


The Completion reform

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 NORWAY

Timeline

2021 Approved/Agreed

2022 Implementation

2023 Approved/Agreed

2024 Completed

ID number 41538

Background

The development of society and the education system over the last 30 years has necessitated changes. The reform will look at all aspects of upper secondary education, with a focus on VET.

With the Completion reform, the government will change the content of upper secondary education to get more people to complete education and enter the labour market. The biggest changes in upper secondary education since Reform-94 are being implemented with this reform. Development is moving away from the line of thinking that all students need to fit into a model, to a model in which the school needs to adapt to the learner.

In Norway young people aged 20-29 with only lower secondary education who were not in education, training or work have increased by 10 % during the last 9 years. Higher upper secondary education completion rate will increase the work opportunities.

In the world of work, it has become increasingly difficult to cope without upper secondary education. Also, requirements are changing, for example related to the Industry 4.0 digitalisation and automation.

Objectives

The reform aims to give people the freedom to choose. Completion of upper secondary education gives young people and adults the freedom to choose their way forward in life, more people will have equal opportunities for better lives.

The government aims for nine out of ten to complete and pass upper secondary education by 2030. The Completion reform, with open doors to the world and the future, contains measures to equip more young people and adults with key and/or professional competences, and to be well prepared for further education and working life.

Description

The reform will include more options for completing upper secondary education, including for adults, along with more relevant training and a right to apprenticeship in VET.

All students in upper secondary education, including both IVET and CVET, will benefit from

the policy development.

These are the most important measures foreseen in the Completion reform:

- (a) everyone who starts upper secondary school will have the right to complete an upper secondary degree;
- (b) training courses will be better adapted to learners;
- (c) all students who have a short period of residence and weak skills in Norwegian will receive an introduction course when they start upper secondary school;
- (d) a duty to work systematically and preventatively with students who are at risk of failing subjects;
- (e) students will receive more specialisation, more relevant education and more freedom of choice;
- (f) all students must have Norwegian, Mathematics and English as subjects, as well as a brand new subject, a subject for the future;
- (g) introduce measures to ensure that more people get an apprenticeship;
- (h) it will be possible to take several trade certificates;
- (i) a right to an apprenticeship or an equivalent offer;
- (j) to strengthen the quality of the option to take a vocational certificate in school, so that these are equal to the vocational certificate achieved as an apprentice;
- (k) it proposes an extended right that will allow adults to return to upper secondary school.

2021 Approved/Agreed

The Cabinet of ministers approved the Recommendation for the Completion reform (White paper 21) on 26 March 2021.

2022 Implementation

As a follow up of the Completion reform, the Government strengthened the following initiatives in 2022:

- (a) improved school-based training in upper secondary vocational education and better follow-up of students in work-based learning;
- (b) improved opportunities for persons without the right to upper secondary education;
- (c) vocational re-qualification;
- (d) trade certificate at work;
- (e) flexible and adaptable training;
- (f) increased effort for vocational teachers and trainers;
- (g) pilot with investment of equipment in upper secondary vocational schools;
- (h) increased opportunities for employees from enterprises to be directly involved in vocational training at upper secondary level (the scheme is called *Yrkesfaglærer 2* in native Norwegian language).

The Government has agreed to change the right to upper secondary education to the right to complete upper secondary education with a qualification. The Ministry of Education and Research launched a public consultation on lowering the age limit for a study loan, from 25 to 21 years of age and to make the study loan more flexible and for younger people to complete education. The public consultation seeks input on whether applicants who have completed upper secondary still should be entitled to loan-based education support regardless of age. The deadline for the public consultation was April 2023.

2023 Approved/Agreed

After the public consultation on the right to upper secondary education ended in April 2023, the Ministry of Education and Research processed the input. The Government approved the new Education Act in July to come into effect the following year. During the autumn of 2023, the connected regulation was changed accordingly.

2024 Completed

The updated Education Act came into force on 1 August 2024. The main changes are as follows:

- (a) extended right to upper secondary education – a right to complete with a degree;
- (b) expanded right to change from one education programme to another. Previously, one could only change once. Now, there will be a free right to change up until the age of 19;
- (c) the right to re-qualify in vocational education;
- (d) training provision in the transition to upper secondary education for students who lack the academic or language prerequisites to be able to participate in and pass upper secondary education;
- (e) a right to a bridge year from vocational education to general education without an upper age limit;
- (f) right to career guidance for apprentices in companies;
- (g) the target group for the follow-up service has been expanded from 16-21 to 16-24. The service provides support to young individuals who are entitled to upper secondary education but are not engaged in education or employment.

The Directorate for Education and Training has initiated a pilot with the option to do a combination of a written and oral exam in two subjects from spring 2025: the cleaning operator subject and the cook subject. The aim of the pilot is among other things, to investigate whether a written-oral exam form is more suitable than a five-hour written exam for adults combining work with a vocational education (EQF4). A written-oral exam will give the candidates the opportunity to express their competence in several ways. The pilot will be implemented for the exams in the spring 2025, autumn 2025 and spring 2026. The assessment criteria and tasks were being drawn up for the two subjects.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research (KD)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers
Learners with disabilities

Thematic categories

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible
VET

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[White Paper 21](#)

[Link to information about changes in the Education Act](#)

[Follow the legislative process](#)

Related policy developments

2023 Completed

Admission rules for upper secondary education (vocational and general)

In the current regulation, it is possible for county municipalities to determine in their local admissions regulations that up to 50% of the students are admitted based on skills tests, instead of following the ordinary admissions rules based on grades.

 NORWAY

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). The Completion reform: 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/41538>