


White Paper - Higher vocational education

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 NORWAY

Timeline

2023 Design

2024 Design

2025 Approved/Agreed

ID number 47261

Background

A White Paper on higher vocational education was published in 2016, containing 48 development measures. The results of the measures have been evaluated and it is time for new and adjusted measures to further develop this sector. Higher vocational education is important to ensure society the competence needed in working life.

Objectives

The White Paper intends to set out measures to strengthen access to competent labour with higher vocational education and to point out a direction for the vocational college sector's further development.

Description

The work on this paper started in 2023 and the Ministry of Education and Research planned to present a white paper on higher vocational education to the Storting by spring 2025. All stakeholders were invited to contribute to this process to ensure relevant content and measures and set the future direction of higher vocational education.

This measure is linked to Hurdalsplattformen and the NIP.

2023 Design

In the last few months of 2023, the Ministry of Education and Research conducted a series of workshops with the higher vocational education sector on topics central in the White Paper: internationalisation, management and financing, quality and relevance, and competence needs. Digital regional input meetings were also held.

2024 Design

Input processes in the higher vocational education sector have been completed and the education ministry was drafting the White Paper.

2025 Approved/Agreed

White Paper No 11, 'Skilled workers for a new era - with higher vocational education', was approved by the Norwegian Parliament on 15 May 2025.

The white paper outlined 29 measures to improve higher vocational education. Eleven measures aim to equip vocational colleges with stronger knowledge about quality, better and more predictable funding, and new institutional responsibilities. Fourteen measures focus on improving students' access to welfare services and providing them with broader learning and career opportunities. Four measures are designed to strengthen the county authorities' capacity to govern higher vocational education through increased cooperation and greater flexibility.

One measure is to expand higher VET to NQF/EQF levels 6 and 7 and separate higher VET and higher academic education in a two-pillar model.

Another suggested measure that could bring major changes is the proposal to connect Norwegian higher VET to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

In the voting over the White Paper, the Norwegian Parliament decided that the government should ensure a connection to ECTS. They also decided to ask the government to propose formal qualification titles for the completed vocational education qualifications at levels 6 and 7, which are consistent with titles in other European countries.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research (KD)

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)
Adult learners

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Using EU transparency tools (EQF, Europass, ESCO, ECTS, ECVET principles)

European priorities in VET

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

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

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Link to more information about the White Paper](#)

[Link to the White Paper](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Completed

VET-related priorities in the political platform of the government

Following the elections of autumn 2017, the government announced its priorities on 14 January 2018. For upper secondary VET, they included:

 NORWAY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). White Paper – Higher vocational education: 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/47261>