

A substantial reinforcement of VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 DENMARK

Timeline

2025 Implementation

ID number 49530

Background

In recent years, Denmark has faced persistent challenges in its vocational education and training system. Enrolment in vocational programmes has been declining, and dropout rates remain high, with around 40% of students leaving before completing their training. At the same time, society's demand for skilled workers is increasing due to the green transition and growing needs in healthcare and elder care. Policymakers have therefore identified a pressing need to make VET more attractive, inclusive, and of higher quality, ensuring that more young people and adults complete VET.

Objectives

The agreement seeks:

- (a) to improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education in Denmark;
- (b) to reduce dropout rates and ensure that more students complete their training to ensure that Denmark continues to train some of the most competent skilled workers in the world;
- (c) students and apprentices must be offered even more attractive VET programmes with skilled, inspiring teachers, strong learning and social environments, and a good connection between school-based education and work based education.

Description

The agreement contains 31 initiatives that have the purpose of improving Danish VET. Many of the initiatives included in the agreement are linked to other agreements within the VET area. For example, the agreement forms part of a broader series of reforms in the education sector (*Prepared for the Future I-VII*). In addition, several initiatives build on or interact with earlier and related initiatives, such as the agreement on increasing the number of skilled workers for the green transition and initiatives supporting international mobility in VET, including through Erasmus+. The overarching objective of this agreement, as well as of most related initiatives, is to increase the number of skilled workers across the main vocational fields by strengthening the quality and thereby the attractiveness of vocational education and training.

As the formal responsibility for vocational education and training lies with the Ministry of

Children and Education, the agreement has been concluded within this framework.

The 31 initiatives are divided into the following eight categories:

- (a) strong frameworks for attractive vocational education and training
- (b) skilled and competent teachers;
- (c) more pathways into VET;
- (d) increasing international mobility in VET;
- (e) VET in the border region;
- (f) more pedagogical assistants;
- (g) reducing student dropout
- (h) reforming the apprenticeship funding network

Strong frameworks for attractive VET

This category focusses on improving the physical, social, and learning environments of VET institutions to make them more appealing to young people. It includes investments in modern facilities, stronger youth communities, and initiatives to strengthen the overall learning culture at vocational schools. It also includes to simplify and reduce unnecessary regulatory requirements.

A total of EUR 35.2 million (DKK 262.1 million) will be allocated from 2025, increasing to EUR 49.1 million (DKK 365.7 million) in 2030, and EUR 42.6 million (DKK 317.2 million) from 2033 onwards as a permanent funding increase ("rate uplift") for VET programmes, excluding the main programmes within the social and health care education track.

In addition, a temporary special grant will be provided in the years 2025–2030, amounting to EUR 6.7 million (DKK 50 million) in 2025, rising to EUR 19.5 million (DKK 145 million) in 2029, and EUR 11.4 million (DKK 85 million) in 2030. This grant is aimed at strengthening youth environments at VET institutions, supporting initiatives that improve the social, learning, and community aspects of student life.

Skilled and competent teachers

This category aims to enhance the professional and pedagogical competences of VET teachers. It supports continuous professional development, strengthens vocational and special pedagogy, and encourages closer cooperation with industry, including through guest teachers from companies.

More pathways into VET

Under this category it is planned to introduce new and flexible access routes to VET. They make it easier for people with relevant work experience or special educational backgrounds to enter vocational programmes and include experimental entry models for, e.g., Preparatory Basic Education and Training (FGU).

Increasing international mobility in VET

This initiative strengthens the international dimension of Danish VET by expanding opportunities for students and apprentices to complete parts of their training abroad. The goal is to increase international mobility fivefold (there is, however, no baseline number) by 2035 through better financial support and improved organisational frameworks.

VET in the border region

This category addresses cross-border cooperation in VET between Denmark and Germany. It supports mutual access to training programmes and facilitates mobility and recognition of qualifications across the border. The parties to the agreement have decided to allocate EUR 0.67 million (DKK 5 million) annually in 2026 and 2027 to vocational schools located in Southern Jutland, enabling the schools to build capacity to offer Danish VET programmes in German or English.

More pedagogical assistants

This category focuses on strengthening the supply of pedagogical assistants to meet labour

market demand in childcare and educational settings. They include measures to expand capacity and attract more students to the pedagogical assistant education programme.

Reducing student dropouts

This category addresses one of the key challenges in Danish VET, namely the high dropout rate. The majority of initiatives under this category aim to ensure that more students complete their training by improving guidance, learning stimulating environments, and social support, as well as by developing flexible solutions for students with special needs.

For example, one initiative includes improved access to student housing, with an annual allocation of EUR 0.34 million (DKK 2.5 million) from 2026 onwards to strengthen the social environment at VET school residences. Another initiative encourages all relevant VET schools to maintain open workshops, allowing students and apprentices to practice their skills outside of class hours.

Reform of the apprenticeship funding model

As part of the agreement, the apprenticeship subsidy scheme will be restructured from 2026. Due to outdated IT systems, funding previously allocated per apprenticeship agreement will be incorporated into the ordinary VET funding model and distributed based on student numbers instead. The change is budget-neutral and does not alter the responsibilities of vocational colleges to secure apprenticeship placements.

2025 Implementation

The government and a broad range of agreement parties concluded the agreement in May 2025. Some initiatives were introduced in 2025, while others will be implemented in the coming years. The same applies to the financial aspects of the agreement.

One example of an initiative that has already received funding from 2025 (EUR 200 thousand / DKK 1.5 million) is VET-flex (EUD-fleks). VET-flex enables students and apprentices with disabilities or comparable challenges to complete vocational education and training over an extended period. The level of funding is expected to increase in the coming years.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Children and Education

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers
Learners with disabilities

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers

Entities providing VET

Companies
VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

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

Supporting teachers and trainers for green transition and sustainability

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning

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

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European and international dimensions of VET

VET internationalisation strategies

Mobility of learners and staff

Transnational VET initiatives, including joint VET programmes

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[A new agreement establishing a substantial investment in vocational education and training has been reached](#)

[Government and political parties' agreement on a substantial reinforcement of vocational education and training](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Prepared for the future V: reforming upper secondary education by introducing a new VET pathway (EPX)

The government presented a reform of the youth education system, including significant investments in the area, along with their proposal for a new upper secondary education programme, the vocational and profession-oriented gymnasium (EPX), which they aim to implement by 2030.

 DENMARK

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Apprentices' rights if they experience sexual harassment

The Danish Agency for Education and Quality (STUK) took a series of actions (e.g., preparing guidance material for apprenticeship learners, VET providers, teachers and administrative staff at VET schools) as part of an information campaign on the rights of apprentices who have experienced offenses

 DENMARK

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

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

2025 Implementation

Climate vocational education and training (VET) institutions

To address the need for skilled professionals with the right competencies for the green transition, three climate VET institutions have been appointed to be key drivers of the green transformation across all vocational schools.

 DENMARK

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Training abroad and Erasmus+ activities

The *Training abroad* scheme (OPU) is a Danish mobility programme that allows students in Danish VET to gain international experience by completing training periods abroad after finishing their basic course. The trainee/apprentice can spend all or part of their training abroad.

 DENMARK

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Tripartite agreement for increasing apprentices in the health

sector

In November 2020, a tripartite agreement was made between the government, Local Government Denmark (KL) (the national association of municipalities), the national association of the Danish Regions and the largest trade union confederation in Denmark (FH).

 DENMARK

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Pedagogy becomes a mandatory part of initial teacher training

Following the norm of 2015, legislation requires that VET teachers start their studies in vocational pedagogy normally one year after being recruited and complete their studies at least four years after recruitment at the bachelor or diploma level (60 ECTS – European credit transfer and accumulat

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IVET CVET

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/49530>