



Certificate of practice (Praksisbrev)

Description

The Norwegian 'Certificate of Practice' is a two-year programme with emphasis on practical training. After obtaining a 'Certificate of Practice', the learner can continue training towards a trade or journeyman's certificate.

Beneficiaries

VET students (school based)

The scheme targets students who have difficulties completing an ordinary VET programme and are at risk of leaving school early.

Countries

 Norway

Education level and sector

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary vocational education and training (school-based)

Upper secondary vocational education and training (work-based learning)

Upper secondary education

Vocational Education and Training (VET) (school-based), Vocational Education and Training (VET) (apprenticeship-based)

Type of policy/initiative

Prevention Intervention

Prevention/Intervention

Level of implementation / Scope

Regional level National level

National scope, but rooted regionally in counties

Stage of implementation

On-going

The programme was piloted between 2008-2011 in three counties. As of 2018, the 'certificate of practice' has been implemented and is now a permanent supplement to VET in Norway.

Aims of policy/initiative

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The overall aim of the measure is to reduce Early Leaving in Vocational Education and Training (ELVET) by providing an alternative to VET students who would otherwise have had difficulties to complete an ordinary VET programme.

Features and types of activities implemented

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, vocational councils and social partners were involved in the design of the pilot project measure.

The 'certificate of practice' is a two-year programme with emphasis on practical training. Normally students spend 4 days a week working in an enterprise and 1 day in school, studying general subjects (Norwegian, mathematics and social studies). Alternatively, after obtaining a 'certificate of practice', candidates can continue training towards a trade or journeyman's certificate (a formal vocational certificate).

Each county decides how to organise the programme. For instance, VET institutions can have a programme officer, teachers and a guidance officer, affiliated with the 'certificate of practice' programme.[1] In this case, the programme officer is responsible for everything related to the facilitation of contacts between students and enterprises, as well as follow-ups during the placement period. The programme officer is also responsible for the assessment process, involving students, parents, and the school, and making sure that the curriculum requirements are met.

[1] Based on interviews with 2 different VET institutions implementing the 'certificate of practice'.

Resources

The public upper secondary VET is financed by the counties that receive a block grant from the national level to cover services provided at local level.

Funding is then distributed to schools, pro rata to the number of students enrolled per school.

Enterprises are given a subsidy for taking in 'certificate of practice' candidates (approx. €15,821 a year[1]) for 2 years.

[1] NOK141, 566 per year.

Evaluation of the measure

The Norwegian Research Institute (NIFU) has evaluated the pilot project that ran from 2008-11 in 3 counties (Akershus, Rogaland and Vestfold).

Initial interviews were conducted with relevant authorities and stakeholders, as well as with actors from counties, schools and participating enterprises, in order to determine the implementation context of the measure. Interviews were periodically conducted throughout the duration of the programme.

The evaluation's conclusions are based both on the quantitative comparison of performances and on the qualitative assessment of the programme by teachers and students.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

The 2011 pilot project evaluation showed promising results with 41 out of 51 students completing the 'certificate of practice' (two-year programme) (80%). 25 students successfully got an apprenticeship contract after completing the 'certificate of practice'.

Ultimately, 49% of the 'certificate of practice' students successfully got an apprenticeship contract, compared to 29% of ordinary VET students.

Students' lack of discipline was initially a problem in most schools. It however improved over time.

Success factors

The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed for the Cedefop study:

1. Strong focus on work-based learning instead of school-based education: as not all students are cut out for school-based education, working in an enterprise can boost their confidence and motivation.
2. Placements in enterprises more likely to lead to ordinary apprenticeship positions: as contact has already been established and students are already familiar with the enterprises' work processes, chances of getting an apprenticeship contract with the same enterprise tend to be higher.
3. Thorough assessment of individual cases before admission to the programme (in the 2 VET school visited): only students assessed to have a fair chance of completing the programme and eventually obtaining a full qualification through an ordinary apprenticeship, are accepted into the programme. Based on these assessments, alternatives can be suggested to students for whom the 'certificate of practice' is not a good fit.
4. The school's active role in the programme: a close relationship between the schools/teachers and students, and the schools/teachers and the enterprises, is crucial.
5. After obtaining a 'certificate of practice', the candidate can continue training towards a trade or journeyman's certificate.

Contact details for further information

Contact name:

Anne Katrine Kaels, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet)

Contact telephone:

+47 23 30 12 00

Contact website:

<http://www.udir.no/utdanningslopet/videregaende-opplaring/andre-varianter/praksi...>

Contact email:

Anne.Katrine.Kaels@utdanningsdirektoratet.no

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