



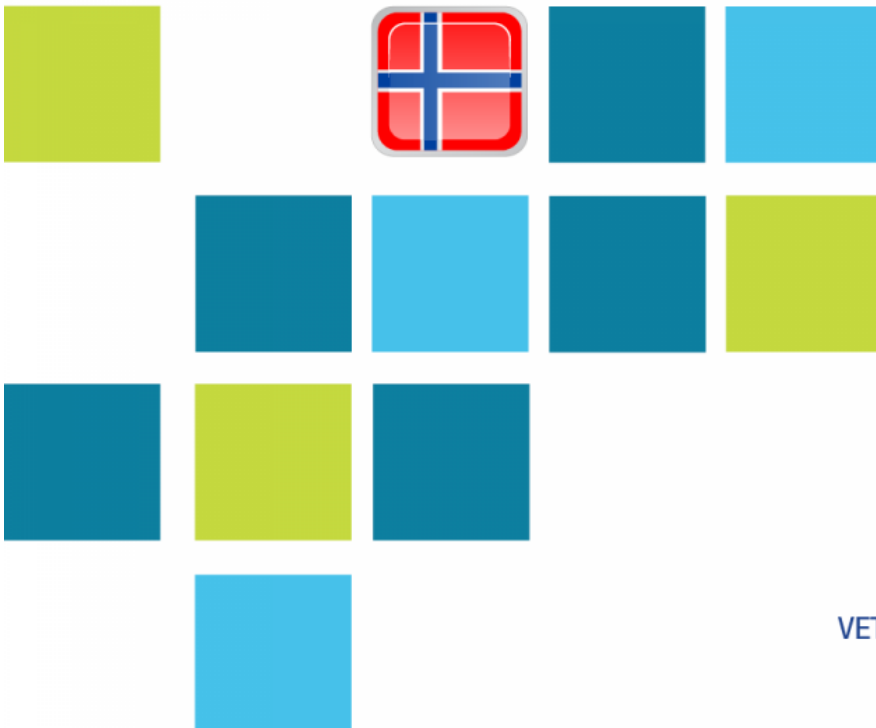
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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

# NORWAY

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## SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



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## CHAPTER 1.

# Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

VET in Norway comprises the following main features:

- VET is mostly provided as combination of school-based and apprenticeships with apprentices having employment contracts and being paid for their work
- VET starts at upper secondary level through two main models; 2 + 2 model (two years in school and two years of apprenticeship training) leading to a trade or journeymans certificate at EQF level 4 and 3-year school-based model leading to professional competence qualification at EQF level 3
- There are several progression routes
- VET is part of the formal education and training system
- Approximately 42 per cent of the learners choose a vocational programme.
- Most of the learners are in the age group 16-18 years
- There are more male than female learners in VET both at upper secondary level and post-secondary VET

Distinctive features ([ 1 ]):

At upper secondary level, Norway has a long-standing tradition of close national and regional cooperation between education authorities and the social partners. National cooperation is organised in the National Council for VET (*Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring* – SRY), nine vocational training councils (*Faglige råd*), one for each programme area, and national appeal boards (*Klagenemnder*). Regional cooperation involves county vocational training boards (*Yrkesopplæringsnemnder*) and examination boards (*Prøvenemnder*).

Tripartite cooperation aims to ensure training provided to Norwegian VET learners meets labour market and skill needs. It informs changes in the VET structure, curriculum development, regional structure and volume of VET provision, the framework of examinations leading to trade or journeyman's certificates, and quality control at all levels. At ISCED level 4, the social partners participate in the National Council for Vocational Colleges. In higher education, institutions are requested to set up a consultative council for cooperation with social partners.

Norway has a unified education structure with VET integrated as an equal to general education in upper secondary education. Most education at this level is provided by public schools. Since learners have a right to attend upper secondary education, most choose to do so. Learners are entitled to upper secondary education and have the right to enrol in one of the learners top three choice.

More than half of trade and journeyman's certificates are awarded to people over 23.

## CHAPTER 2.

# Main challenges and policy responses

The main policy measures in Norwegian upper secondary VET concern:

- increasing the number of apprenticeship placements and increase the competence of vocational teachers;
- increase the attractiveness of VET;
- improving post-secondary vocational colleges and the position of their learners.

Skilled workers with VET qualifications will play an important role in the reorganisation of the Norwegian economy. Figures from the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) show that many enterprises lack these employees and consequently lose assignments.

Statistics Norway (SSB) estimates a shortage of almost 100 000 skilled workers in 2035.

The government and the social partners are collaborating closely to increase the number of apprenticeship places and so enable more learners to complete their education. In 2015 the government launched a vocational teacher promotion initiative strategy supporting increased vocational teacher competence. The work continues in 2017.

To make VET more attractive, a new white paper Skilled workers for the future (Fagfolk for fremtiden) was adopted in May 2017. It has close to 50 measures aiming at making post-secondary VET a fully equivalent profession- oriented alternative to university and university college education.

Since 2016 a yearly apprenticeship award has been given to the best public apprenticeships placement.

2018 was declared a VET year in Norway with information and reputation campaigns online and in social media to increase the interest in VET.

Important legislative changes took place in 2018:

- A regulation was changed so completing the two years of vocational college programme give admission to higher education.
- A committee was assigned to analyse upper secondary education and to make suggestions on how to change for a better school. A new law for higher vocational education was adopted ([ 2 ]).
- The Government implemented the possibility for learners to change from general education to VET after the first year of upper secondary education.
- A new programme structure for upper secondary VET was adopted and will be implemented in 2020.

Adopted from VET in Norway Spotlight 2017 ([ 3 ]).

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[2] <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2018-06-08-28>

## CHAPTER 3.

# External factors influencing VET

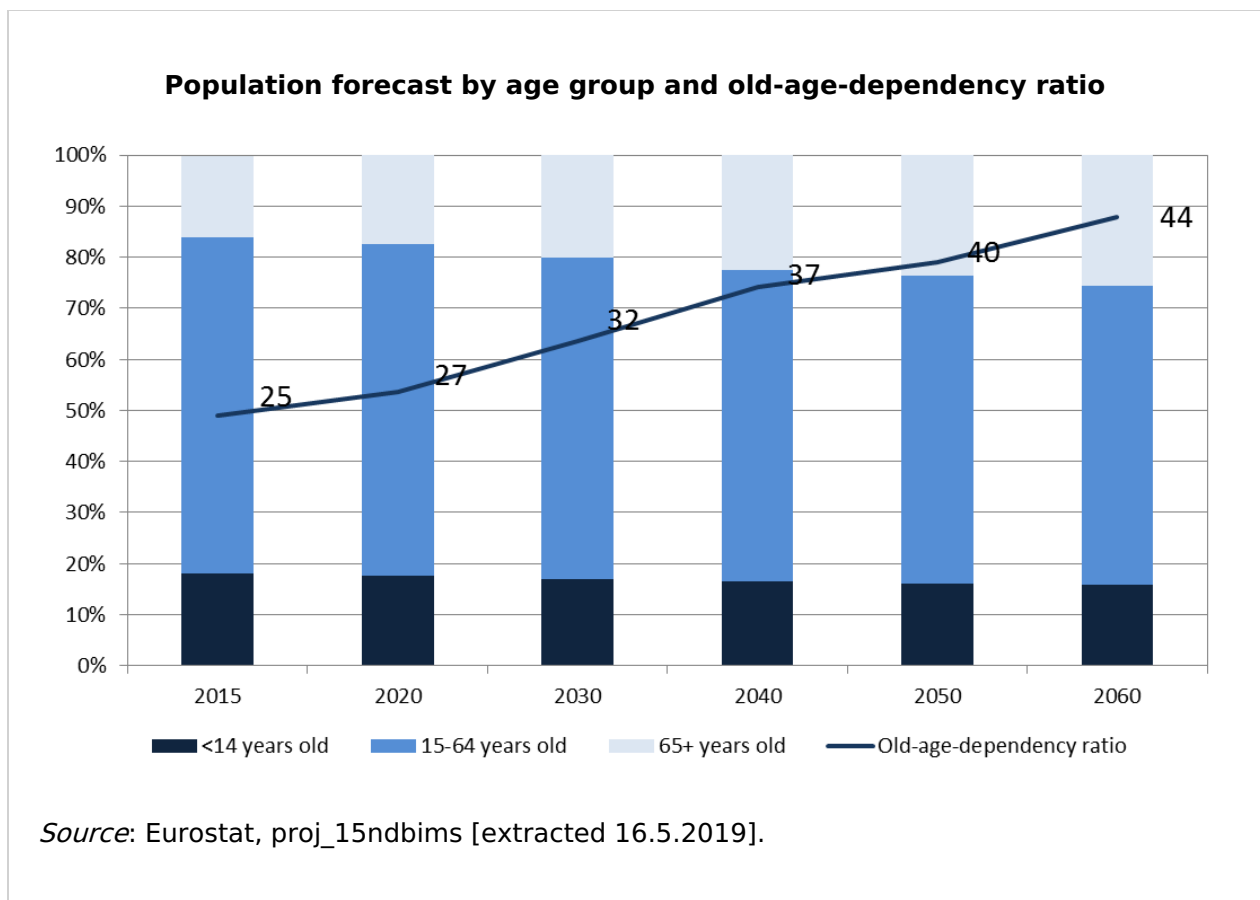
## 3.1 Demographics

Population in 2019: 5 334 762 (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter) ([ 4 ])

It increased since 2013 by 4.8% ([ 5 ]) due to the positive growth and migration.

Age group 67+ constitutes 14.8%, an increase of 0.8 pp from 2017, and is expected to increase to 15% by 2020, 20% by 2040, 22% by 2060, and 21% by 2060 ([ 6 ]).

An old-age dependency ratio is expected to increase from 25 in 2015 to 44 in 2060 ([ 7 ])



The demographic has an impact on VET. More people move in to the cities. In the cities it is more common to choose general education whereas in rural areas VET is often preferred ([ 8 ]).

In Akershus 37,6% of the learners attend VET. In Finnmark 59 % of the learners in upper secondary school attend VET ([ 9 ]).

In 2018, immigrants and those born in Norway to immigrant parents increased with 1% from 2016, representing 17.3% of the total population. 48.7% (370 000) of this segment of the population originates in other European countries ([ 10 ]). The immigrant population is spread all over the country: 55% live in Oslo and the five surrounding counties, constituting 22.5% of

the population in the area ([ 11 ]).

Information about impact on VET is not available.

### 3.2 Economics

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), defined as enterprises with less than 250 employees, constitute more than 99% of all enterprises. 17% of SMEs have fewer than five employees, mainly because 65.3% of enterprises have no registered employees. Only 0.6% of the total number of enterprises has 100 or more employees ([ 12 ]). These numbers indicate that apprenticeship training in Norwegian upper secondary VET often takes place in SMEs.

Most people in the production sector are employed in non-marketed services, business and transport and domestic trade.

**Employment by production sector 2017**

Sector	Per cent
Primary and utilities sector	4.2
Manufacturing	7.9
Construction	9.5
Transport and domestic trade	18.5
Business and other services	24.4
Non-marketed services	35.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: [Statistics Norway, c](#)

Exports constitute an important part of the economy thanks to a large oil and gas sector, fishing and fish farming, shipping, and power-intensive manufacturing sectors such as metals production, industrial chemicals and paper.

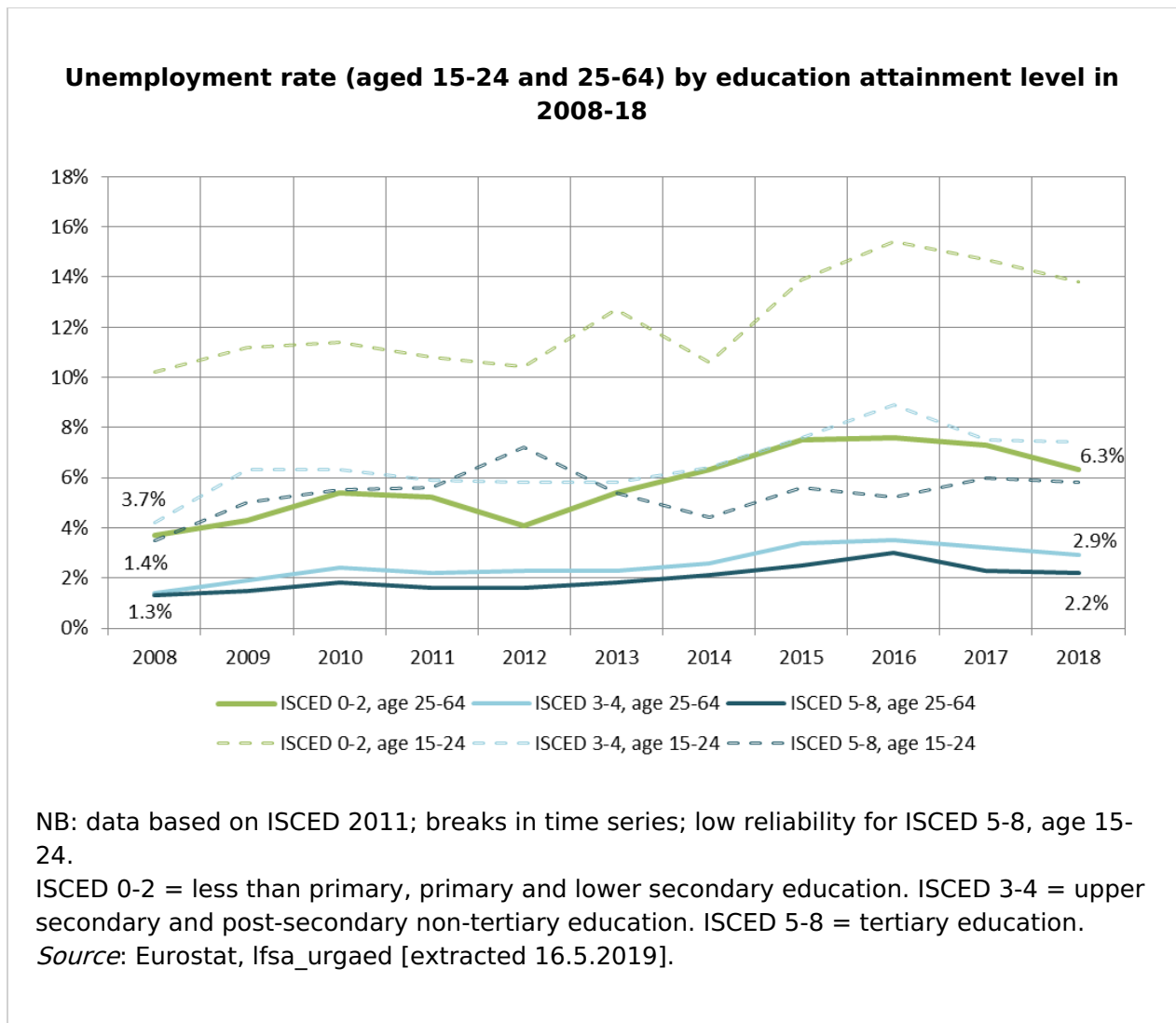
### 3.3 Labour market

Some trades are regulated and certificates or recognition of qualifications are compulsory to get a job ([www.nokut.no](http://www.nokut.no)).

There is an increasing number of job vacancies ads which require formal education and often a minimum of a bachelor. However, in trades where there is lack of employees and the trade is not regulated job seekers will get an employment also without formal education documentation.

Total unemployment ([ 13 ]) (2018): 3% (6% in EU28); it increased by 1.2 percentage points since 2008 ([ 14 ]).

Due to an oil crisis, Norway's unemployment rate peaked in 2016, with slow recovery trend since then.



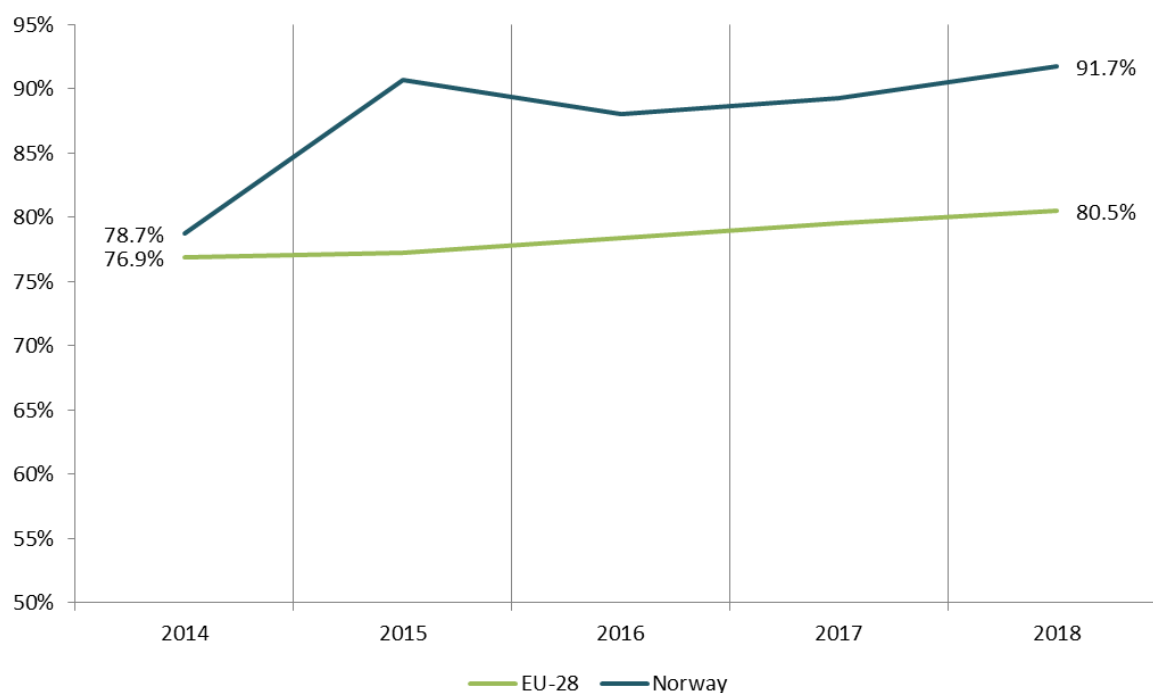
Unemployment rates of people aged 15-24 are in general higher than among people aged 25-64 for each education level, with low qualified (ISCED levels 0-2) people scoring the highest unemployment rates.

Among 25-64 year olds, the economic crisis has hit more low-qualified than people with high-level (ISCED levels 5-8) and medium-level qualifications, including most VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4).

Employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates increased from 78.7% in 2014 to 91.7% in 2018 ([ 15 ]).



### Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, edat\_lfse\_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

The increase (+13 pp) in employment of 20-34 year-old VET graduates in 2014-18, was higher compared to the increase in employment of all 20-34 year-old graduates ( 1.8 pp) in the same period in Norway ([ 16 ]).

For more information about the external drivers influencing VET developments in Norway please see the case study from Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project [ 16a ]

[4] <https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/faktaside/befolkningen>

[5] NB: Data for population as of 1 January 2018. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 16.5.2019].

[6] Statistics Norway: <https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/statistikker/voppl>

[7] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).

[8] Source: [www.ssb.no](http://www.ssb.no) and [www.udir.no](http://www.udir.no)

[9] <https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/statistikker/vgu/aar>

[10] [Statistics Norway, h](#)

[11] [Statistics Norway, i](#)

[12] [Statistics Norway, b](#)

[13] Percentage of active population, 25 to 74 years old.

[14] Eurostat table une\_rt\_a [extracted 20.5.2019].

[15] Eurostat table edat\_lfse\_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

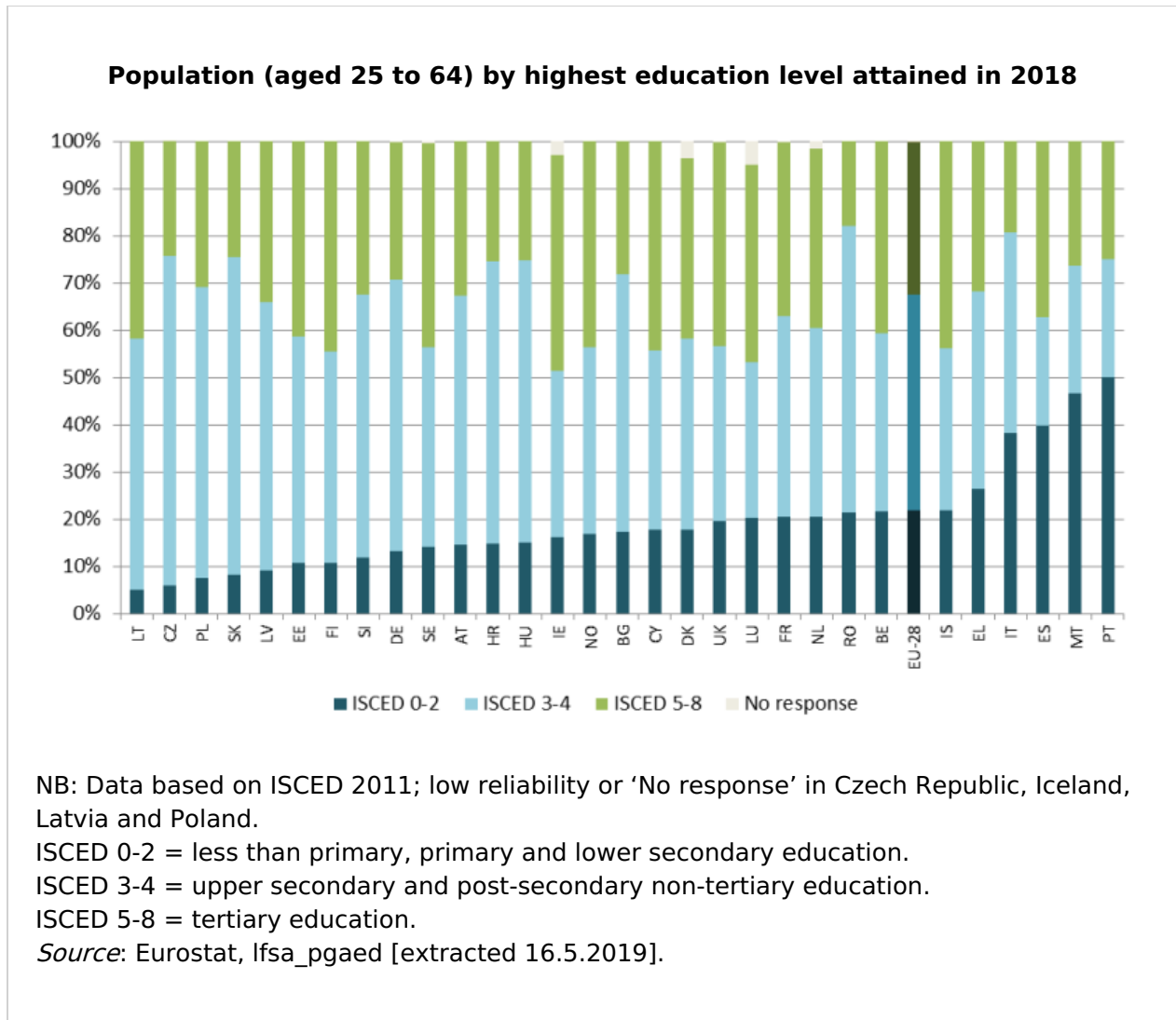
[16] NB: breaks in time series. Eurostat table edat\_lfse\_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

CHAPTER 4.

# Education attainment

## 4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

In 2018, the share of the population aged up to 64 with higher education (43.7%) was higher in Norway than EU-28 average (32.2%). Also, the share of the population with only ISCED levels 0-2 achieved was lower (17.0%) than EU28 average (21.8%).



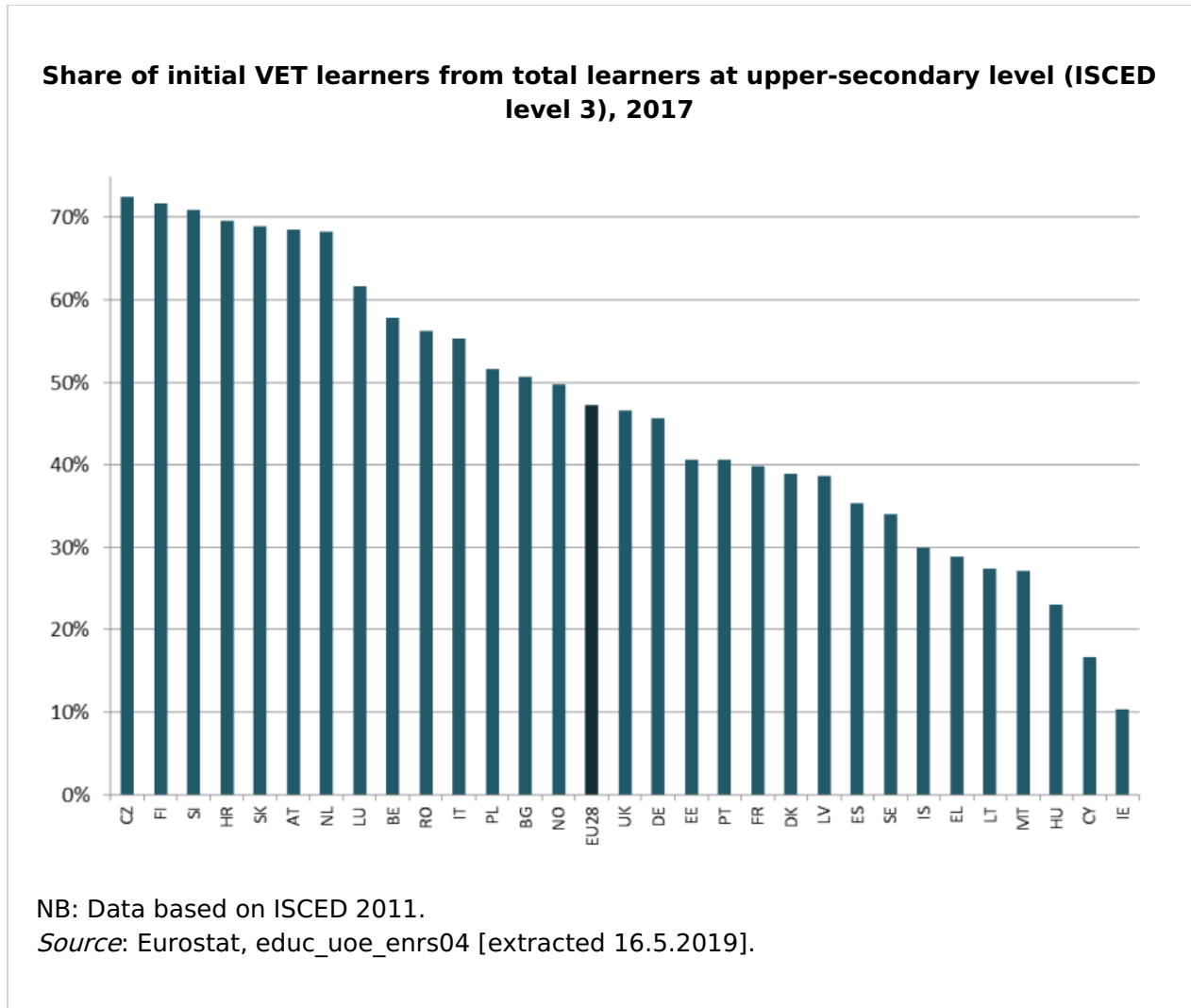
For more information about VET in higher education in Norway please see the case study from Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project [ 16b ]

## 4.3 VET learners by level

### Share of learners in VET by level in 2017

lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
Not applicable	49.7%	100%

Source: Eurostat, educ\_uoe\_ens01, educ\_uoe\_ens04 and educ\_uoe\_ens07 [extracted



#### 4.4 Female share

In VET at upper secondary level there are more male than female learners; in 2019, 62% males and 38 % females. In post-secondary VET the number of female students is slightly higher (42 %) ([ 17 ]).

Males prefer technical and industrial production (most popular option), followed by electrical trades and building and construction. Females choose healthcare, childhood and early youth development followed by design, arts and crafts and service trades.

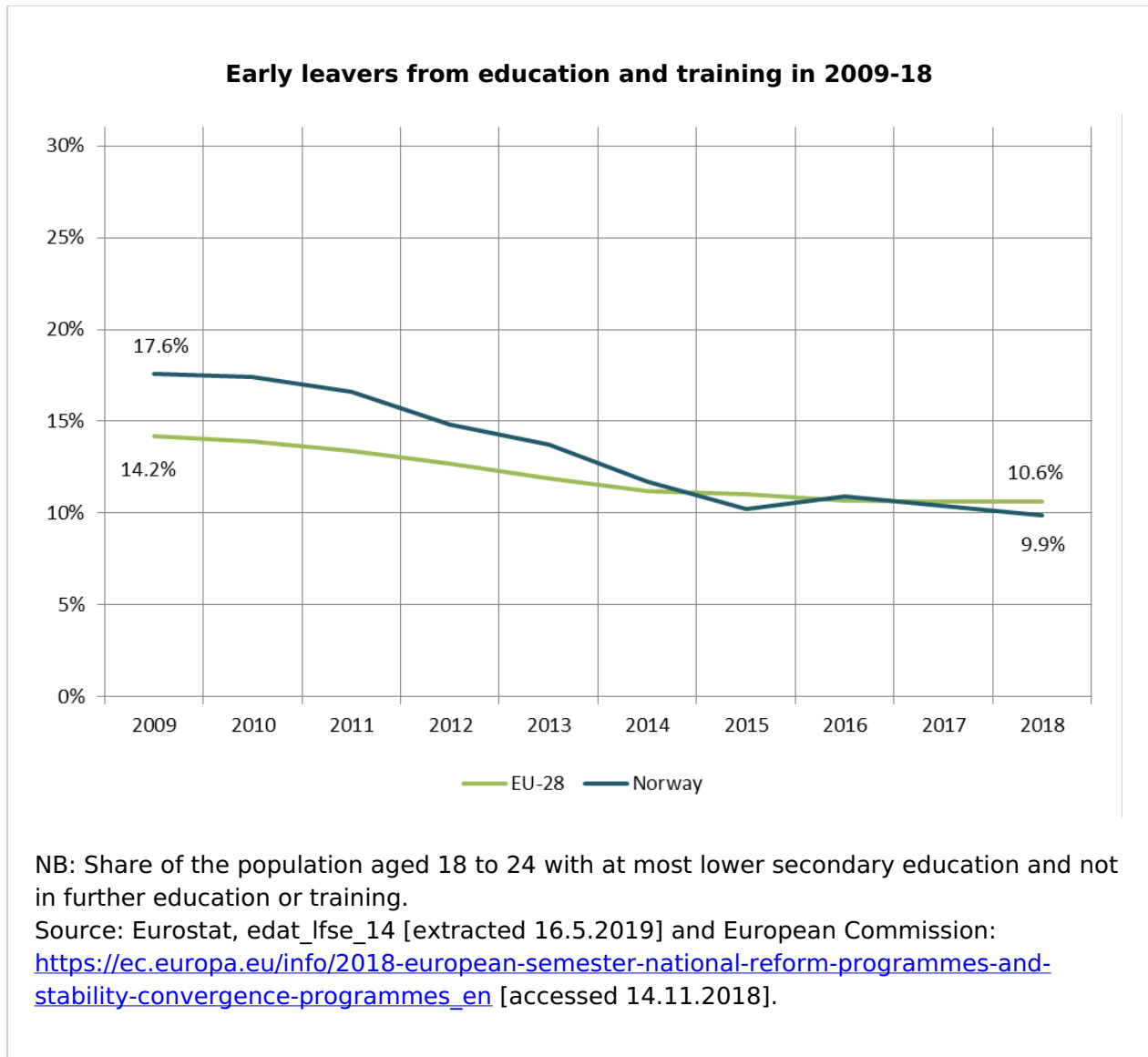
It is a national target to increase the number of underrepresented sexes in all vocational educations.

#### 4.5 Early leavers from education and training

The share of early leavers from education and training has decreased from 17.6% in 2009 to 9.9% in 2018. It is below 10.6%, the EU28 average.

In Norway it is a target to reduce the number of school leavers, and the Norwegian

Government`s goal is that 9 out of 10 complete upper secondary education. Several measures have been implemented and several have been initiated. It is a goal for the Norwegian government to keep up the work also in the future ([ 18 ]).



In Norway, drop-out is defined as non-completion of upper secondary level within a five-year period after starting upper secondary level 1. More than half of those who do not complete upper secondary education complete by the age of 40.

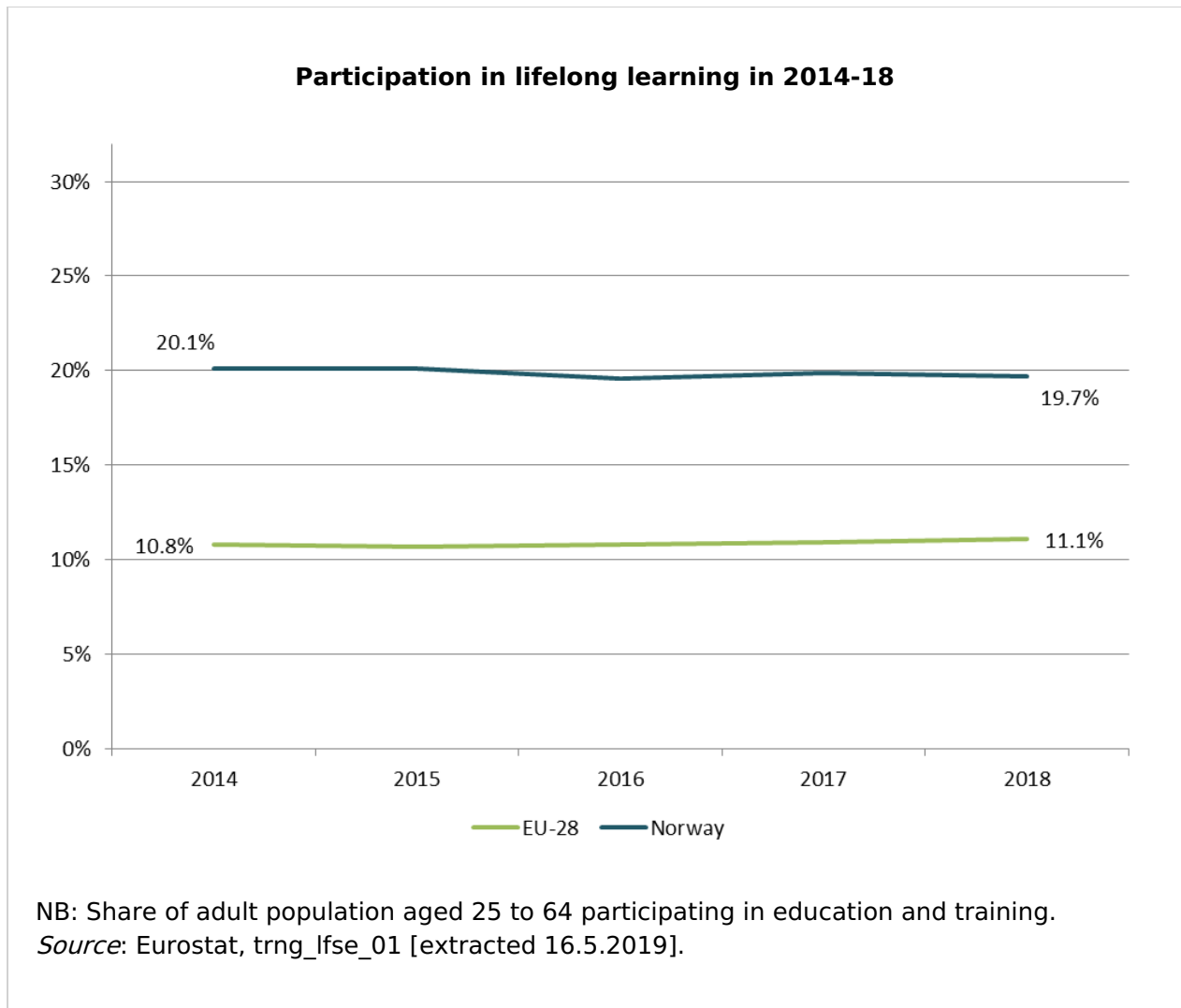
Drop-out issue has been widely discussed in recent years, and measures to tackle it are developed and implemented. Studies have identified factors that influence study progression, success rates, and drop-out rates. Two such factors are social background and learning achievements in primary and lower secondary education. Another factor is the lack of apprenticeship placements for VET learners in the transition from school-based training to apprenticeship training. In 2017, 28 900 learners applied for an apprenticeship contract, and about 20 800 (72 per cent) received an apprenticeship placement. Most of those who receive apprenticeship placements complete their VET training with a trade or journeyman`s certificate. Nine out of 10 passed their final exam in 2015-16 ([ 19 ]).

Statistics show significant variations in drop-out rates between education programmes. For instance, in the restaurant and food processing around 40% dropped out before completing the programme, compared to only 3.6% in sport and physical education programmes (one of the general study programmes) the same year ([ 20 ]). The differences in learners' grades at lower secondary level are seen as a key factor; learners admitted to general study programmes generally have higher marks than learners admitted to vocational programmes.

Measures to reduce drop-out rates range from early interventions encouraging young people to learn, guidance and counselling, financial incentives, promoting VET and practice-based learning, common core subjects in VET, etc.

For more information, please read the VET in Europe report Norway 2018 ([ 21 ]).

#### 4.6 Participation in lifelong learning



Participation in lifelong learning in Norway has been stable in the last years with 20.1% in 2018, significantly above the EU-28 average of 10.8%.

#### 4.7 VET learners by age

In Norway most learners at upper secondary level, both VET and general education, are young people in the age group 16-18.

<b>Age group</b>	<b>VET Learners</b>	<b>% of total VET learners</b>
<b>16-18</b>	16 6183	83.40
<b>19-24</b>	20 172	10.10
<b>25-29</b>	4 892	2.50
<b>30-34</b>	3 406	1.70
<b>35+</b>	4 539	2.30

The share of adults (aged 25 and above) in upper secondary education (general and VET), has been increasing with more than 58 % since 2013 ([ 22 ]).

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[17] [www.ssb.no](http://www.ssb.no)

[18] [www.regjeringen.no](http://www.regjeringen.no)

[19] [Education Mirror 2017](#)

[20] [udir.no](http://udir.no)

[22] [www.ssb.no](http://www.ssb.no)

## CHAPTER 5.

# VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- First education level is divided into two levels:
  1. primary education (from 6 years to 13 years)
  2. lower secondary education (EQF 2, ISCED 2)
- Upper secondary education (EQF 3 and 4 and ISCED 3. VET is available from upper secondary level.
- Post- secondary, non- tertiary VET education (EQF 5, ISCED 453 and 554)
- Higher education (EQF 6, 7 and 8, ISCED 6, 7 and 8)

Education is compulsory for 6-16 year olds. It comprise primary education (years 1-7) where learners get no grades, and lower secondary education (years 8-10) where learners are given grades that are also counted for entering upper secondary level.

It is under municipality responsibility and free of charge.

Upper secondary education is offered as general education and VET. The regional county authorities are responsible for general education and VET provision. All young people completing compulsory education have a statutory right to three years of upper secondary education and most of them use it. Public upper secondary schools are free of charge.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education builds on upper secondary education and an upper secondary certificate or an equivalent qualification is a requirement to enrol. The education can often be combined with work. There are public and private providers.

Norway has seven universities, 27 university colleges and five specialised, state-owned university institutions. In addition, Norway has a variety of private institutions for higher education.

Students must pay a small fee each semester. The semester fee is paid to the student welfare organisation at the educational institution. The purpose of the fee is to cover expenses relating to the students' welfare needs at their place of learning. The amount varies, but it rarely exceeds NOK 500.

In Norway it is possible to attend formal, non-formal, initial and continuing VET. Depending on the programme the learners may attend school-based or work-based learning or a combination of both. It is also possible to take an exam as an external candidate.

To complete a VET programme at upper secondary level, learners need to pass a final craft- or journeyman exam, which is both theoretical and practical. With one exception; it is possible to do a three year run, which leads to a qualification at EQF level 3.

Initial and continuing VET are part of the formal education system. In order to progress to CVET, the initial VET has to be completed. Initial VET starts at upper secondary school and most pathways leads to a EQF level 4 qualification. CVET is at EQF level 5.

The apprenticeship is offered at upper secondary level leading to EQF level 4 qualification.



## CHAPTER 6.

# Apprenticeship

At upper secondary level, VET is conducted both in school and in public and private enterprises. The standard two-plus-two model normally includes two years in school, where students also participate in practical training in workshops and enterprises, followed by two years of formalised apprenticeship (training and productive work) in enterprises. The first year of training consists of an introduction to the vocational area. During the second year, VET students choose specialisations and courses are more trade- specific but core subjects are also included. Some crafts follow varying models with three years in school or one year in school followed by three years of formalised apprenticeship.

Upper secondary VET is completed with a practical-theoretical trade or journeyman's examination (Fag- eller svenneprøve) leading to an EQF level 4 qualification: a trade certificate (Fagbrev) for industrial and service trades or a journeyman's certificate (Svennebrev) for traditional crafts. The eight programme areas offer about 190 different certificates.

There are many possible routes to higher education via upper secondary VET.

From Spotlight on VET - 2018 compilation (2019) ([ 23 ])

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches>

## CHAPTER 7.

# VET governance

Central to the Norwegian education and training system is the Education Act of 17 July 1998 no. 61 (*Opplæringsloven*), most recently amended on 1 August 2018. It covers primary, lower and upper secondary general education and VET, including apprenticeship training, for young people and adults, delivered by both public and private institutions. It states that the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) has overall responsibility for national policy development and administration of all levels of education and training. The counties (*fylkeskommuner*) and municipalities (*kommuner*) are responsible for developing comprehensive plans and for organising and financing within their jurisdiction.

Pursuant to the Education Act, the social partners have (most often majority) representation in all important advisory bodies for upper secondary VET at national and county level:

- the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring (SRY)) gives advice on an overarching level;
- eight Vocational Training Councils (Faglige råd) give advice on training in specific groups of trades, one for each VET programme (see Table 3, section 2.2.1);
- the County Vocational Training Board (Yrkesopplæringsnemnda) for each county gives advice on quality, career guidance, regional development and the provision in the county to meet local labour market needs;
- the trade-specific Examination Boards (Prøvenemnder) are situated in each county;
- National Appeals Boards (Klagenemnder) cater for candidates who fail the trade or journeyman's final test at county level.

For post-secondary vocational education (nationally referred as tertiary; *fagskoleutdanning*), the social partners are consulted through the National Council for Tertiary Vocational Education (Nasjonalt fagskoleråd) established by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2010. This council has less of a formal function than the vocational training councils have at upper secondary level, as the education and training providers at this level design their own programmes. Skills Norway hosts the secretariat. In addition, two advisory bodies with social partner representatives consult tertiary vocational education, one for technical and maritime education and one for health and social education.

Tertiary vocational colleges (fagskoler) represent a significant alternative to higher education. The colleges are important for developing competence and specialisation in VET. The objective of the National Council for Vocational Education and Training is to improve cooperation between the colleges, the rest of the education structure, working life, and society in general. The council acts as a coordinating body for the sector and is the advisory body to the Ministry of Education and Research. It comprises representatives from the education sector, employee and employer organisations and learners.

## CHAPTER 8.

# VET financing mechanisms

The regional county authorities are responsible for general education and VET provision, distributing VET financing provided by the State budget and ensuring apprenticeship placement and supervision ([ 24 ]). Enterprises with training contracts, according to the Education act, receive a grant (*Basistilskudd I*), approximately EUR 640 per month for two years (24 months) per apprentice. There are some grant variations depending on type of apprenticeship contract (main model (2+2) or 2, 3 or 4 years of training in enterprise). In addition, the enterprise receives a yearly funding of approximately EUR 6 000 per contract.

The grant given to training enterprises accepting adult apprentices (*basistilskudd II*) is about EUR 6 000 per year per apprentice.

Extra funding is also provided for enterprises signing contracts with apprentices in rare and protected crafts.

A EUR 2 million grant to encourage new enterprises to take on apprentices was introduced in 2014. From 2015, the county municipality could define regional criteria for the grant and from 2016 the grant may also be used to decrease unemployment amongst NEETs or ensure a high quality school based training as an alternative for those without an apprenticeships contract.

## CHAPTER 9.

# Teachers and trainers

## 9.1 VET teacher types

There are three main groups of VET training staff at upper secondary level:

- VET teachers who provide formal school-based education and training;
- training supervisors (*faglige ledere*); and,
- trainers (*instruktører*) who provide training in enterprises.

### **VET teachers**

The formal qualification requirements for VET teachers in schools are specified in national regulations. In principle, there is no difference between VET teachers and other teachers. Both groups must have two sets of formal qualifications: qualifications in the relevant subject and in education (pedagogy and didactics). VET teacher education programmes follow the general degree system, with a three-year bachelor's degree and a two-year master's degree. To become a qualified VET teacher, candidates must complete either vocational practical-pedagogical education or vocational teacher education.

Vocational practical-pedagogical education (consecutive model) is a one-year programme (or two years part-time) for learners who already hold a vocational/professional degree or other qualification (see below). The main fields of study are pedagogical theory, vocational didactics and supervised teaching and training practice. The admission requirements are:

- a professionally oriented bachelor's or master's degree +;
- a minimum of two years of professional experience,

or:

- qualification as a skilled craftsperson/worker +;
- general university and college admission certification +;
- four years of relevant occupational experience +;
- two years of further studies (technical, professional, managerial).

Vocational teacher education is a comprehensive three-year bachelor programme covering both vocational training and pedagogy. It is also available as a part-time course of study and through work-based provision. The admission requirements are:

- general university and college admission certification +;
- mark requirements in mathematics and Norwegian +;
- trade or journeyman's certificate; and,
- minimum two years of relevant work experience.

All teacher education programmes for the lower and upper secondary levels (grades 8–13), including those for VET teachers, were revised in the Norwegian National Qualifications Framework of December 2011, following up both the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in the Bologna Process (QF-EHEA) and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). The new regulation on the relevant framework curricula came into force in March 2013 and was last amended in 2016.

Already employed teachers may apply for grants to do a one-year undergraduate teacher training programme for vocations (60 ECTS) or a vocational teacher education (180 ECTS). The

size of the grant size is from EUR 11 000 to 22 000.

Another option for teachers is to do continuing education in common core subjects. While studying, the teacher may be released with up to 37.5% of the employment.

Several new continuing education courses are available from the school year 2018/19, all 15 ECTS. The target group is vocational teachers who teach programme subjects.

Secondment as a visiting trainee for VET teachers, trainers and qualified training supervisors has been introduced to facilitate a better cooperation between schools and enterprises. The teacher will become familiar with the enterprises and the trainers and qualified training supervisors will get an insight in how training in schools is organised for future apprentices.

### **Training supervisor and trainers**

A training enterprise with an apprentice must appoint a qualified training supervisor and one or more trainers. How training is conducted varies between enterprises, but other employees in the enterprise are often involved in the training. The training enterprise must be able to document how the training is planned, organised and assessed in order to ensure that apprentices can develop the necessary skills and competencies. These skills are not assessed by testing and grading, but rather through continuous evaluation by the enterprise and at two meetings a year between the trainer (*instruktør*) and the apprentice.

Training supervisors (*faglige ledere*) in enterprises or other workplaces with apprentices must ensure that the training meets the requirements stipulated in the Education Act. They must have one of the following qualifications:

- a trade or journeyman's certificate in the relevant trade or craft;
- master craftsman's certificate in the relevant craft;

relevant higher education in the trade or craft;

- adequate educational background in the parts of the trade which, according to the curriculum, will be taught in the enterprise, or;
- six years of experience in the trade or craft.

Trainers (*instruktører*) in training enterprises are vocationally skilled, often with a formal vocational qualification. They are not required to hold a teaching certificate. Some trainers do not hold formal qualifications in their vocational skills, but have instead developed them through work experience. Formal regulations simply state that the management of the training enterprise must ensure that trainers have "the necessary qualifications" (Education Act).

### **Initiatives for VET competence development**

Norway will need more vocational education teachers in the years to come to help provide skilled trades-people for the national workforce. The Government gives priority to increased recruitment and qualification of VET teachers in the national competence development initiative from 2015. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and training is responsible for several VET competence development initiatives. Since 2015 there has been a mapping of skills development among VET teachers, for the best possible adapted schemes to this target group. Course material for trainers (*instruktør*), qualified training supervisor (*faglig leder*) and examination board member is made easy accessible online, together with tips and guidance to apprentices preparing for the qualifying exam.

## **9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers**

It is not compulsory to attend CPD for teachers in trainers.

There are, however, many possibilities for those who are interested and funding is available. The funding covers temporary employment, scholarships and are meant to be incentives for continuing education.

[www.udir.no](http://www.udir.no)

The courses are selected by the individuals and approved by the school leader. The courses takes place during the school year.

## CHAPTER 10.

# Shaping VET qualifications

### 10.1 Anticipating skill needs

Demands for new skills and changes in the labour market call for continuous adjustment and revision of the upper secondary VET programmes, their content and their modes of delivery. The Ministry, parents, learners, employers, trade unions and others may initiate a need for adjustments or changes.

#### **At upper secondary VET level**

All eight upper secondary VET programmes are closely monitored. Changes are made continuously based on input and applications from social partners, counties or the Vocational Training Councils (Faglige råd) that give advice on training in specific groups of trades ([ 25 ]).

The Directorate for Education and Training (Directorate) hosts the secretariats of both the National Council for Vocational Education (*Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring* (SRY)) that gives advice on an overarching level, and the Vocational Training Councils. Vocational Training Councils must report on the situation to the national authorities once in the 4 years nomination period. The report also covers the potential need for changes in their respective VET programmes. The Directorate, in cooperation with Vocational Training Councils, vocational committees (*faglig utvalg*), county municipalities and social partners, reviewed VET programmes available in 2016. The result is a new structure for vocational subjects in upper secondary schools from 2020, which will be the biggest change in vocational education since 2006. The new structure will strengthen the quality and relevance of the education.

One element that may limit the social partners' impact on upper secondary VET provision is the emphasis placed on the individual choices of learners. According to legislation ([ 26 ]), learners are entitled to admission to one out of three preferred upper secondary programmes. In the school year 2017/18, 82% of first-year learners were admitted to their first choice of upper secondary education ([ 27 ]). County authorities must provide programmes and subjects that correspond to these preferences. Thus, in order to balance the VET provision with labour market needs, social partners give advice concerning a wide range of topics related to upper secondary VET, such as: training programme structure, curriculum development, regional structure, volume of VET provision, examinations framework for trade and journeyman's certificates, and quality control at national, county and local level.

#### **At post-secondary VET level**

In post-secondary vocational education, and in higher education, study programmes are designed by the provider. Each post-secondary vocational education programme must be recognised by Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT). In higher education, all accredited institutions can establish programmes at bachelor level, within the scope of their accreditation. Universities are free to establish programmes at all levels, including master and PhD programmes. All tertiary education institutions have external board members, and consultation with relevant labour market players on the design of programmes is common. In some fields there are national framework curricula to ensure some degree of similarity in training for all graduates (in teacher education, nursing, engineering, auditing, etc.). For other fields of training, the respective industries have national boards which offer advice to higher education providers. All higher education institutions are required to have a strategy and a consultative council for cooperation with working life (*Råd for samarbeid med arbeidslivet*).

## 10.2 Designing qualifications

In April 2016, the Government adopted a new white paper ([ 28 ]) that will lead to a renewal of the curricular reform (*Kunnskapsløftet*) from 2006. The renewal of the school subjects in primary and lower- and upper secondary education, including VET, will give learners more in-depth training and a better subject understanding, more relevant content and links between subjects and the learning process progression will be made clearer. The new curricular will be ready autumn 2020.

### **The national curriculum**

The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion (*Kunnskapsløftet 2006*) covers compulsory primary and lower secondary education and upper secondary education and training as a whole.

The curriculum consists of:

- the Core Curriculum – values and principles in education;
- subject curricula;
- a framework regulating the distribution of teaching hours per subject.

The Core Curriculum deepens appreciation of basic values such as moral outlook, creative abilities, preparation for working life and society, general education, cooperation, and ecological understanding. This part of the curriculum underlies all education in Norway from primary to adult education and constitutes the binding foundation and values for primary and upper secondary education and training.

The quality framework consists of the principles that clarify the school owners' (municipalities and county authorities') responsibilities. Key competencies are integrated into the quality framework, such as learning strategies, social competencies, cultural competencies, motivation to learn, and learner participation.

The subject curricula consist of outcome-based learning targets, the main subject areas and basic skills. The main subject areas describe what the learner and apprentice should be able to do. The basic skills are: the ability to express oneself orally and in writing, the ability to read, fluency in numeracy, and the ability to use digital tools. The subject curricula also describe which final assessment will be given on completion.

The distribution of teaching hours per subject is set at national level. This is an overview of how the total teaching hours should be distributed per subject per year for the 10-year compulsory education as well as for the upper secondary level, VET included.

The National Curriculum encompasses 10-year compulsory education and upper secondary education and training as a whole. The competence objectives state what the learner/apprentice should be able to master at each level after grades 2, 4, 7 and 10, as well as after every stage of upper secondary education and training. Basic skills are decisive for acquiring subject-related knowledge and for communicating and cooperating with others in a wide range of situations. Their aims are integrated with, and adapted to each subject according to level. The subject curricula also describe the principles for assessment. However, decisions regarding teaching methods are left to the education and training institutions. Curricular activities at local levels are essential in order to implement the National Curriculum, particularly the outcome-based competence aims in the subject curricula. The school owners must have a system in place for following up the quality of local curricular activities. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training develops web-based guidelines to support local curricular activities as well as other measures to raise competence among school owners and



school managements.

### **Developing VET curricula**

The Directorate has responsibility for continuous curricular development. For this purpose it makes extensive use of expert groups from both schools and enterprises providing upper secondary education. When the need for a new qualification is identified, a tripartite group is set up to design vocational profiles. These form the basis for developing the subject curricula. The Directorate appoints teams for curricular development consisting of professionals (most often proposed by the employer and employee organisations) and VET teachers.

Within three months, the team submits a draft version of the curricula to the Directorate. The draft is distributed to the sector for a three-month consultation process. Relevant feedback is incorporated into the draft curricula. With support from external representatives from the sector, the quality of the curricula is assured by the Directorate. Depending on the subject, the curricula are finally set by the Ministry or the Directorate.

The identified labour market needs will have no direct influence on teachers' training or assessment, but the training of teachers and the assessment of learners and apprentices will be dependent on the subject curricula.

In addition, the Directorate has a follow-up system for curricula (*System for oppfølging av læreplan* (SOL)). The purpose of the system is to obtain a more holistic and systematic overview of the situation for the curricula. SOL entails reviewing, compiling and analysing different sources that inform the situation for the curricula and how they function. These sources include studies, enquiries, evaluation reports and statistics. The intention is that SOL should contribute to making administration of the curricula more systematic, knowledge-based and predictable. The knowledge gained gives the Directorate a basis for initiating the necessary and adequate measures for strengthening implementation of the curricula. These measures can support and inform VET providers when adjusting the curricula.

Norway is in the process of renewing all subjects at all levels of education. The renewed subjects and a new core curriculum will be implemented in 2020.

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[25] One for each VET programme.

[26] Section 3-1 of the Education Act.

[27] Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training: <https://www.udir.no/tall-og-forskning/finn-forskning/tema/soker--og-inntakstall/forsteinntak-til-vgs-2017/>

## CHAPTER 11.

# Quality assurance

The tripartite cooperation represents a crucial quality assurance mechanism for upper secondary VET. The Education Act requires the county authority (*fylkeskommunen*) to consult the County Vocational Training Board (*Yrkesopplæringsnemda*) on quality issues related to school-based and work-based VET. A main task for the Board is thus to give advice, especially related to accreditation of apprenticeship training enterprises. The County Vocational Training Board should also present proposals for quality development, including the enhancement of partnerships between schools and enterprises, and skills and competence development for teachers and trainers.

As quality assurance is embedded in the legal framework, the state is responsible for inspecting all activities stipulated in the Education Act. Furthermore, the state has the authority to issue legally binding orders to rectify unsatisfactory conditions. The Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) has delegated this responsibility as the inspectorate at national level to the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (*Utdanningsdirektoratet*). The Directorate is responsible for developing and supporting inspections, to facilitate a unified inspection throughout the country, and to provide guidance on legislation. The county governors (*fylkesmenn*) serve as the operational inspection authority for basic training, and have responsibility for activities at county level. They also serve as the appeal body for individual decisions regarding learners in primary and lower secondary school. However, the Ministry still has the authority to exercise supervision, and can instruct the Directorate for Education and Training and the county governors on how inspections should be performed.

Quality standards for VET providers are set out in the Education Act and relevant regulations. The legislation sets standards for examinations, trade- and journeyman's certification, approval of apprenticeship training enterprises, and teacher competence. The Education Act also regulates the county governors' responsibility to provide guidance to school owners. This applies to guidance not only on academic matters but also on other matters related to the Education Act. This includes guidance on administrative rules, and is intended to provide the best possible cooperation between the state and the school owners.

In addition to the county governors' more general inspections, joint national inspections may also be implemented. These inspections are incident-based, and are based on regional risk assessments made in cooperation with the county governors. Situations may arise that invoke immediate attention by the authorities, and give county governors the authority to perform inspections at their own initiative.

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (*Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen* (NOKUT)) is responsible for recognition, accreditation and quality assurance in post-secondary vocational education and higher education. The frameworks for these activities are laid down in the respective laws and regulations on quality assurance in higher education and post-secondary vocational education, as well as in supplementary regulations, rules and procedures laid down by NOKUT.

## CHAPTER 12.

# Validation of prior learning

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is possible in all levels of education and training in Norway and can be used to acquire modules and/or full qualifications. There are laws and regulations in place relating to each level of education and training, providing a general framework for validation of prior learning. The Norwegian system of validation is based on shared principles across all sectors. One of these principles is that the validation process should be voluntary and of benefit to the individual.

Differences in funding and governance mechanisms found in primary, upper secondary, post-secondary vocational and higher education affect the preconditions for setting up validation procedures. The sectors of education have developed schemes for validation of non-formal and informal learning according to their specific needs and preconditions. Higher education institutions exercise the greatest freedom in the design and delivery of validation, because responsibilities are devolved to each institution. This also concerns post-secondary VET. The national government and its underlying administrations provide guidelines for all educational sectors.

During the autumn of 2013, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, in cooperation with stakeholders from the sectors, developed national guidelines relating to adults who claim the right to have their formal, non-formal and informal learning validated compared to lower or upper secondary level. The guidelines focus mainly on how to interpret the regulations relating to validation and how to implement the different points described in the regulations. The purpose of the national guidelines for validation is to ensure that sound validation procedures are carried out, leading to similar practices in all Norwegian counties and municipalities. By providing a national basis for local practice, the guidelines could spur confidence and legitimacy of the validation practices.

- It is possible to acquire a full qualification on the basis of validation in the Programme for General Studies in upper secondary education (university-preparatory).
- In upper secondary VET, it is necessary to take the relevant final (trade) examination to achieve a trade or journeyman's certificate as a skilled worker.
- In higher education, individuals can gain exemptions for parts of study programmes. On the diploma as well as on the Diploma Supplement, the relevant courses and credits will be identified as having been obtained through validation. In post-secondary VET, the possibility to give exemption from courses and modules on the basis of validation was introduced through regulations of 1 August 2013.

In terms of awarding credits or partial qualifications after validation in primary and upper secondary education and training, the Education Act permits candidates to achieve a partial certificate qualification, called 'certificate of competence' (*kompetansebevis*) at any level through validation. Candidates then have the right to access further education and training, in order to achieve a full trade or journeyman's certificate. The certificate of competence is awarded to recognise that an individual has achieved certain objectives (learning outcomes) within an upper secondary curriculum. The certificates can serve as a stand-alone evidence of competences and can be used, for example, to support a job application or participation in further education courses.

These partial certificates of competence are recognised on the labour market, as a documentation of parts of the demands in the trade. It is also possible to access education through validation – the individual must be able to show (through documentation or other

means) that s/he has the required skills and competences to enter a certain level of education and training.

For more information about arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning please visit Cedefop's European database ([ 29 ]).

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[29] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/european-database-on-validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

## CHAPTER 13.

# Incentives for learners

### **Salary during apprenticeship training**

The apprenticeship scheme is a critical component of the upper secondary VET 2+2 model. The regulated salary during the apprenticeship training period is a financial incentive to promote learner participation in VET. The salary for apprentices constitutes a given percentage of the initial salary of a worker with a craft certificate in the relevant vocation. The salary is increasing throughout the apprenticeship.

For apprentices following the main model (2+2) the salary will be calculated as follows:

1st half of the years in an approved training company: 30 percent of the initial salary;

2nd half: 40 percent of the initial salary;

3rd half: 50 percent of the initial salary;

4th half: 80 percent of the initial salary.

### **Grants and loans for learners**

The main purposes of the Act relating to Learner Grants (*Lov om utdanningsstøtte*) of 1985, most recently amended in 2015, are to:

- improve equity in access to education and training regardless of geography, gender, age and social background;
- improve learning environments and enable learners to study more effectively;
- ensure a qualified workforce for society at large.

Learner loans carry no interest charges during the period of study. All registered learners participating in formally recognised study programmes at both public and private institutions of higher education may receive grants and subsidised loans from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (*Statens lånekasse for utdanning*) for subsistence expenses. Support is also provided to Norwegian learners abroad, who may receive additional support for travel, admission and tuition fees.

Learners in upper secondary school-based VET (learners and apprentices alike) may qualify for grants and subsidised loans from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund subject to a needs-based assessment. They may receive:

- relocation grants if they have to move away from home to attend school or enterprise-based training, and are also entitled to support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund.

The following grants are also available to adult learners;

- additional subsistence grant to cover expenses if they live away from home;
- grants for purchasing compulsory equipment, according to study programme.

Support to learners at upper secondary level is mainly provided in the form of grants.

## CHAPTER 14.

# Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

The apprenticeship scheme is a critical component of the upper secondary VET 2+2 model. After two years of school-based education, most VET programmes involve a two-year apprenticeship in a training enterprise. This period is equivalent to one year of practice-based training and one year of productive work for the training enterprise. During the first year as an apprentice with practice-based training the enterprise focus on teaching. There is no expectation to profit-making. The second year with productive work is expected to be profit-making for the company. After two years in school, the apprentice signs a legally binding apprenticeship contract with the training enterprise and a representative from the county authorities. By law, apprentices are employees of the enterprise, with the rights and obligations that follow. They are entitled to a salary that increases with the apprentice's productivity during the two-year apprenticeship period. Salary increases normally start at 30% and increase to 80% of a skilled worker's salary. For the school year 2017/18, 66 562 vocational learners are registered in upper secondary education in Norway and there are 41 480 apprentices with apprenticeship contracts.

In 2017, all training enterprises received a state grant of approximately EUR 15 000 per apprentice for a 12-months training period. The grant covers the training period only, not the productive component. The grant is distributed evenly throughout the apprenticeship period in the company. The grant is supposed to cover costs related to training the apprentice. Additional grants are given to enterprises either for offering apprenticeships in rare and protected crafts (*små og verneverdige fag*) or for accepting apprentices or training candidates with special needs.

## CHAPTER 15.

# Guidance and counselling

Legislation ([ 30 ]) guarantees the right of every learner to receive both guidance regarding educational and vocational matters as well as for social or personal character.

Guidance and guidance services are provided by different institutions according to level of education and relation to the labour market. The main guidance services are organised within the school system. Learners in primary and secondary education have the right to “necessary guidance on education, vocational opportunities, vocational choices and social matters”. The provision is organised by the individual schools. All learners are entitled to guidance according to their needs.

A whole-school approach to guidance has been adopted, meaning that individual teachers, and all other personnel in schools, have a responsibility to provide guidance to learners. Moreover, one subject in the curriculum for lower secondary schools, Study Elective Programme Subject (*Utdanningsvalg*), is specifically aimed at providing learners with the competencies they need to make informed educational and vocational choices. A similar subject is offered in VET programmes in upper secondary schools. In addition to this, and with a different responsibility for guidance, guidance counsellors in lower and upper secondary education provide guidance to learners in school. Guidance counsellors in the Follow-up Service (*Oppfølgingstjenesten*) provide guidance to youth aged between 16 and 24 who are neither in education nor in employment.

All counties have allocated funding from the state budget to establish partnerships for career guidance, and most counties have established such partnerships or other forms of regional cooperation. Local and regional school authorities, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the business sector, and social partners are often partners in these initiatives. Several counties have established career centres to provide guidance for everyone, primarily adults aged above 19. The career centres also play a role in helping improve the competence of guidance counsellors in schools, in local Labour and Welfare offices (NAV) and other institutions offering career guidance. The National Unit for Lifelong guidance in Competence Norway is in charge of managing and monitoring partnerships in career guidance.

In 2014 a master’s degree in career guidance was established in Norway. Career guidance strengthens the individual’s ability and competence to make informed education and vocational choices.

Although all learners in upper secondary education have the right to guidance under the Education Act, apprentices do not have this right. An official Norwegian report ([ 31 ]) recommends a right to guidance also for apprentices. It additionally recommends an online guidance platform to increase the quality of guidance in both lower and upper secondary schools. Universities and some university colleges have established career centres to provide guidance to learners. Adults who need guidance may use the local offices of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) or visit regional career centres established by partnerships in career guidance. A small number of private agencies also provide career guidance on a commercial basis.

Please see also:

- guidance and outreach Norway national report ([ 32 ]);
- Cedefop’s inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices ([ A1 ]).

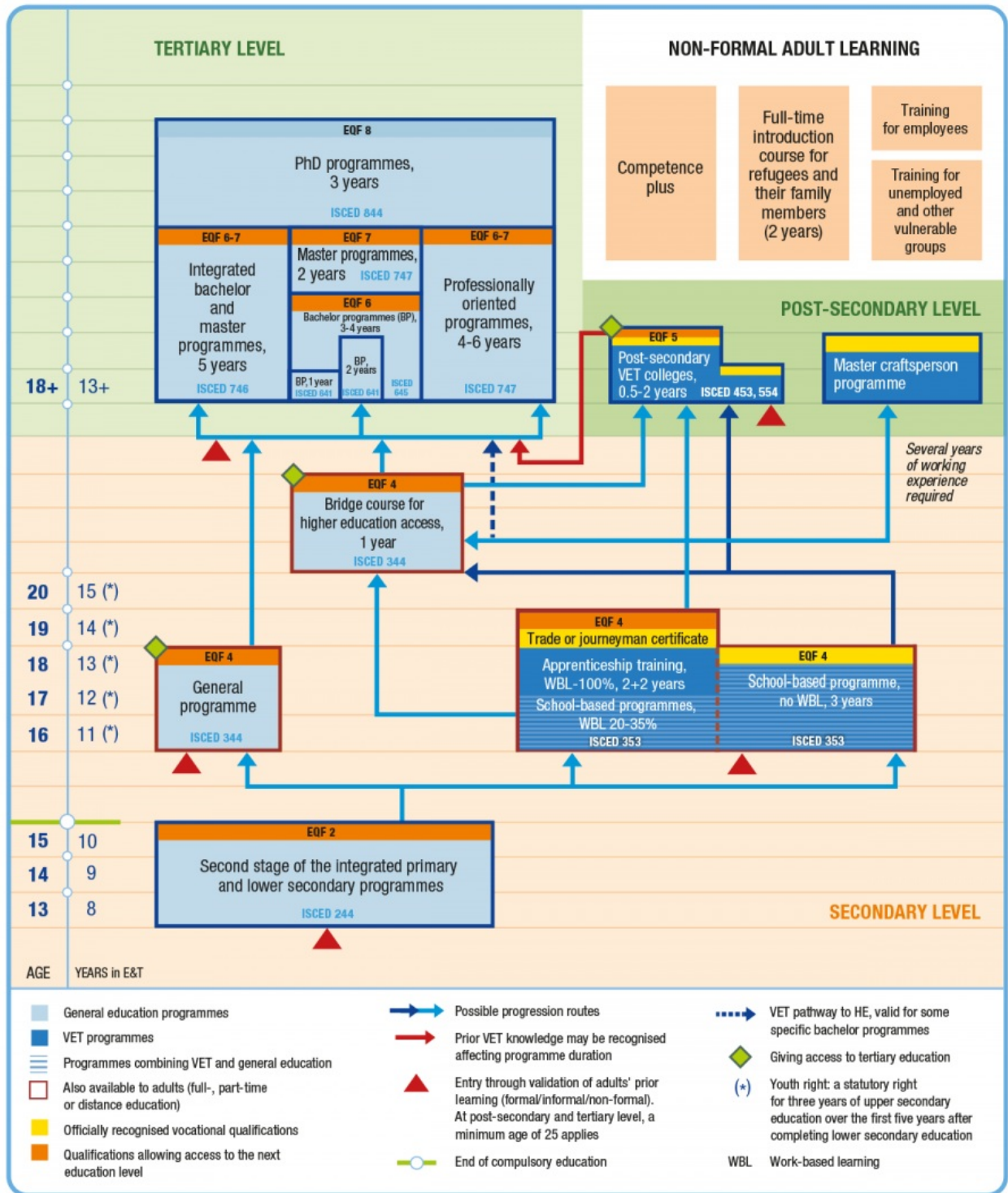
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[30] Under the Education Act (Opplæringsloven); came into effect 1.1.2009.

- [31] NOU 2016:7 Norge I omstilling – karriereveiledning for individ og samfunn [NOU 2016:7 Career guidance for individuals and society].  
<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/voksnes-laring-og-kompetanse/artikler/sammendrag-av-nou-20167-karriereveiledning-for-individ-og-samfunn/id2485528/>
- [32] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/events-and-projects/networks/refernet/thematic-perspectives/guidance-outreach>



# Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.  
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Norway, 2019.

# VET Programme Types

EQF 3
School-based programmes, no WBL, 3 years
ISCED 353

## The three-year upper secondary school-based pathway leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353 (Yrkeskompetanse)

EQF level 3	ISCED-P 2011 level 353
<b>Usual entry grade</b> 11	<b>Usual completion grade</b> 13
<b>Usual entry age</b> 16	<b>Usual completion age</b> 18
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b> 3	
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b> ✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b> ✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b> ✓	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b> ✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b> ✓	<b>Is it available for adults?</b> ✓

**ECVET or other credits** Credits are not available at upper secondary level.

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)** School-based learning consisting of 981 hours of teaching the first year of which 477 hours in the programme subject.

Second year:

982 hours of teaching, 477 hours in the programme subject




Third year:

981 hours, 926 hours in the programme subject.

**Main providers** Upper secondary schools

**Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies** =0%

<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	This scheme is available both for young people and also for adults.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	<p>Completed lower secondary education is required.</p> <p>The level of the grades to enter may vary, depending on the demand (the number of applicants) and the grades of the applicants.</p>
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>The learners need to pass a compulsory final exam, which is based on learning outcomes and usually includes a practical part.</p> <p>At upper secondary level the learners have the right to a new final exam if the first attempt fails. The school is obliged to offer the opportunity to write the exam next time this is scheduled at the school. If a learner fail to do so, the exam has to be completed as an external candidate for a public examination</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	Professional competence qualification at EQF level 3
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Interior designer, piano repair, space technology, pharmacy technician, medical secretary and gardening.
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Those who complete VET may enter the labour market. The learners may also do a craft or journeyman`s certificate exam after five years of working in the trade.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Information for this programme is not available.</p> <p>In Norway the graduates are tracked three years after completing a vocational education. In total, 80.8 % of all the 2016-17 graduates are employed, 12 % are in education and 7.2 % are neither in education nor job ([ 33 ]).</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	Achieving qualifications through validation of prior learning is possible.

<b>General education subjects</b>	 <p>The common core subjects (<i>fellesfag</i>) (Norwegian, English, mathematics, physical education, natural sciences and social sciences) are the same for all VET programmes.</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	 <p>Key competences are integrated in the competence aims for the subject.</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	 <p>The programme is based on learning outcomes.</p>
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	<p>In 2018/19 there were 121 390 learners in general education at upper secondary level. 35.59 % of the learners at upper secondary level were in vocational education and training (67 092). Only 2 465 learners attended the third year at upper secondary school and 58 % of them attended this programme. The others progress to apprenticeship or to a bridge year to access higher education.</p>

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[33] [www.udir.no](http://www.udir.no)

EQF 4

Apprenticeship training,

WBL -100%

2+2 year

School-based  
programmes,

WBL 20-35%

ISCED level 353

**The 2+2 apprenticeship pathway leading to EQF level 4, ISCED level 353 (2+2 modellen)**

<b>EQF level</b>	4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	353
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	11	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	14
<b>Usual entry age</b>	16	<b>Usual completion age</b>	19
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	4		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✓	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✓ Upper secondary school is free of charge.	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓

**ECVET or other credits** Credits are not available at this level of education.

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)** The model entails two years of education in school followed by two years of formal apprenticeship training in company.

**Main providers**

- VET schools in the first two years
- Training companies in the second two years

**Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies** =20-35% in the first two years  
=100 % in the second two years

<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school in the first two years</li> <li>• apprenticeship in company in the second two years</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>Mainly young people, 16-18 year olds (85%).</p> <p>The age group 19-24 represent 9.6%, 25-29 = 2.1%, 30-34 = 1.4% and 35+ represents 1.8% ([ 34 ]).</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	<p>Completed lower secondary education is required.</p>
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>Upper secondary VET is completed with a practical-theoretical trade or journeyman's examination (<i>Fag- eller svenneprøve</i>). In the test, candidates demonstrate their vocational skills, and explain and justify the methods chosen to solve the test assignments.</p> <p>A county-appointed, trade-specific examination board prepares and assesses the examination. The minimum requirement for being a board member is a formal vocational education. The county authorities award the certificate.</p> <p>In 2017, 82.6% of candidates who entered a VET programme in 2012 passed the exam, 5.8% completed their apprenticeship but failed the exam, 10.8% failed to complete their apprenticeship and 0.8% are still undertaking their apprenticeship ([ 35 ]).</p> <p>Learners' competencies are assessed continuously throughout the four years of education and training, in school by the teacher and in apprenticeship by the training supervisor. In addition, they have to take exams in individual subjects developed at local and county level. Learners may also be randomly selected to take nationally organised examinations in common core subjects. Most learners have passed exams in vocational subjects after two and four years of training. After two years in school, learners take an interdisciplinary local practical exam which covers all the vocational subjects.</p>

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**Diplomas/certificates provided**

Upper secondary VET practical-theoretical trade or journeyman's examination lead to an EQF level 4 qualification: a trade certificate (Fagbrev) for industrial and service trades or a journeyman's certificate (Svennebrev) for traditional crafts.

The two certificates have equal status based on similar sets of theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

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**Examples of qualifications**

Goldsmith, winder, painter, roofer.

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**Progression opportunities for learners after graduation** There are many progression opportunities to post-secondary and tertiary education from upper secondary VET.

With a trade or journeyman's certificate, the options are:

- Higher vocational education (EQF level 5), 6 to 24 months specialisation/further education
- via a one-year bridging course in core subjects (påbyggingsår); direct admission to certain specially designed bachelor programmes (Y-veien).

Options without a trade or journeyman's certificate are:

- five years' experience gained in work and/or education and passing a course in core subjects (for those aged 23 or older);
- recognition of relevant formal, informal and non-formal learning for people aged 25 or older who do not meet general entrance requirements;
- successfully completed two years in vocational college;
- completing the bridge course (*Påbygging til generell studiekompetanse*) after completing the first two years of a VET programme. This option is a choice made by more than a quarter of upper secondary VET learners. In 2017, 8 200 learners (27.8% of the VET learners) selected this option after their second year in a VET programme ([ 36 ]). Already after two years in a VET programme, learners may transfer to a third year of supplementary studies that qualify them to enter higher education. This year leads to a qualification at NQF level 4B and EQF level 4. This pathway replaces the two-year apprenticeship period, and the learners will thus not receive a trade or journeyman's certificate. The third year is a 'package' course in the six key academic subjects of Norwegian, English, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, and history, and successful candidates satisfy the general admission requirements to higher education (on par with those taking general study programmes). Apprentices also have a statutory right to a year of supplementary studies after passing the trade- or journeyman's test, a fifth year of training. The fifth year is supplementary studies which qualify for higher education.

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**Destination of graduates** Information for this programme is not available.

In Norway the graduates are tracked three years after completing a vocational education. 80.8 % of all 2016-17 graduates are employed, 12 % are in education and 7.2 % are neither in education nor job ([ 37 ]).

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**Awards through  
validation of prior  
learning** ✓

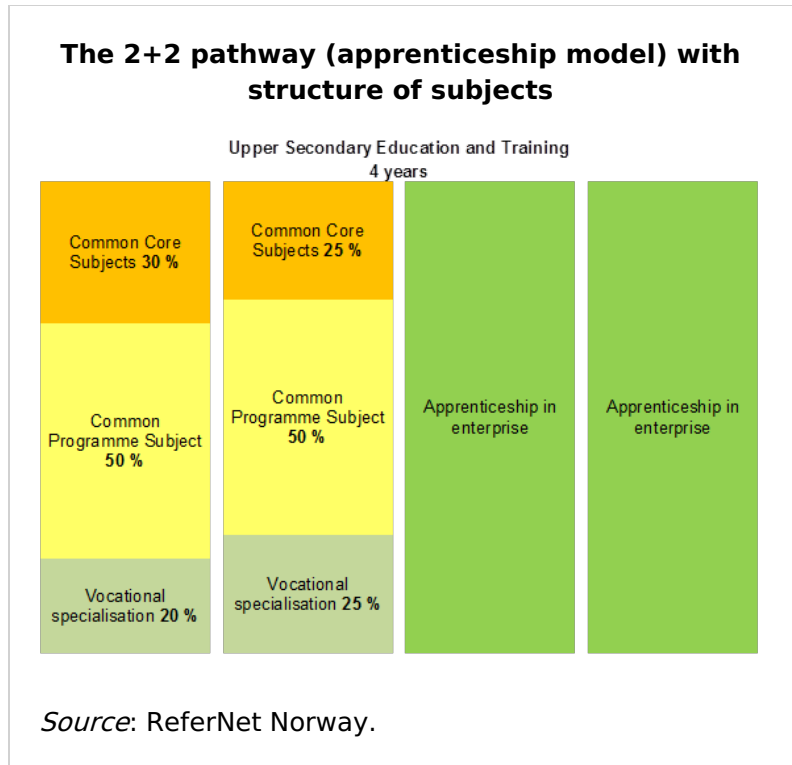
Validation of prior learning is always an option.

The Directorate of Education and training has developed national guidelines for the assessment of prior learning in lower and upper secondary school for adults.

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## General education subjects ✓



The common core subjects (*fellesfag*) (Norwegian, English, mathematics, physical education, natural sciences and social sciences) are the same for all VET programmes.

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## Key competences ✓

The key competences are integrated in the competence aims for the subject.

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**Application of learning outcomes approach** ✓

The programme is based on learning outcomes.

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**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

No information available on the share of learners.

At upper secondary level, 72% of the vocational programmes are structured according to the two main models (2+2 apprenticeships and 3+0 school based).

74.2% of all the learners applying for an apprenticeship signed a contract in 2018.

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[34] Statistics Norway: <https://www.ssb.no/vgu>

[35] Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training: <https://skoleporten.udir.no>

[36] Statistikk-portalen: <https://skoleporten.udir.no/>

[37] [www.udir.no](http://www.udir.no)

## Master craftsperson programme (Mesterbrevordningen)

<b>EQF level</b>	Not applicable	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	1,5 - 2 (part-time)		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✗ The craftsman education is still not linked to NKF/EQF
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✓ A trade or journeyman certificate is required, as well as several years of relevant work experience.
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✗	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓

**ECVET or other credits** Not applicable

### Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

Master craftsperson programme covers general administrative subjects, e.g. organisation and management, marketing and financial control, as well as craft theory.

Common subjects are delivered part-time over the course of two years (the training is typically combined with full-time work as an employee or owner of an SME). ICT is integrated throughout the course. Both common subjects and craft theory are offered as evening and part-time courses. Distance education courses are also available.

<b>Main providers</b>	Three institutions provide master craftsman education: <i>Folkeuniversitetet</i> (FU), <i>Norges grønne fagskole - Veia</i> , <i>Blimester</i> ([ 38 ])
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	This education targets people that are already in work, and the education is organised to allow for full time work besides studies.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory studies in e.g. administration, economics and leadership.</li> <li>• Both classroom teaching and web based education supplemented by study gatherings are offered.</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	Master craftsman education is for holders of a trade or journeyman's certificate who also have several years of relevant work experience and wish to set up their own business or hold a managerial position in a craft enterprise.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Trade or journeyman's certificate and several years of relevant work experience.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>Courses in common subjects conclude with a written examination. In craft theory, a written examination is held for each master craftsman subject. Learners may also take the examination as private candidates.</p> <p>Master craftsmen programme is administered by the publicly appointed Master Craftsman Certificate Committee (<i>Mesterbrevnemnda</i> (MCC)), which determines training standards and practice requirements and awards the certificate.</p> <p>In recent years, MCC has further extended the education system for master crafts persons. As a result, learning output-based degrees from other providers can also be recognised.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>Successful candidates obtain the title "Master Craftsman".</p> <p>The master craftsman certificate is awarded in 73 different crafts covering all traditional trades in which journeyman's examinations are held and journeyman's certificates issued, as well as some (newer) trades with craft examinations and certificates.</p>

<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Example of qualifications (out of more than 70):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masonry</li> <li>• Goldsmith</li> <li>• Woodcarving</li> </ul>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Master craftsman education does not qualify for further education.</p> <p>The education qualifies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting up own business</li> <li>• taking a managerial position in a craft enterprise</li> </ul>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	The education is primarily for people already in work, and they take the education part time.
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>Validation of prior learning in order to achieve the mastercraftsman tribunal (<i>Mesterbrevnemnda</i>) is possible.</p>
<b>General education subjects</b>	Master craftsperson education combines general administrative subjects such as business organisation and management, marketing, financial control, and vocational theory.
<b>Key competences</b>	✗
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	✓
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	Not applicable

[38] [www.blimester.com](http://www.blimester.com)

EQF 5

Post-secondary

VET colleges,

0.5-2 years

ISCED 453, 554

**Post-secondary vocation education (nationally referred as tertiary) leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 453 and 554 (fagskoleutdanning)**

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	453 and 554
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	<p>Not applicable</p> <p>Share of learners in a range of age groups is as following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30% 21-25 y.o.</li> <li>• 20% 26-30 y.o.</li> <li>• 14% 31-35 y.o.</li> <li>• 11% 36-40 y.o.</li> <li>• 7% 41-45 y.o.</li> <li>• 7% 46-50 y.o.</li> <li>• 5% 51+ y.o.</li> </ul> <p>Data from 2018 ([ 39 ]).</p>	<b>Usual completion age</b>	6 months up to 2 years after study entry.
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	From 0.5 year to 2 years (up to 3 years in special cases)		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✓
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	Depending on the study, some are free of charge and some are with tuition fee.		<b>Is it available for adults?</b> ✓

<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	From 30 – 120 higher vocational education credits. In special cases 180 credits
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	Education at this level is available as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• part time studies to be combined with work</li> <li>• online studies</li> </ul> <p>Training is available at school and within an enterprise.</p>
<b>Main providers</b>	Post-secondary (nationally referred as tertiary) vocational colleges ( <i>fagskoler</i> ), private and public
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	The share of work-based learning depends on the study and varies.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	Work-based learning may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	Programmes are available both for young people and for working adults.  The education especially target working adults and the study is often adapted to fit a combination of work and study.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Access is based on an upper secondary general or vocational qualification, depending on the branch of study, or validated prior learning (VPL).  No practical work experience is required. However, many programmes, particularly those aimed at the health and social service sector, are designed as part-time courses, where learners are required to work part-time and undertake project assignments at a workplace, often their own.  No age restrictions apply.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	The education is based on learning outcomes and the students have to pass a final examination.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	VET students at this level may receive three qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher professional degree (120-180 credits)</li> <li>• Professional degree (60 -90 credits)</li> <li>• Certificate without a degree</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Mechanical engineer, electro technician, fashion designer and pattern maker.



<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Candidates who have completed a two-year post-secondary VET programme qualify for some engineer educations and some technical educations at tertiary level. The framework curricula for the bachelor programmes in engineering allow for the recognition of relevant two-year technical post-secondary vocational education as one year of the engineering programme.  Some vocational education colleges have agreements with higher education institutions whereby their graduates are directly admitted to the second year of engineering programmes in the relevant field of study. However, such agreements often set conditions for technical vocational college learners. For instance, engineering at tertiary education level requires college candidates to spend 3½ or 4 years on completing their bachelor's degree.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	✓ Recognition of prior learning (RPL): Access based on individual assessment of formal, informal and non-formal qualifications is open to applicants aged 25 or above. Applications for admission on the basis of RPL are processed locally at each institution.
<b>General education subjects</b>	✗
<b>Key competences</b>	✗
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	✓
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	Information for this type of programmes is not available.  In general, there are 16 000 students at post-secondary level compared to 293 287 students at universities and university colleges.  Data from 2019 ([ 40 ]).

[40] <https://www.ssb.no/fagskoler>

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