young NEETs should be reduced by half by 2030. The remaining 10% must be well on their way to completing education later or have a permanent connection to the labour market and therefore be entitled to be assigned a training plan. The goal reflects that society has the ambition that all young people should be able to support themselves.

Preparatory basic education (FGU) is for young people under the age of 25 who have not completed or are not in upper secondary education and who are not in employment. From a broader perspective, the purpose of FGU is to contribute to all young people completing upper secondary education or entering employment before the age of 25.

Description

In 2017, a committee of experts was set up by the Danish parliament to address the declining number of applications to IVET and to rethink pathways that would facilitate the transition from compulsory schooling to IVET.

By 2018, the committee's recommendations were accepted by a majority in parliament, leading to the creation of the Executive Order of the Act on Preparatory Basic Education (FGU). This law provides the framework for education programmes targeted at young

people under 25 who have not completed general or vocational upper secondary education. These programmes can last up to two years.

Additionally, the 2019 Act on municipal action for young people under 25 and the Executive Order on guidance for the choice of youth education and profession made municipalities responsible for supporting young people until they have completed a youth education programme or gained stable employment, under the Municipal youth initiative (KUI - Kommunal Ungeindsats).

Under KUI, municipal councils are responsible for making sure that every young person receives guidance on education and career options. For those who do not immediately enter the education system, KUI helps them navigate their way into education or employment. This also applies to young people who have not completed upper secondary or higher education. A personalised training plan is used to gather relevant information and offer tailored support. KUI also accommodates those with special needs through programs like STU (youth education for young people with special needs).

In 2019, 27 institutions were established nationwide, using a taximeter financing system to reduce barriers to education, such as distance and accessibility issues. State grants are provided for students over 18 (DKK 6.820 for students living independently). The first cohort of approximately 13000 FGU students began their courses in August 2019.

The FGU programme offers three types of training tracks:

- (a) PGU (production): Full-time, primarily practical in school-based workshops (two-thirds practical, one-third theoretical);
- (b) AGU (general subjects): Full-time, primarily school-based (two-thirds) and little practical content (one-third);
- (c) EGU (work-based learning): Full-time, primarily practical, alternating between school (one-third) and workplace-based training (two-thirds).

Since its establishment in 2019, around 24 000 students have enrolled in a Preparatory basic education programme (FGU).

2021 Implementation

In 2020-21, the first full year of teaching was conducted. Until the end of 2021, 8 000 students were still in FGU, 10 000 students completed FGU and 5 000 students dropped out from FGU.

2022 Implementation

As part of an agreement between the government and most parties represented in the Danish parliament, funding of EUR 2.7 million (DKK 20.2 million) was allocated to FGU in 2022, in addition to the special grants of EUR 14.15 million (DKK 105.4 million) that FGU institutions received in 2022. A total of EUR 28.6 million (DKK 215 million) was earmarked for FGU institutions for 2023. It was also decided to set aside EUR 6.1 million (DKK 45.5 million) for funding education for young people in remote areas, thus supporting small VET schools.

2023 Implementation

In November 2023, the government and all parties in the Danish Parliament agreed to strengthen the framework for preparatory basic education and training (FGU) and make it more financially stable. The agreement provided FGU with a more flexible framework for organising teaching, adjusted the financial model between state and municipality, and implemented the reserve set aside in a political agreement in October 2022.

This agreement sets aside approximately EUR 18 million (DKK 135 million) for a permanent financial boost to FGU and EUR 3.69 million (DKK 27.6 million) in 2024 for upgrading workshops, kitchen facilities and teaching materials at FGU.

Also, in 2023, the education minister established a team of experts to gather knowledge about FGU and initiate dialogue in local areas. This initiative was launched to support the implementation of the FGU reform.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, the Danish Parliament voted an Act amending the Preparatory Basic Education and Training programme (FGU). The Act implements the 2023 agreement. Amongst other things, this means that pupils in 9th and 10th grade who are deemed to be amongst the target groups for FGU can attend a bridging course at an FGU school. This gives young people the opportunity to test whether FGU is the right choice before leaving primary school.

In addition, under the municipal youth initiative (KUI) - which has the responsibility to ensure that all young people receive guidance on education and careers - the opportunity to assess whether FGU is the right educational programme for a student while they are still in 9th grade will be given. Currently, this is only possible after a young person has completed primary school.

Also, the Act provided for the simplification of the FGU institutions' administration as a result of the agreement between the government and all parties in the Danish parliament to strengthen FGU. This means that redundant rules must be abolished. Therefore, from 12 August to 9 September 2024, it was possible to submit proposals for which administrative rules in the FGU area can be simplified, abolished or adjusted. Everyone could make such suggestions.

The Act was issued as part of the comprehensive reform of the Danish education system, which sets a coherent plan for the education system.

2025 Implementation

The initiative was operational and ran as regular practice.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Children and Education

Target group

Learners

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners with migrant background, including refugees

Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers

Learners with disabilities

Low-skilled/qualified persons

Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

Other

primary school
learners

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Further developing national quality assurance systems

Modernising VET infrastructure

Modernising infrastructure for vocational training

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Osnabrück Declaration

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

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Statistics on FGU learners](#)

[Youth education for young people with special needs \(STU\)](#)

[Ministry of Children and Education.\(2022, October 3\).New agreement: economic boost of FGU, VEU and youth education in peripheral areas](#)

[Preparatory basic education \(FGU\) official website. \(n.d.\). Information on FGU](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

A coherent plan for the education system

The coherent plan for the education system consists of different reforms and initiatives across the entire education system thus targeting a wide array of groups.

 DENMARK

Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation**More skilled workers for the green transition**

The *Prepared for the future IV - more skilled workers for the green transition* agreement is a component of a holistic education reform plan encompassing various education levels.

 DENMARK**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Political agreement on better pathways to education and jobs (2017): Preparatory Basic Education (FGU): Denmark. 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/43042>