

Skilled workers for the future: white paper, 2016

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** NORWAY

Timeline

**ID number 28769**

Description

The 2016 white paper, *Skilled workers for the future*, contained 48 measures on how to make post-secondary VET more attractive as a profession-oriented, fully equivalent alternative to higher education. Some of these measures were accepted by the Norwegian parliament in May 2017, including the right to be part of a student welfare organisation, better transitions to study programmes at universities and university colleges, a new national admissions system, new grant schemes, mapping and raising the competence of vocational college teachers, better knowledge about vocational education and a development fund. Several of the measures have been implemented:

- (a) the right of students to be part of a student welfare organisation;
- (b) the transition from vocational colleges to university or university colleges has been improved;
- (c) new surveys have been introduced to increase the knowledge about students and colleges;
- (d) an annual development fund of around NOK 40 million (approx. EUR 3.5 million at 19.07.2023 exchange rate) has been introduced;
- (e) an education quality price of NOK 1 million (approx; EUR 85 000 at 19.07.2023 exchange rate) has been set up.

2017 Approved/Agreed**2018 Implementation****2019 Implementation****2020 Implementation**

The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service was opened up for higher vocational education. Planned development in 2020/21: evaluation of the white paper.

2021 Implementation

Three reports are expected from an evaluation carried out between August 2020 and December 2022:

- (a) a status report on the implementation of the measures in the white paper Skilled workers for the future (February 2021);
- (b) a report on the funding system for higher vocational education (January 2022);
- (c) the final evaluation report in full (December 2022).

Work was underway.

2022 Implementation

The status report on the implementation of the measures was published.

The first interim evaluation report provided an overview of the status of the implementation of the 48 measures. Many of the measures put forward through the White Paper have been implemented, among other things, because in recent years significant changes have been made to the regulations on vocational colleges. Several steps have also been taken to strengthen the knowledge base in various areas. Each measure has been implemented to a different extent, and the work on transitional arrangements between higher vocational education and university and college education was highlighted as one of the areas where work remains to be done. Actors in the field generally pointed to a positive development. In particular, measures to designate such type of training as higher vocational education, and to introduce credits for standardised study time and learning outcomes. There are still some obstacles, especially related to funding.

The second report was published in 2022 and explored how the funding system for vocational colleges worked for the various actors. The report also examined whether the system contributed to raise quality and whether the education offers responded to labour market needs.

Main findings of the report were as follows:

- (a) The evaluation suggests that the changes introduced in the funding of higher vocational education as a result of the white paper have been reasonable;
- (b) The system of basic funding, a result-based incentive and development funds that vocational colleges can apply for is considered positive, but the sector believes that the level of funding is too low to ensure the necessary quality in the future;
- (c) The administrative responsibility of the county councils is seen positive given their proximity to the vocational colleges and to working life. Still, there are also some challenges with the quality of the administration and its predictability for the students. The admission to higher vocational education has to be predictable;
- (d) The report points out that the vocational college sector is positive about competitive funding, but the sector believes that the share of project funding is too big compared to basic funding.

2023 Completed

The final report from the evaluation was published on 21.03.2023. The report shows that the vocational colleges have had a positive development. The development can largely be attributed to measures from the White Paper, together with the increased attention to the sector. The knowledge base for the sector has been strengthened, the number of students is increasing, there has been a positive development in several areas important to ensure increased quality, and there has been a positive development in terms of visibility and attractiveness. At the same time, there is still work to be done to realise further the desired effects of the measures in the White Paper. The final evaluation points out, among other things, the following:

- (a) there is still a need for measures to ensure clear organisation and management in the sector;
- (b) an obstacle to development is the lack of predictability concerning growth and financing;
- (c) the use of project funds can prevent investment in a solid professional environment;

(d) the sector is complex and with major variations, which may be an obstacle to achieving goals.

The final evaluation report pointed out the need to assess what the sector is supposed to be and which types of institutions naturally form this sector.

A new White Paper for higher vocational colleges was being drafted, expected to be published in 2025.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research (KD)

Target group

Learners

Adult learners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

National, regional and local authorities

Other

Higher vocational education students

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Establishing and developing skills intelligence systems

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

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 CVET

Further reading

48 measures to strengthen vocational colleges and their students, white paper 9 (2016-2017) Skilled workers for the future

Final evaluation report

Related policy developments

2022 Completed

National admission service for vocational colleges

The Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services in Higher Education and Research (UNIT) has coordinated the work to develop and implement a joint website, where the education programmes of all vocational colleges (EQF level 5) can be presented, and application opportunities be more visible.



Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

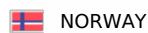
Subsystem

CVET

2018 Completed

National survey on quality in post-secondary vocational education

The first national survey on quality in post-secondary vocational education was carried out in April 2018.



Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2022 Completed

Law on higher vocational education

A law for post-secondary vocational education (EQF level 5) was adopted in 2018. Higher vocational colleges are categorised as post-secondary (referred to as tertiary in Norway) vocational education schools. Their students have strengthened rights.

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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