

Norway

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Norway: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2005

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Author: ReferNet Norway

Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Norway. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2005. Later editions can be viewed at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Norway

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



Norway

01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Norway consists of the mainland and the islands of Svalbard and Jan Mayen, with a total area of 387,000 sq. km. Mainland Norway shares borders with Sweden, Finland and Russia, and has the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

Currency is Norwegian Kroner (NOK). 1 Euro = 8,1 NOK (November 25th 2004).

Norway is a unitary state, a monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. The constitutional foundation is *Grunnloven* (the Norwegian Constitution), which dates from 1814 (with several subsequent amendments).

Norway is a member of NATO and EFTA. Despite a positive attitude in the government and among the majority in parliament at the time, in a referendum in 1994, a small majority of the population (52%) decided that Norway should not join the EU. However, through the EEA Agreement between the EU and the EFTA countries (except Switzerland), Norway is a member of the Single Market and a participant in several of the EU programmes and institutional arrangements, such as CEDEFOP, SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI and YOUTH.

A fundamental aspect of the Norwegian constitution, is the principle of separation of power, which ensures the freedom of the individual and prevents unhealthy concentration of power with the public authorities. The power of the State has three pillars:

- The *Storting*, the national assembly, has the legislative power.
- The government, which is headed by a prime minister, has the executive power.
- The courts, which are independent of both the national assembly and the government, have the judiciary power.

The government rules the country. It is the *Storting*, however, which establishes the political and economic conditions for the government's work. Furthermore, the *Storting* decides which political party is going to form the government, and the government is dissolved if a majority of the *Storting* decides so. As opposed to several other countries with a parliamentary system, the Norwegian government does not have the right to dissolve the *Storting* and call an election.

The *Storting* has 165 representatives, of whom 157 represent the counties (see below) according to a fixed distribution of seats. The last 8 seats are distributed among the parties that have received too few representatives in relation to the number of votes cast nationally after the first 157 seats are distributed. The members of the *Storting* are elected for four years. Norwegians have the right to vote from the age of 18.

According to the constitution, the government is the king's advisory body. Each member of the government is a minister, responsible for a certain political area. The public administration is in a corresponding way organised in ministries, which are organisational units responsible for a certain sector.

Norway has three political-administrative levels, as it is divided into 19 counties and 435 municipalities. Each of these units have an elected, decision-making body, as well as an executive body. The counties and municipalities are responsible for the practical implementation of national policies in important areas such as education and health services.

Local autonomy at municipal level was authorized by law as early as 1837, and has a strong position in Norwegian society. Since 1945 several reforms have been implemented resulting in the transfer of an increasing number of tasks and power from central to regional and local authorities. This system of ruling by targets necessitates transfer of financial resources from central to local authorities. Financial support is partly given as earmarked grants, but mainly as general or "block" grants.

Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet, UFD, (The Ministry of Education and Research), has the overall responsibility for national mainstream education and vocational training, but executive power is exercised at all three administrative levels. The national assembly defines the overall aims of basic (i.e. primary, lower secondary and upper secondary) education, of the public tertiary education institutions and of pre-school education. It lays down their structure and organisation, determines where responsibility for running the education system lies and specifies their sources of funding. (See also: Ministry of Education and Research: <http://odin.dep.no/>) The curricula on which educational administration and provision are based, are determined by the Ministry of Education and Research. However, development of curricula, examinations and quality control is mandated to the external government bodies, *Utdanningsdirektoratet* (the Directorate of Education) for all levels and parts of publicly authorised education and training below tertiary level. To some degree, also other ministries have responsibilities and dispose of resources which affect continuing training. This mainly applies to Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet (the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) and Kommunal- og regionaldepartementet (the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development).

In each county (except in Oslo and Akershus, which share one common body), the central government is represented by a County Governor (*Fylkesmann*). One department of the County Governor's office has a particular responsibility for education and training in the county. In cooperation with municipal and county authorities, the County Governor's Education Office ensures that appropriate schooling is provided for young people in compliance with national regulations, and also ensures the provision of adequate adult education facilities. (Source: Ministry of Education and Research: <http://odin.dep.no/>)

Individual municipalities own and run the public primary and lower secondary schools, while county authorities are responsible for organising the delivery of public upper secondary education and training. A small number of private

schools are operating at basic education level (primary and secondary education), but the total enrolment at these represent less than 2% of the total number of pupils. Provided they are approved by the Ministry of Education and Research, the private schools and tertiary education institutions receive financial support from the Ministry at the same level as the publicly owned schools, i.e. approximately 80 - 85% of total operational costs.

There are no school fees at any level, including higher education, in the public education system. Textbooks and other teaching materials are provided without any costs of the pupils in compulsory school, i.e. primary and lower secondary levels, whereas students in upper secondary and tertiary education and training must cover these costs themselves. The counties and municipalities cover all remaining expenses over their regular budgets. The Ministry of Education and Research cover most of the operational costs even at the tertiary education institutions directly, the remaining part is covered by contracted education and research. (See also: <http://odin.dep.no/>) Pupils and students in private schools at all levels, are charged a fee to top the operational budgets.

Norway has an open economy with an extensive foreign trade. Approximately 40% of the country's production is exported, whereas imports amount to approximately 30% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Oil and gas, fish, forestry and hydropower are major resources and the economic basis. The open economy and dependency on certain natural resources make the Norwegian economy vulnerable to fluctuations in international markets.

In spite of the dependency on natural resources, Norway must be considered a modern industrial nation. Mechanization and automation characterize all industries, and a high level of investment ensures a continuing modernization of machinery and production equipment. The use of new information and communication technology is rapidly increasing.

6 of 10 households in Norway had access to Internet the second quarter of 2004. Half of these subscriptions were broadband connections. Three quarters of the households had access to a PC, and it was used daily by half of the Norwegian population.

The Internet was used daily of 43 per cent and 80 per cent used the Internet for purchase/sale of goods and services (cfr. Statistics Norway 2004, <http://www.ssb.no/>).

An important structural characteristic of the Norwegian economy is the predominance of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). They constitute more than 99% of the total number of enterprises, and more than 80% of them have less than 5 employees. SME employees constitute approximately 70% of the total labour force. Only about 1 000 enterprises have as many as 100 employees or more.

After a period of recession in the late 1980s, the Norwegian economy has flourished during recent years. As of 2004, unemployment is less than 4%, the interest rate is around 3% and inflation is around 1.5 %. For almost a decade there has been a favourable trade balance and a surplus in the national budget. Private investments in both traditional and new industries are at a high level.

The off-shore oil and gas industry has become increasingly important, as far as both investment and revenue are concerned. As of 2004, Norway is the world's third largest exporter of oil and gas, with 38% of the total export revenues coming from this sector.

The considerable revenues from oil and gas activities have enabled Norway to maintain a high level of consumption and welfare. The government has had the opportunity to implement measures to maintain employment in times when international recession has caused rising unemployment in other countries. In addition, oil and gas activities have had a favourable impact on wealth creation in other sectors of the economy.

Norway has a well developed and regulated system of close co-operation between the major social partners and the government. Through the system of collective bargaining the social partners and the government control wage levels and influence prices. The system of collective bargaining also settles the main principles for both initial and continuing vocational training. These main principles are stated in the agreements reached between the social partners at sector level. For example, in the Basic Agreement between the Confederation of Business and Industry and the Confederation of Unions, the wage levels for apprentices during the training period is decided, and the question of educational leave is raised.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Norway consists of the mainland and the arctic islands of Svalbard and Jan Mayen. The total area is approximately 387,000 km², the mainland 304,300 sq.km. By 1 January 2004 the size of the population was 4,577,500 (Source: Statistics Norway 2004, <http://www.ssb.no/>). This corresponds to a population density of only 11.7 persons per sq.km, or 15 per sq.km on mainland Norway.

YEAR	1991	1996	2003
POPULATION	4 250 000	4 370 000	4 577 450
INCREASE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR (%)	0.56	0.52	0.55

The annual population increase since 1991 has been stable, approximately 0.5-0.6%. (Source Statistics Norway 2003, <http://www.ssb.no/>)

The vast majority of the population (36%) is found in the 5 counties surrounding the Oslo fjord, whereas only 10.1% are located in the three northernmost counties, Nordland, Troms and Finnmark. The general trend is national centralisation towards Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim with surroundings. But even a "decentralised centralisation" towards the central towns in each county is observed.

Population by age, 1 January 2004. N and (per cent)

0 - 24 YEARS	1 464 550 (32.0)
25 - 59	2 229 580 (48.8)
60 +	883 323 (19.3)

Source: Statistics Norway 2004 (<http://www.ssb.no/>).

Demographic projections are made for alternative growth and mobility scenarios. They indicate that the age group 60+ will see a relatively stronger increase than the other age groups.

Age-specific demographic projection 2002 – 2025(*). N and (per cent)

	2002	2005	2010	2020	2025
TOTAL	4 524 066 (100.0)	4 605 294 (100.0)	4 723 213 (100.0)	4 973 909 (100.0)	5 112 097 (100.0)
0-24	1 447 506 (32.0)	1 468 622 (31.9)	1 492 768 (31.6)	1 479 154 (29.7)	1 476 883 (28.9)
25-59	2 209 107 (48.8)	2 236 478 (48.6)	2 228 699 (47.2)	2 289 034 (46.0)	2 315 899 (45.3)
60 +	867 453 (19.2)	900 194 (19.5)	1 001 746 (21.2)	1 205 721 (24.2)	1 319 315 (25.8)

(*) Based on 2002 population data. Scenario: Medium National Growth, High Mobility

Source: Statistics Norway, 2002 (http://www.ssb.no)

By the beginning of 2003 the immigrant population counted almost 333,000 persons, or 7.3 per cent of the total population in Norway. 277,300 were first generation immigrants and 55 500 were born in Norway of two foreign-born parents. During 2002 the immigrant population increased by 4,000 persons born in Norway of two foreign-born parents, and 17,200 first generation immigrants.

A total of 234,000 persons (70 per cent) of the immigrant population originated from non-western countries. Persons with background from Pakistan still form the largest immigrant group, followed by Swedes and Danes. Approximately one third of the first generation immigrants has lived in Norway less than 5 years, another third has resided in Norway between 5 and 14 years, and the last third for more than 15 years.

Generally immigrants live in more central areas than the rest of the population. 48 per cent of the non-western immigrants live in the region in and around Oslo. They make up 17 per cent of the total population in the capitol. The concentration in central areas varies with country background. Three out of four immigrants from Pakistan and Morocco live in Oslo, while for example one out of three with Russian background live in Northern-Norway.

A total of 25,400 foreign citizens moved to Norway in 2001, and 15,200 emigrated. An interesting observation is that every year more Norwegian citizens move out of the country than to the country. Looking only at movements of foreign citizens the net migration to Norway was 18,400 in 2002 and 10,200 in 2001.

There are large differences in participation in tertiary education between first generation immigrants and persons born in Norway of two foreign-born parents. Looking at the age group 19-24 years an increasingly large portion undertake tertiary education. The participation among first generation immigrants is still 11.4 percentage points below the participation of the population as a whole. Persons born in Norway of two foreign-born parents have participation rates far higher than first generation immigrants, but still below the country average (5.5 percentage points). In all groups more women than men undertake tertiary education. For the age group 25-29 participation among those born in Norway of two foreign-born parents is higher than the country average.

The level of education varies much according to country background. The portion of highly educated is larger among immigrants from the Philippines, Poland, Russia and India than among the total population in Norway (aged 30-44 years). 42 per cent of the immigrants from the Philippines have completed tertiary education. Among non-immigrants the portion is 30 per cent. Immigrants from Somalia, Pakistan and Thailand are worst off when it comes to educational attainment, and many women from non-western countries have little education or no schooling at all.

The total employment rate among first generation immigrants decreased from 59.3 per cent the 4th quarter of 2001 to 57.6 the 4th quarter of 2002. In the entire population the employment rate decreased from 70.9 per cent to 70.1 per cent. The employment rate varies with duration of residence. For first generation immigrants the employment rate increased from 48.4 per cent among those who had lived in Norway less than four years, to 60.5 per cent among those with four to six years of residency. For persons born in Norway of two foreign born parents the employment rate is 61.1 per cent.

8, 800 first generation immigrants were registered as self employed in the 4th quarter of 2002, corresponding to 3.7 per cent of the immigrant population. In the whole population 4.7 per cent were self-employed. Nordic and Western Europeans first generation immigrants have the highest rates of self-employed, by more than 5 per cent. Among the non-western immigrants, the ones from Asia had the highest rate of self employed, 3.5 per cent.

Registered unemployment is higher among immigrants than among the rest of the population. Unemployment among first generation immigrants increased from 7.7 to 9.7 per cent from May 2002 to May 2003. For the entire population unemployment increased from 2.9 to 3.7 per cent. Immigrants from Africa had the highest unemployment rate, 17.8 per cent, while immigrants from Asia and South and Central America had 13.0 and 11.2 per cent respectively. Immigrants from Eastern Europe had the lowest unemployment rate among the non-westerners in the 2nd quarter 2003, 10.5 per cent. The rates for immigrants from the Nordic countries and Western Europe were 4.4 per cent.

Source: Statistics Norway 2004 (<http://www.ssb.no>)

Migration rates net immigration/net emigration			
	1994	1999	2003
BIRTH EXCESS	16 071	14 128	13 980
NET IMMIGRATION	7 436	18 999	11 285
TOTAL INCREASE	23 507	33 127	25 265

Source: Statistics Norway 2004 (<http://www.ssb.no/b>).

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Norwegian manufacturing has traditionally been relatively raw-materials based. Natural conditions such as access to hydro-electric power, abundant forest and fisheries resources and petroleum deposits are reflected in the country's industrial structure. Power-intensive manufacturing sectors such as metals production, industrial chemicals and wood processing account for a significant share of Norway's export-oriented industry. Shipbuilding and offshore platform construction are other major sectors while other engineering industries such as the manufacture of electrical and electronic goods have taken on increasing importance in recent years. Fish farming is a relatively new export industry which has boomed during the last 20 years. Due to the topography and climate, the significance of agriculture to GDP and employment is limited.

The Norwegian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 80-90 per cent through the 1980s and 90s, while the increase in the EU, for example was around 50 per cent and in the USA about 70 per cent. The strong growth in Norway must be viewed, among other factors, in light of the development of the oil and gas industry. Norway is currently (2004) the world's third largest exporter of oil. At the same time the oil sector's demand for goods and services from the mainland economy has grown substantially. Norway has nevertheless a diversified industrial structure. More than half of the economy consists of service sector industries, which include housing, banking and insurance, transport and communications and the public sector. Petroleum-linked activities, including crude oil and gas production, made up a good 23 per cent, while manufacturing accounted for about slightly over 9 per cent of the GDP in 2000.

Norway's economy is open, with a per capita foreign trade that is one of the highest in the world. Approximately 77 per cent of Norwegian exports go to EU countries, while a good 68 per cent of imports come from these countries. The Nordic countries, Great Britain and Germany are Norway's most important trading partners. Exports of goods and services accounted for 46 percent of the GDP in 2000, while imports accounted 31 per cent. Exports of oil and gas constituted 46 per cent of total exports. With the exception of one single year, Norway has had large surpluses on its balance of payments every year since 1989 as a result of significant crude and natural gas exports, because of both higher oil prices and increased export volume. The number of public sector workers is more than twice as high in Norway than it is in the USA, while Denmark and Sweden are on about the same level. The demand for labour in the health and social sector will escalate considerably in coming years, due to an ageing population and current reforms in the public sector. In Norway public consumption and public transfers constitute around 20 per cent of the GDP, a lower figure than in Sweden and Denmark but higher than in the United States and Germany. The public sector finances consumption and transfers largely through tax and duties. In Norway the level of tax and duties, measured in relation to the total GDP, has in recent years remained at the same level as the average for the EU countries. The taxation level in Norway is lower than the average for the Nordic countries also in relation to the GDP for mainland Norway but considerably higher than the average for the industrialised countries.(Russwurm 2001, <http://odin.dep.no/>).

Recent economic and labour market data for Norway:

GDP and GDP/capita, NOK. Total and (change from previous year)		
1996	2000	2003
1 026 924 / 234 386 (4.1)	1 469 075 / 327 112 (15.9)	1 561 915 / 342 180 (2.4)

Source: Statistics Norway 2004 (<http://www.ssb.no/> and <http://www.ssb.no/> and <http://www.ssb.no/>).

Inflation rate (change from previous year)			
1990	1995	1999	2003
4.1 (-0.5)	2.5 (1.1)	2.3 (0.1)	2.5 (1.2)

Source: Statistics Norway 2004 (<http://www.ssb.no/>).

Preliminary data in November 2004 show that the price increase from November 2003 was only 1.2%, whereas the economic policy target is 2.5 %. The interest rate is low and the Norwegian currency is at target of the Norwegian Central Bank (1 €= approx. 8.2 NOK).

Employment, 16 - 74 years, 4th quarter 2003. Per cent of population.	
MEN	72.6
WOMEN	66.2
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT RATE	69.4

Source: Statistics Norway 2004 (<http://www.ssb.no/>).

There was a slight decrease in employment from the 4th quarter of 2002. For the country as a whole the decrease amounted to 0.3 per cent, or 7 000 employed persons. Nearly half of the counties had a decrease in the number of employed persons. With the exception of Østfold, Oslo, Vestfold, Telemark and Møre og Romsdal, the changes were less than one per cent. (Statistics Norway 2004, http://www.ssb.no/regsys_en/).

Unemployment rates, 4th quarter 2003. Per cent	
TOTAL	4.5
MEN	4.9
WOMEN	4.4
20 – 24 YEARS	9.3

Source: Statistics Norway 2004 (<http://www.ssb.no/>).

Employment by sector, 4th quarter 2003. Per cent	
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHERY	3.8
OIL, MANUFACTURING, MINING, ENERGY	14.0
CONSTRUCTION	6.6
SERVICE	75.0

Source: Statistics Norway 2004
<http://www.ssb.no>.

In 2000, the total public expenditure on education in Norway was 16.2 % of total public expenditure (cfr. OECD, <http://www.oecd.org/>). In 2002 the corresponding figure was 13 per cent (cfr. Statistics Norway 2004, <http://www.ssb.no/>).

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Eurostat statistics gives the general impression that the educational level of the Norwegian population 25 - 64 is above the European average. With only 13 % of the population having left the education system after primary and lower secondary education, an important educational policy principle and objective has been more or less obtained; that of universal access independent of geography, family economy and gender. Even if the population is scattered over a large area and distance to education institutions often are long, especially in the three northernmost counties, 87 % of the population has been willing and able to attend upper secondary and tertiary education. State financial arrangements reduce the barriers to education for young people from families with a weak economy. Recent Norwegian statistics show that around 95 % of those who complete compulsory school enter upper secondary education (Statistics Norway, <http://www.ssb.no/>). In 2002, the public spending in Education amounted to almost 90 billion (milliard) NOK, corresponding to 13 % of the total public budgets (<http://www.ssb.no/>).

Female students are in majority in general upper secondary education and in tertiary education, whereas male students constitute 74 % of those in upper secondary VET (Statistics Norway 2004, <http://www.ssb.no/>). The high participation in non-compulsory education must be viewed in light of the fact that all young people are legally entitled to three years of upper secondary education, that there are no school fees at any level within the public education system, and that employment opportunities are few for those with low education. It is expected that the general education level will continue to increase.

In 1983, about 12 per cent of the Norwegian population had completed tertiary education. Twenty years later the figure had risen to almost 24 per cent. The proportion of people who only have lower secondary education has decreased by more than 20 percentage points in the same period. At 17 per cent, the counties of Hedmark, Oppland and Nordland have the lowest proportion of inhabitants with tertiary education. Oslo and Akershus, on the other hand, have the highest proportion of people with tertiary education, at 38 and 29 per cent respectively.

More men than women have completed a long tertiary education. Whereas 7 per cent of men had completed a tertiary education of more than four years in 2003, the corresponding figure for women was approximately 3 per cent. Looking at the level of tertiary education of four years or less, we find that women are the majority. About 21 per cent of women and almost 16 per cent of men have completed a tertiary education at this level.

The majority of people with tertiary education are aged 25-39 years. Irrespective of duration, more than 45 per cent of women aged 25-29 have completed tertiary education, while less than 17 per cent have the same level of education in the age group 60-66 years.

Recent data show that the majority of men take a tertiary education in natural sciences or vocational and technical subjects. Women dominate in teacher training and pedagogy as well as medical, social and physical education programmes, and the majority take tertiary education of four years or less. However, the majority of women with long tertiary education study social sciences and law, or like the men, natural sciences or vocational and technical subjects. The last four paragraphs above are based on Statistics Norway 2004, cfr. <http://www.ssb.no/>.

Eurostat has established that 13.3 % in the age group 18 – 24 have left education and training without entering or completing upper secondary level. Recent data from Statistics Norway show that attendance in upper secondary training is slightly lower in Oslo and in the three northernmost counties (<http://www.ssb.no/>.)

The Oslo figures might pertain to the relatively low attendance by first generation immigrants (ref. <http://www.ssb.no/>), and partly to the fact that job opportunities for less educated people are better in the city than in less urbanised areas. In the three northernmost counties the explanation might be that many young people find work easily in the fisheries, e.g. in the family business, or in traditional sami activities, where requirements of formal education are generally lower than in other sectors.

A more general observation is that many young people are not motivated for more formal education after completing compulsory school and instead look for a more practically oriented life at work. This does not necessarily mean, however, that they have completed their education once and for all. Second chance alternatives are many and experience shows that some of those who drop out early, develop new motivation and go back to school after some

years of work. As of October 2003, around 15 000 adult students above 25 attended upper secondary education and training (Statistics Norway 2004, <http://www.ssb.no/>).

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Equality and freedom of choice are general political principles which have wide national support and lie at the heart of the Norwegian education and vocational training policy. A major national principle and objective is to ensure equal rights in terms of educational provision, irrespective of gender and social, geographical and cultural background.

Accordingly, in Norway:

- education is a public responsibility;
- every young person completing compulsory education is entitled by law to three years of upper secondary education;
- the supply of education and training should be of high quality and broad enough to allow for a range of choices irrespective of geographical location and social conditions;
- all education and training in the public domain is supplied free of charge. The costs are covered by public budgets.

The Ministry of Education and Research (Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet - UFD) is responsible for all levels of education, from primary and secondary to higher education, including adult education. The responsibility comprises development of standards and curricula, supervision of training providers, quality assurance and control, national examinations and certification.

Primary and lower secondary education is provided by the 435 municipalities, whereas delivery of upper secondary education and training is the responsibility of the 19 counties. Universities and other tertiary education institutions are the responsibility of the Ministry, but have a high degree of professional and economical autonomy. Education and vocational training are viewed as central means to achieve national economic, employment and regional policy goals. Hence, Norwegian education and training policy is shaped in the intersection between the goals of economic and social distribution policy. It tends to include value perspectives on both production and social distribution.

Vocational training, including apprenticeship, is an integral part of the Norwegian education system. Tasks and responsibilities related to education and training are shared between public authorities and the social partners. The employers' organisations and the trade unions play an important and active role in both the framing and implementation of vocational education and training policy.

A high general level of education in the entire population is seen as necessary in order to meet the new challenges of the international knowledge-based society, characterised by frequent changes and rapid development in technologies and markets. Hence, the period around the turn of the century (1990 – present) has been characterised by coherent, major reforms in all parts of the Norwegian education system. The aim has been to strengthen the general access to and quality and relevance of the system, to increase the effectivity and cost-efficiency of education and training, but at the same time establish a framework that would allow for flexibility and rapid responses to future challenges and demands. Other objectives and principles of the reform processes comprise:

- decentralisation of educational administration;
- meeting long-term and short-term qualification requirements of the labour market;
- emphasis on a broad and general initial education, leaving specialisation to later stages and further training at work ;
- lifelong learning, based on a "cradle to grave" definition;
- a comprehensive education system with easy transitions between levels and courses.

By the end of 2004, the system is still in a state of continuous change, but the outline is clear:

- The various parts of the education system have been mutually adapted to create a more streamlined structure;
- It has become easier for the students to move horizontally between academic and vocational training paths;
- A legal framework has been established to ensure national control of all parts of the education system, but at the same time allows for flexible delivery according to needs;

- The administrative system, as well as the financial arrangements for students and public and private providers of education and training, have been adjusted to fit the strategic intentions of outreach, control and flexibility;
- The international orientation of the provision has been strengthened.

In general, Quality, ICT literacy and Adult education have been given considerable and increasing attention over the last decade. Other important challenges are vocational guidance and training of immigrants to support their integration in working life and society in general.

Regarding the strengthening of vocational guidance and counselling, preparatory studies of alternative arrangements have been completed and various systems are currently being tested at county level. In the autumn 2004 a compulsory, 2-years Introduction Programme for legal immigrants was launched for implementation at municipality level. The programme focus on themes and issues in relation to culture, political system, social system and the organisation of working life, in addition to massive language training.

In June 2001, the Storting approved the so-called "Quality Reform in Higher Education", implemented from the autumn 2003. Main elements in the Quality Reform comprise:

- More autonomy to the institutions in professional, financial and organisational matters.
- More responsibility on the institution to ensure a closer follow-up on the progress and learning achievements of each individual student, to increase quality and efficiency;
- Introduction of a new and uniform grading and degree structure, with Bachelor, Master and Ph. D degrees, in accordance with international trends and the Bologna Declaration;
- A strengthening of the international co-operation between institutions and more international exchanges of students and staff;

A quality reform for Basic education, i.e. primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education and training, was approved by the Storting in 2004 and will be implemented from 2005 - 6. Recent international studies show that there is a great potential for further quality improvements regarding fundamental skills and competencies of Norwegian learners (cfr. <http://odin.dep.no/>).

The increased focus on Lifelong learning from the mid 1990ies generated a tripartite co-operation between the major social partners and the government. The aim was to find ways of improving and ensuring access for adults to basic and continuous education and training. The adult education policy is meant to raise the level of education of the entire adult population, primarily in order to meet the labour market's needs for skills and competencies.

Right from the start, the idea was that planning, financing and management of the so-called "Competence Reform" would be a joint venture between trade unions, employers' organisations and the government. As of 2004, these are the most important achievements within the framework of the Competence Reform (cfr. <http://odin.dep.no/>):

- 400 million NOK were allocated for the years 2000 – 2003 to support various projects involving training providers and working life, with the aim to develop the market for continuing education and training.
- As from 2000 and 2002, adults were given a statutory right to upper secondary education and primary and lower secondary education, respectively.
- Adults above the age of 23 may be allowed to enter higher education on the basis of non-formal competencies. Each institution is responsible for the evaluation of the applicants' non-formal alternative competencies and work experience and to take the final decision on admittance.
- From 2001, adult employees on certain conditions have a legal right to study leave.
- Public study financing arrangements have been strengthened to better meet adults' needs during periods of further training.

Municipalities are responsible for primary and lower secondary education for adults and for training in Norwegian language and civic life for adult immigrants. County authorities are responsible for upper secondary education for adults. Over 50 000 persons participate annually in adult education provided by municipal and county authorities. Various types of training for adults are furthermore provided by adult education associations, regional resource centres, folkehøgskolene (Folk High Schools), distant education institutions and other private institutions and enterprises.

Of a population of 4.6 million, close to one million participate annually in some variety of adult education courses. The typical learner is between 30 and 49 years old. The focus of adult education lies increasingly on the provision of courses aiming at paving the way for adults to learning relevant for vocational life and/or higher education.

Efforts have been made to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups through adult education. This particularly applies to adults with especially weak schooling, various groups of physically disabled persons, adults with reading and writing difficulties and adult immigrants

Several institutional changes have been implemented in order to support the many reforms in the education system, both at national and at regional levels:

- Reorganisation of the Ministry of Education and Research in 1999, including a merger of two former departments into a new Training Department (Opplæringsavdelingen).
- Establishment of the Norwegian Board of Education ("Læringscenteret") in 2000, with operational responsibilities in relation to development of training standards and curricula, national examinations, evaluation and quality control.
- Establishment of NOKUT, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, in operation from January 2003, with responsibilities in evaluation and accreditation of tertiary education institutions, study programmes and quality assurance systems.
- Establishment of SOFF – the Norwegian Agency for Flexible Learning in Higher Education, as a permanent Board and Secretariat from 1994, with national responsibilities related to information, counselling, evaluation and coordinating of distance education within higher education.
- Establishment of VOX – Norwegian Institute for Adult Education in 2001 (see above).
- The Norwegian Board of Education was replaced by a new Directorate of Education in June 2004, with operational responsibilities in all parts of pre-tertiary education and training. Preparing and implementing the new Quality Reform of Primary, Lower secondary and Upper secondary school, including the preparation of new curricula and establishment of improved quality assurance systems, are major tasks of the new body.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for all levels of education, from primary to higher education, including adult education. The legislative power lies with Stortinget (the Norwegian Parliament). The Ministry normally initiates any major change processes regarding organisation and content of education with national implications.

Whereas the Ministry is mainly concerned with policy formulation, the operational national responsibilities are handled by the Directorate of Education. The Directorate, established in June 2004, is supporting the Ministry in all matters relating to curricula, educational support and research, ICT in education, national examinations, international co-operation and quality control.

Primary and lower secondary education is provided by the 435 municipalities, whereas delivery of upper secondary education and training is the responsibility of the 19 counties. Education institutions are owned and run by the municipalities and counties, but most of the fundings are provided by the central government. Universities and other tertiary education institutions are organised directly under the Ministry and financed over its budget, but they have a high degree of professional and economical autonomy.

The government is represented in each county by a County Governor (except in Oslo and Akershus which share one). The Governor's role is to supervise municipalities and county authorities and ensure that decisions of the Storting and central government are implemented in the best possible way. One department of the County Governor's office is overlooking education and training. It co-operates with the municipalities and counties and reports to the Directorate of Education. Its role is to supervise, coordinate and control delivery and results of compulsory and upper secondary education and training, including adult education.

Vocational education and training including apprenticeship is a fully integrated part of upper secondary education. The tasks and responsibilities related to education and training and the development of skills in the workforce are shared between public authorities and the social partners. According to Norwegian tradition and the legal framework, the employers' organisations and the trade unions play an active role in planning and implementation of upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) at national and county levels.

As of July 2004, all national policy decisions in upper secondary VET were based on the recommendations of the National council for vocational training (Rådet for fagopplæring i arbeidslivet – RFA), where the employers' and employees' organisations were in majority. National decisions regarding training in the individual trades were based on recommendations from the 20 national Training councils (Opplæringsråd) which represented the expertise in different sectors and recognised occupations. The Training councils were operated by the social partners within the relevant trades. One of their tasks was to assist the Ministry in appointing candidates to the national Appeals Boards (ankenemnder) for candidates failing the trade and journeyman's final examination at county level. However, as from August 2004, the RFA and the Training councils were closed following a joint decision by the social partners and the government. A new structure is currently being developed, coordinated by the Directorate of Education.

The counties are responsible for providing upper secondary education and training to all persons with a statutory right. All counties have established a follow-up service with a responsibility to follow up dropouts and young persons who have not applied for, or accepted, a school or training place, despite their statutory right.

Upper secondary vocational education and training normally includes two years at school and two years as an apprentice in an enterprise. The county is responsible for the full training. If there are not enough apprenticeship

places, pupils are entitled to training at a school-based Advanced Course II to complete their training. Those who complete their training at school sit for the same examination as the apprentices, obtain the same certificate (trade- or journeyman's certificate) and the same status.

The practical parts of upper secondary VET is statutorily directed by the county Yrkesopplæringsnemnda (the Vocational training committee), which is a decision-making body appointed by the County Parliament (Fylkestinget, Bystyret i Oslo) for a period of four years. The social partners in the county nominate four of the seven committee members, two from each side. In addition, three members are nominated by the county authorities, one being an apprentice. The Vocational training committee has a secretariat (Fagopplæringskontoret), normally integrated with the Education department of the County authorities.

Private and public enterprises and institutions are co-operating closely with the county authorities, providing apprenticeship places and tutors at the workplace. Opplæringskontorer (Training offices), which are owned by local enterprises and institutions, assist in identifying and recruiting Lærebedrifter (Training enterprises / establishments / organisations), hereby establishing apprenticeship places. They function as administrative and professional mediators between the authorities and the Training companies and organise apprenticeship training with shared responsibilities between smaller enterprises.

The Vocational training committee secretariat formally approves Training companies and has a supervisory responsibility towards each company throughout the training period. It has the right to revoke the status as a training organisation if the training is not provided in accordance with the targets and training agreement. The Training offices are important tools in the work of ensuring that training actually meets the requirements of the curriculum and provides consistent quality to the working community.

The Vocational training committee is responsible for ensuring that the trade and journeyman's examinations are held in accordance with the requirements. The examinations are organised and evaluated by Prøvenemnder (Examination boards), appointed by the Vocational training committee. The main tasks of the boards are to organise the practical examination and evaluate the results. The Vocational training committees also use them as advisors on questions related to the respective trades, e.g. approval of training establishments, supervision of enterprises, evaluation of work experience, etc.

The county Vocational training committee is responsible for issuing Fag- og svennebrev (Trade and journeyman's certificates). A candidate who has failed the trade and journeyman's examination may appeal the decision of the county based Examination board. The appeal is handled by a national Klagenemnd (Appeals board) for the recognised occupation in question.

Higher education and training is funded directly from the Ministry. Tertiary education institutions execute a high degree of autonomy and may or may not have representatives from industry and the social partner organisations at their Board. The institutions and the study programmes they offer must be accredited by the government institution NOKUT, Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanning (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).

OVERVIEW OF POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, VET

LEVEL	NAME OF INSTITUTION	OWNER/TYPE OF BODY	ROLE, MANDATE
NATIONAL	The Storting	Parliament	Legislation, principles, objectives, budgets
	Ministry of Education & Research - MOER	Government	Education and training policy
	Directorate of Education - DOE	MOER	Curricula developm, national examin., ICT, research, quality control
	National Council for Vocational Training – RFA (*)	Social partners and MOER	Advise MOER in most issues regarding the national VET system
	20 Training Councils (trade-specific)*	Relevant social partners	Trade-specific advice to RFA and MOER, input to curricula developm., National Appeals Boards
	NOKUT – the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education	MOER	Approval of higher education institutions and their programmes, quality assurance in tertiary education and training

	County Governor Education Dept.	Government (reporting to DOE)	Coordinate and monitor primary and secondary education in the county
	National Appeals Boards (trade-specific)	Social partners	Assess county-based trade examinations and results of individual candidates, on request
COUNTY	County Education office	County authorities/ county parliament	Administer, monitor and supervise school-based upper sec. VET
	County Follow-up Service	County Education Office	Follow up on dropouts and non-applicants to ensure they receive a relevant offer in accordance with statutory right of upper sec. education
	Upper secondary schools	County Education Office	Delivery of VET
	Vocational Training Committee	Social partners and County authorities	Decisions on county provision, appointing Examination Boards, issuing of trade certificates
	Secretariat of Vocational Training Committee	Vocational Training Committee / County authorities	Practical management of voc. training in the county, incl. approval of Training companies and training
	Training Offices (trade-specific)	Local industry	Establishment of Apprenticeship places, mediator enterprises and public authorities
	Examination Boards (trade-specific)	Vocational Training Committee / Social partners	Practical implementation of final trade examinations and assessment of performance

(*) Is being replaced by new structure.

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Vocational education and training (VET) is directly and indirectly affected by a variety of legal regulations. Some of these are of the general type, regulating all public institutions and activities, division of responsibilities between the different administrative levels etc. and will not be considered here.

The legal framework directly targetting VET comprise laws and their appurtenant administrative regulations affecting:

- public and private providers of VET;
- at upper secondary, post-secondary non-academic and tertiary levels;
- initial (IVT) as well as continuous vocational training (CVT);
- young people as well as adults;
- professional as well as administrative and financial issues.

The most relevant acts are:

- Lov om folkehøgskoler - Act relating to Folk High Schools (2002)

- Lov om utdanningsstøtte til elever og studenter - Act relating to Financial Support to Students and Pupils (1985, latest amendment 2001)
- Lov om universiteter og høyskoler - Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (1995, latest amendment 2003)
- Lov om fagskoler - Act relating to post-secondary, non-tertiary professional training (2003)
- Opplæringslova - Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education – Education Act (1998, latest amendments 2004)
- Lov om voksenopplæring - Act relating to Adult Education (1976, latest amendments 2003)

The act on Folk High Schools regulate the organisation and activities at these institutions, hereby defining the terms for receiving state financial support. The Folk High Schools provide education and training of (young) adults without centrally recognised curricula and examinations, the general purpose being to provide general and cultural education based on clearly defined values and norms. Some of the schools offer vocational courses.

The act on financial support to pupils and students states that all registered students at formally recognised study programmes, at both public and private higher education institutions may receive grants and subsidised loans from the State Educational Loan Fund for subsistence costs. Support is also provided to Norwegian students abroad, who may receive additional support for travel, entrance and tuition fees. The same rights are given to students in upper secondary school who can document specific needs, as well as to apprentices who spend at least 3 months of their practical training abroad. Main purposes of the act are to:

- improve equality in access to education and training regardless of geography, gender, age and private economy;
- improve working conditions and study efficiency of the students; and to
- ensure access to qualified labour for the society.

The act on universities and colleges applies to all public tertiary institutions and regulates organisational as well as professional aspects, including recognition of study programmes, examination and certification, as well as quality assessment. These are terms for financing over government budgets. The act is relevant for both IVT and CVT, as the universities and university colleges offer both through the regular study programmes. The act states clearly that the institutions must co-operate with external private and public companies and institutions in developing and providing CVT in their professional areas. Furthermore, the institutions are obliged to assess the total competencies, including work experience, of adult applicants who fail to meet formal, regular entry requirements, and to allow students on this basis to relevant studies.

The act on post-secondary, non-tertiary professional training regulates public and private institutions offering vocational courses building on upper secondary education and training, with a duration between 6 months and 2 years. The purpose is to establish a system of formal recognition of such training and to promote the professional interests of the students. The act covers also the two year technical school, which as part of the mainstream education system is being provided by the counties and represents regular CVT to students who have obtained their trade certificate.

The act on Primary and Secondary Education (cfr. <http://odin.dep.no/>) concerns primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, both public and private. Objectives and scope, organisation and division of responsibilities, financing and content of education and training are regulated by the act. Primary and secondary education for adults are covered, as this delivery is the responsibility of the municipalities and counties, respectively. According to the act, the Ministry is responsible for the development of national plans and financing arrangements, whereas the counties and municipalities are given the responsibility of developing comprehensive plans, organise delivery and financing in their respective geographical areas.

The act states that: "Upper secondary education shall aim to develop the skills, understanding and responsibility that prepare pupils for life at work and in society, and assist the pupils, apprentices and trainees in their personal development." Development of human values and promotion of democratic ideals and scientific thought and methods, equal status and equal rights of all human beings, intellectual freedom and tolerance, ecological understanding and international co-responsibility.

Teaching shall provide a foundation for further education and for lifelong learning and provide support for a common foundation of knowledge, culture and basic values, and a high general level of education in the population. It shall furthermore: "be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of individual pupils, apprentices and trainees."

The Education act states that emphasis shall be placed on creating satisfactory forms of cooperation between apprentices, trainees and training establishments, as well as between the school, the home and the workplace.

The Adult Education Act is regulating different types of adult training that are not covered by the Education act. Education and training for adults is provided by a variety of public and private institutions. Among the most important are the private study associations (studieforbundene) that offer regular primary and secondary education, but even IVT and CVT. The act furthermore covers labour market training, in-service training and distant learning. The act intends to contribute to giving adults increased general insights, knowledge and professional skills, and improved professional and social abilities.

The Adult Education Act expresses strong expectations and places significant responsibilities on the private study associations for the delivery of CVT courses for adults not regulated by national curricula and certification. Distance learning provisions should be delivered by independent institutions specialising in this area. IVT courses for adults

with work experience are to be developed. These may be organised by higher training institutions or accredited study associations and will be financed by the Ministry.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

Norway has a long tradition of close cooperation, both formal and informal, between the education and training authorities and the social partners at all levels. Because vocational training is of major importance to the working community as far as working conditions, productivity and profitability are concerned, the employers' and employees' organisations have considerable influence on national vocational training at the upper secondary level.

Formally, the role of the social partners in vocational education and training (VET) is based on the ILO convention 142, ratified by Norway in 1976, which establishes that the employers' organisations and trade unions shall influence and participate in the framing and development of vocational guidance and training. The institutionalised participation is further legitimised by and outlined in the Education act. Formal procedures for representation in central bodies and active participation in preparatory, implementation and control tasks within the field are available.

According to the legal framework, the social partners have representatives, most often the majority, in all important advisory and decision-making bodies at national and county level (see also 0301):

- Rådet for fagopplæring i arbeidslivet - RFA (the National Council for Vocational Training);(*)
- the 20 national Opplæringsråd (Vocational Training Boards) which represent the expertise in different sectors and recognised occupations;(*)
- the national Ankenemnder (Appeals boards) for the craft certificate examinations held at county level;
- Yrkesopplæringsnemnda (the Vocational Training Committee) for each county;
- Prøvenemndene (the Examination boards) in each county.

(*) As by July 2004. New structure is being developed.

Through this representation, the social partners are directly involved in the framing of the national structure and content of recognised trades, in development of national curricula, decisions on regional structure and volume of VET provision, and framing and implementation of the examinations for the trade- and journeyman's certificate.

Apart from the legal framework, the active involvement and co-operation on VET is institutionalised through the comprehensive formal agreements between the social partners that set the "rules of the game" for the working life. Both the quadrennial "constitutional" National wage agreements (Hovedavtalene) and the two-year wage agreements (tariffavtalene) include sections on objectives, rights, obligations and procedures regarding co-operation on training of staff in member enterprises, including apprentices.

According to the legal and pragmatic regulative frameworks, the social partners are actively involved in decision-making, organisation and provision of both national IVT and CVT at all levels, including sectoral level and in the individual enterprises. In addition to the bodies described above as part of the regular national VET system, employers/enterprises and trade unions are organised by sector. The sector or branch organisations, some of them organised as joint ventures by relevant employers and trade unions, provide various services and support to the enterprises and employees in the sector. Their tasks are related to R&D, policy formulation, information and organisation of specialised CVT.

Roles of the Social Partners in Norwegian VET		
LEVEL	RESPONSIBILITIES	TYPE OF ROLE
NATIONAL	Development of national framework for public IVT and frameworks for adult education and CVT, development of curricula and procedures for examination and certification, national appeals boards	Direct involvement in processes of formal decision-making in all matters.
REGIONAL	Decisions on provision structure and volume of IVT. Organisation and implementation of apprenticeship training, examination and certification. Operation of Training Offices.	Direct involvement in all decision-making processes.
SECTOR	Development of national curricula (IVT). Organise, support and / or facilitate CVT to the member enterprises.	Direct involvement. Actual, but not formal decision-making power

		in IVT.
LOCAL/ENTERPRISE	Training of apprentices.	Direct involvement. Decision-making role.

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

Click on the link below to see the diagram of Education and Training system in Norway

[Diagram of Education and Training system in Norway](#)

Similar to most other European countries, Norwegian public mainstream education and training has several levels: Barneskole (Primary school), Ungdomsskole (Lower Secondary school), Videregående skole (Upper secondary school), Fagskole (Post-secondary pre-tertiary school), and Høgre utdanning (Tertiary education and training).

The ten years of Primary (1-7) and Lower secondary (8-10) education are compulsory. Children start school at the age of six. In areas defined as Sami districts and according to specific criteria elsewhere in Norway, the teaching is given in accordance with the special Sami curriculum.

The national responsibility for the provision at these levels lies with Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet (the Ministry of Education and Research), but the actual delivery of compulsory, as well as Upper secondary and some Post-secondary pre-tertiary education, is organised by the 435 Kommuner (Municipalities) and the 19 Fylker (Counties), respectively. Tertiary education and training institutions are organised directly under the Ministry and operate with a high degree of professional and economic autonomy.

Adults have a statutory right to receive public Primary and Secondary education, and the responsibility for provision is similar to the one applying to children and youth. Adults may study at tertiary institutions, just like younger students.

Many different education and training courses for adults are offered by Studieforbund (Study associations), distant training organisations and a high number of public and private training centres, consultancy companies and sector organisations. Modes of delivery cover most approaches from traditional classes to open and distant learning and elearning. Labour market training for the unemployed, and language and vocational training for immigrants also constitute important parts of the Norwegian education and training system, but fall outside mainstream education.

At Primary and Lower secondary levels, less than 2 % of the pupils attend private schools (Statistics Norway, cfr. <http://www.ssb.no/>), whereas private institutions cater for around 9 % and 15 % of the students at Upper secondary and Tertiary levels, respectively (Statistics Norway 2004, cfr. <http://www.ssb.no/> and <http://www.ssb.no/>).

All education and training provided by public institutions is free of charge. This applies to all levels. Students in private institutions have to pay a tuition fee, but may receive financial support from the state to cover most of these expenses.

An important ambition of Norwegian education is that: "Teaching shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of individual pupils, apprentices and trainees" (Education act § 1-2, cfr. <http://odin.dep.no/>). Accordingly, with few exceptions, pupils and students with special needs are integrated in ordinary schools and classes at all levels. At all levels, public and private training institutions operating with public support are obliged to mobilise necessary resources and create satisfactory learning conditions for each individual pupil. However, experience shows that the institutions often find it difficult to comply with this requirement.

Early childhood day-care institutions in Norway are the responsibility of Barne- og familiedepartementet (Ministry of Children and Family Affairs) and are not part of the education and training system. Attendance is voluntary and parents are charged a fee depending on the total family income. The institutions are run by the municipality or private operators in accordance with public regulations. In general, more than 40 % of the children aged 1-5 attend early childhood institutions for more than 33 hours a week.

No qualifying VET is being provided during the first 10 years of schooling.

The path to a specific vocational qualification might contain several levels, each of them being a complete, terminated, qualifying unit with a formal certificate. "Initial Vocational Education and Training" (IVET) covers the first/lowest level of a specialising education and training path.

IVET has two main access points in the Norwegian education and training structure:

- First year of upper secondary school, i.e. after the finalisation of 10 years of primary and lower secondary education; and
- First year of post-secondary education, including tertiary education, i.e. following the finalisation of 13 years of general education.

Upper secondary school normally covers the age group 16-19, i.e. the period from the 11th to the 13th grade. This level in the education system includes both general, academic studies and vocational and apprenticeship training. Hence, VET, including apprenticeship training, is a fully integrated part of upper secondary education. The large majority of public upper secondary schools 1974 are combined schools, offering both academic and vocational education. Few schools offer solely vocational training.

The majority of those undergoing upper secondary IVET are in the age group 16 – 21. Most post-secondary IVET students are in the age group 20 - 27.

UPPER SECONDARY IVET

Upper secondary school, general or vocational, is not compulsory. But all young people leaving compulsory school has a statutory right to receive three years of upper secondary education and training. Intake to the individual training paths and particular schools is based on the pupils' achievements in compulsory school, but every pupil is entitled to intake at one out of three prioritised training paths. In each county a Follow-up service is responsible for trying to contact pupils who do not enter, or drop out of, upper secondary education and training, and make an effort to get them "back on track".

Upper secondary level IVET includes a one-year foundation course and two years of advanced courses. In general, the two first years – "Foundation course" and "Advanced course I" – are school-based with practical training in school workshops and short work placements in industry. "Advanced course II" as a main rule consists of two years of formalised apprenticeship training and productive work in an enterprise or public institution. The training part of the apprenticeship is equivalent to one year of training at school. The curriculum covers the whole period at school as well as the apprenticeship period. This main path – two years at school and two years as an apprentice – is known as the "2 + 2 model".

If there are not enough apprenticeship places available, pupils are entitled to one year of "Advanced course II" training at school as a substitute to the two years of apprenticeship. There are also other exceptions to the main path.

POST-SECONDARY IVET

Higher education in Norway comprises the universities and the colleges / university colleges. Most Tertiary education institutions are state owned, but the Ministry has certified some private institutions to deliver approved higher education programmes.

The general entry requirement at all universities and colleges is successful completion of three years of general upper secondary education. However, from the study year 2001/2002, adult applicants above the age of 25 may obtain right of admission to specific tertiary studies based on the assessment of his or her total formal and non-formal qualifications, including work experience. Each institution is responsible for the assessment of the individual applicants' non-formal alternative competencies and work experience and to take the final decision on admittance. Almost 7000 students without a general right of admission used this opportunity to start tertiary studies during the two first years of the new arrangement.

All tertiary education institutions have adapted to an international degree structure, with the three levels Bachelor, Master and Ph.D.

Most vocationally oriented university programmes, e.g. medicine, odontology, psychology, pharmacy, theology and law, have duration of 5-6 years. Successful candidates obtain a Master degree.

The colleges offer shorter IVET programmes of 2 – 4 years duration. Teacher education, health and social work, engineering and business administration are the major disciplines. Teacher training lasts 4 years. Successful completion of programmes of 3 years duration or more is awarded with a Bachelor degree.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

No qualifying vocational education and training is being provided at lower secondary level.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

In Norway, upper secondary training covers the 11th to the 13th grade. This level in the education system includes both general, academic studies and vocational and apprenticeship training. VET, including apprenticeship training, is a fully integrated part of upper secondary education and has a similar formal status as general studies at the same level. The majority of those undergoing upper secondary IVET are in the age group 16 – 21.

The only formal access requirement is that the applicant has completed lower secondary education, as all of these candidates are entitled to three years of upper secondary education. However, applicants compete for access to particular training paths and schools on the basis of prior education achievements.

Special needs education is generally provided in ordinary classes. Students with documented needs due to physical or other disabilities have a legal right to more than three years of upper secondary education and may get priority access to particularly attractive programmes, thereby being exempted from intake competition. Extra financial support is provided to schools and enterprises involved in training of these students.

Training provided by public institutions is free of charge. Students in private institutions have to pay a tuition fee, but may receive financial support from the state to cover most of these expenses, provided that the provision and institution is formally approved by the authorities.

A vast majority of the approximately 500 public upper secondary schools are combined, i.e. they provide both general and vocational training. Less than 20% of the schools deliver only general education or solely IVET. Schools providing VET are equipped with the relevant workshops and tools for provision of the requested practical instruction. They cooperate with local enterprises on placements and apprenticeship training. There is no formalised alternance training in Norway.

UPPER SECONDARY IVET STARTS WITH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING "FOUNDATION COURSES":

- General and Business Studies
- Health and Social Care
- Arts, Crafts and Design
- Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry
- Hotel and Food-Processing Trades

- Building and Construction Trades
- Technical Building Trades
- Electrical Trades
- Engineering and Mechanical Trades
- Chemical and Processing Trades
- Woodworking Trades
- Sales and Service Trades
- Media and Communication

The "General and Business Studies" foundation course has only one path leading to a trade certificate: "ICT Operator". Each of the others leads to 5 – 72 different specialised qualifications.

Specialisation increases through the second and third years (Advanced courses I and II) and apprenticeship. As of February 2004, there were 105 different "advanced course I" and 232 "advanced course II". More than 220 apprentice schemes lead to a formal certification.

Not all national IVET programmes are offered in all the 19 counties. Each county decide the structure of provision based on the student interests and production structure.

In general, students spend two years under the same roof, whether they receive general or vocational training. General education students spend even the third year at the school. For vocational training students, the third year at school in most cases is substituted by two years as an apprentice in an enterprise or public institution, depending on the chosen trade. During these two years, the apprentices receive training equivalent to one year at school, whereas the rest of the period is relevant practical work.

When there are too few apprenticeship places available to meet the demand in the individual trades, the IVET students have a statutory right to receive a third year at school. All candidates within IVET, whether they receive the third year training as an apprentice or as a student at school, sit for the same theoretical and practical exams (see below).

The VET curricula are decided by the Ministry and vary in content regarding practical training and trade-specific theory. But all vocational curricula taught during the two years at school contain general theory similar to theory in the curricula in the general education path up to a certain level. This makes it easier for students to switch to another programme during upper secondary training, if they change their minds. Those who complete vocational training can add a 6 months theoretical bridging course and hereby obtain formal qualifications for tertiary studies. Since the vocational curricula right from the start contains trade-specific theory and some practice which is necessary for further studies, students in general programmes have to start all over if they switch to upper secondary IVET.

All vocational curricula include the general subjects Norwegian, foreign language training, maths, social science and natural science. A broad concept of knowledge is applied including ethical values and attitudes, social competence, entrepreneurial and communicative skills. International responsibility, environmental concerns and computer technology are integrated.

All vocational subjects contain both theory and practice. A placement for at least two weeks in a company is organized during the advanced course.

The table below shows the allocation of time to the various elements – General studies subjects, Trade-specific subjects and Electives - at the different levels of upper secondary IVET, including the apprenticeship period. Each training year is 190 days delivered over 38 weeks. A total of 1309 periods of instruction is delivered each year at school, whereas the apprentices follow normal working life routines.

Distribution of subjects in curricula at the various levels of upper secondary IVET. Periods per week (and percent of total instruction time).

SUBJECT	FOUNDATION COURSE	ADVANCED COURSE I	ADVANCED COURSE II / APPRENTICESHIP
GENERAL	14 (40)	8 (23)	
TRADE-SPECIFIC	17 (49)	25 (71)	35 (100)

OF THIS, PRACTICE (*)	8 – 12	15 – 20	(90 – 95)
ELECTIVES (**)	4 (11)	2 (6)	

Source: Directorate of Education (cfr. <http://www.udir.no/>)

(*) Estimate. The theory/practice ratio varies between the different trades due to their nature. As far as possible, theory is delivered in the workshop, integrated with practical training.
(**) The scope of the electives has been increased to allow foreign language training.

Students must conduct one or several coherent projects every year. The projects include and integrate general and trade-specific elements. Thus, the figures in the table show the average number of periods per week over the year.

The curricula are competency-based, implying that they state concrete goals of attainment by theme for the successful candidates. The curricula are modulised and candidates may obtain a "Competence document" for specific modules or even part of modules if they do not complete the full training programme for the full trade certification.

When the students leave school for apprenticeship training they must compete for the interest of the training enterprises. If employers consider the candidates too weak or unfitted, they may choose not to take on any applicant at all. This adds to the problem of mismatch between applicants and apprenticeship places, which always is likely to exist due to population and production structure. The mismatch varies over time, by geography and training area.

Most examinations in upper secondary IVET are developed at local and county level. However, students may be randomly selected to sit for nationally arranged examinations in theoretical subjects. Yrkesopplæringsnemnda (the Vocational Training Committee) at county level develops and organise the final practical-theoretical Fag- og svenneprøve (the trade and journeyman's examination), whereas the relevant Prøvenemnd (Examination Board) handle the implementation and assessment. Successful candidates are awarded Fagbrev (Trade certificate) or Svennebrev (Journeyman's certificate). The latter is obtained in traditional crafts, whereas the Trade certificate applies to industrial and service trades. The two types of certificates have equal status and are based on similar sets of requirements as regards theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The trade or journeyman's certificate is issued and awarded by Yrkesopplæringsnemnda.

The trade and journeyman's certificate gives the right of access to further studies at Teknisk Fagskole (Technical school), which is a post-secondary, pre-tertiary CVET. The certificate does not meet general entry requirements of higher education institutions, but the candidates can obtain right of admission by taking a 6 months theoretical bridging course.

It is a general consensus among politicians and the social partners that 50 percent of all students entering upper secondary education should choose vocational programmes. In order to obtain this goal, school counsellors, the social partners and county authorities regularly involve actively in extensive information campaigns aiming to provide the pupils in lower secondary schools and their parents with realistic and reliable information necessary to make a conscious choice. Continuous efforts are made to recruit enterprises for involvement in apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship enterprises receive public funding for each trainee.

The Eurostat figure for Norway indicate that the distribution between upper secondary general (42 %) and vocational education and training (58 %) is in line with the policy objectives of key stakeholders. On the total list of 27 countries, Norway is among the upper third regarding upper secondary VET participation and have the highest attendance of the Nordic countries. The particular efforts and measures taken as part of the reform work in the 1990ies appears as a reasonable explanation, since the VET attendance in 1996 was approx. 44 % (CEDEFOP 1999, VET in Norway, monograph). The increased attendance might also be explained by the improved provision following the Reform 94.

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

In Norway, apprenticeship is a regular part of upper secondary IVET. This is the only existing apprenticeship arrangement, which is formally recognised as such. The structure provides vocational training to primarily, but not exclusively, young people:

Apprentices by age, October 2003. Absolute figures and per cent:		
AGE	TOTAL NUMBER	PER CENT
16 – 21	22 249	78.1
22 – 24	2 769	9.7

25 +	3 472	12.2
TOTAL	28 490	100.0

Source: Statistics Norway 2004
(<http://www.ssb.no/>)

Apprenticeship normally follows two years of school-based IVET that provide the student with basic theory and practice in the relevant trade. The apprenticeship training takes part in a company or public institution in accordance with national training schemes and curricula decided by Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet (the Ministry of Education and Research). The status as an apprentice is formalised in a Lærlingkontrakt (Apprenticeship contract) between the individual student and a Lærebedrift (Training enterprise).

Periods of work practice are compulsory also in various types of tertiary professional training such as teacher training, journalism and nursing. Privately organised training for specific sectors, such as banking and trading, include periods of practical work. Short-term job placements are used as an employment policy measure by the labour authorities. Furthermore, large companies often use traineeship as recruitment measures. However, *none of these arrangements are recognised as apprenticeship arrangements.*

Implementation of upper secondary IVET, including apprenticeship is the responsibility of the 19 counties. The table below shows the distribution between general and trade-specific subjects at different levels of upper secondary IVET.

Distribution of subjects in curricula at the various levels of upper secondary IVET. Periods per week (and percent of total instruction time).

SUBJECT	FOUNDATION COURSE	ADVANCED COURSE I	ADVANCED COURSE II / APPRENTICESHIP
GENERAL	14 (40)	8 (23)	
TRADE-SPECIFIC	17 (49)	25 (71)	35 (100)
OF THIS, PRACTICE*	8 – 12	15 – 20	(90 – 95)
ELECTIVES**	4 (11)	2 (6)	

Source: Directorate of Education (cfr. <http://www.udir.no/>)

* Estimate. The theory/practice ratio varies between the different trades due to their nature. As far as possible, theory is delivered in the workshop, integrated with practical training.

** The scope of the electives has been increased to allow foreign language training.

Apprenticeship training schemes are available in more than 220 trades provided within 13 different areas of training:

- General and Business Studies
- Health and Social Care
- Arts, Crafts and Design
- Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry
- Hotel and Food-Processing Trades
- Building and Construction Trades
- Technical Building Trades
- Electrical Trades

- Engineering and Mechanical Trades
- Chemical and Processing Trades
- Woodworking Trades
- Sales and Service Trades
- Media and Communication

Each of these training areas starts with a Foundation course and a more specialised Advanced course I within the same area, delivered by an upper secondary school. The number of Advanced course I options vary between the training areas. There are a total of 105 Advanced courses I available.

After Advanced Course I, the students sign an apprenticeship contract with an enterprise or institution, which has been formally approved as a Training enterprise by the county education authorities. The apprenticeship period is two years for most trades. During these two years, the apprentice receives on-the-job training and takes part in the daily work of the company. The training part of the apprenticeship period is normally equivalent to one year of training at school, while the rest of the time is productive work. Companies and public institutions signing apprenticeship contracts receive public economical support for assuming training responsibilities.

The described training model, two years at school followed by two years of in-service training, applies to most training paths within upper secondary IVET and is referred to as the "2+2-model". Students with low motivation for school-based education may be allowed to commence apprenticeship directly after compulsory school or the Foundation course.

In order to obtain approval as a Training enterprise, the organisation must be in a position to meet the training requirements of the curriculum for the trade in question. A qualified training manager must be appointed with responsibility for the instruction, whereas several employees may provide the actual training. The training is supervised by the employees' representatives and the training manager who make sure that the training facilities are adequate and that the curriculum requirements are met. Yrkesopplæringsnemnda (the Vocational training committee) of the county formally approves each apprenticeship contract.

In cases where one enterprise alone is not able to assume responsibility for training within all parts of the curriculum for the trade in question, several Training enterprises co-operate and share the training responsibilities for the apprentice. In such cases, the apprenticeship contract is established between the apprentice and a local Oppføringskontor (Training office) for the trade. Training offices are owned and run by the industry and coordinate the training in the relevant Training enterprises.

The training enterprise is responsible for both the practical and theoretical training during the apprenticeship period. Large companies often organise the theory teaching internally, but smaller companies most often leave this task to the relevant Training office or a local upper secondary school.

More than 200 specialised courses leading to a trade or journeyman's certificate follow the "2+2 model" as the regular training path. Some highly specialised courses within Electronics and Aviation trades have training schemes of three years at school and 18 months of apprenticeship training, whereas a small number of small, traditional crafts, e.g. Plasterer and Gilder, spend only one year at school and three years in apprenticeship training.

The objective of apprenticeship training is to give the students realistic experiences regarding the trade and the part of working life they are training for. Expectations and demands pertaining to presence and performance in training, as well as the organisational culture in an enterprise deviates from what the students experience during more than 10 years at school.

To carry out work of a high enough standard to be competitive, enterprises possess modern, often advanced technical equipment and use modern working methods. They are preoccupied with productivity and profitability and with obtaining and maintaining market shares. In enterprises, therefore, apprentices will achieve the training which best prepares them for post apprenticeship employment.

The apprenticeship training is the joint responsibility of the social partners, the Vocational training committee and the Training offices. Fylkestinget (the County assembly) appoints the Vocational training committee, and a Secretariat is established to implement the decisions of the committee. In most counties, the Secretariat is located with the county education department. Major tasks of the Secretariat are to recruit Training enterprises, assist in the establishment of apprenticeship contracts, perform quality control of the Training enterprises, administer the implementation of trade examinations and issue trade certificates. The Training offices assist in identifying and establishing apprenticeship places and function as administrative and professional mediators between the Secretariat and the Training companies.

Legally, the apprentice is an employee of the Training enterprise and has the rights and duties that follow from statutes and wage agreements between the employers and employees' organisations. The apprentice is entitled to a salary that corresponds to the productive work conducted. Since the productive work is increasing and the training is decreasing throughout the two-year apprenticeship period, the salary increases accordingly. These conditions are specified in the apprenticeship contract, which is standardised. To be valid, the apprenticeship contract must be signed by the apprentice, the manager of the Training company, the appointed training manager and a representative of the Vocational training committee.

As a general rule, the apprenticeship contract must be signed once the training starts, without a probation period. The only exception to this rule relates to adult apprentices aged 21 or more who sign for a full four-year apprenticeship period. These apprentices have a probation period of 6 months, during which both parties may cancel the contract on 14 days' notice.

The county Vocational training committee has a supervisory responsibility towards the Training enterprise throughout the training period and has the right to revoke the approval if the training is not provided in accordance with the targets and training agreement.

Public planning and budgeting is based on the assumption that about half of the pupils entering upper secondary school will choose vocational training. This corresponds to the social partners' analyses of the need for skilled workers, concluding that there is an annual need for approximately 17 000 new apprenticeship places. Whereas there was a significant increase in the number of new apprenticeship contracts between 1990 (8 000) and 1998 (almost 16 000), there has lately been a decrease, to around 13 500 in 2003 (<http://www.ssb.no/>).

In general, the only access requirement for entering apprenticeship is that the student has completed the required compulsory school and introductory upper secondary schooling. However, the correspondence between apprenticeship applicants and available apprenticeship places in the various trades is rarely perfect, but varies over time and between geographical areas. Consequently, in trades with few places, applicants are not guaranteed to obtain an apprenticeship contract even if they in principle meet access requirements. The students must compete for the interest of the available Training enterprises. Good marks in theoretical subjects are often considered less important by the employers than practice performance and the level of absence from training at school. Of course, private enterprises and public institutions are free to choose whether or not they will assume training responsibilities for an apprentice. If they consider all the candidates too weak or unfitted, employers often choose not to take on any applicant at all.

The county authorities are responsible for vocational training in its entirety, both education at school and apprenticeship training. Hence, those who do not succeed in the competition for an apprenticeship contract are entitled to a third year at school – "advanced course II" – with practice in the school workshops and through short placements in industry, to complete their IVET training. Those who complete their training at school take the same trade examination as the apprentices, and obtain the same certification and formal status in working life.

The structure of training provision is decided for each county. The decision is taken by the County Council, based on advice from the Vocational training committee, which has a majority of representatives from the industry. The advice is in turn based on analysis of the local labour market situation and needs. Hence, the availability of the various programmes varies between the counties. For instance are maritime education and training for aquaculture only found in counties along the coast and training in aviation trades in areas with major airports. But a majority of trades are offered in almost all 19 counties.

There are no age restrictions pertaining to recruitment of apprentices. Applicants above the age of 21 may take the full IVET training as an apprentice. Younger candidates are prioritised in the intake to the schools, but the employers are free to choose the older candidates for apprenticeship, if they regard them more suitable.

Most examinations in upper secondary IVET are developed at local and county level. However, students may be randomly selected to sit for nationally arranged examinations in theoretical subjects. The Vocational training committee develops and organise the final practical-theoretical Fag- og svenneprøve (the Trade and Journeyman's examination) in accordance with national regulations and appropriate quality standards, whereas the relevant Prøvenemnd (Examination board), appointed by the Vocational training committee, handle the implementation and assessment. In principle, each county has (at least) one Examination board for each trade.

Successful candidates are awarded Fagbrev (Trade certificate) or Svennebrev (Journeyman's certificate). The latter is obtained in traditional crafts, whereas the Trade certificate applies to industrial and service trades. The two types of certificates have equal status and are based on similar sets of requirements as regards theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Trade or journeyman's certificates are issued and awarded by Yrkesopplæringsnemnda.

A special training programme may be designed for persons who do not have the capacity to attain a full trade or a journeyman's certificate, adapted to the individual's capacity. The programme will comprise parts of the curriculum with individually adapted targets. The candidates will get an individually adapted examination and receive documentation of the knowledge and skills attained.

The trade and journeyman's certificate gives the right of access to further studies at Teknisk Fagskole (Technical school), which is a post-secondary, pre-tertiary CVET. The certificate does not meet general entry requirements of higher education institutions, but the candidates can obtain right of admission by taking a 6 months theoretical bridging course.

A candidate who has failed the trade and journeyman's examination may appeal the decision of the county-based Examination board. The appeal is decided by a national Appeals board (Klagenemnd) for the trade in question. Candidates who fail are not entitled to additional training, but may sit for the examination for a second time. The workplace will organize this and the costs are covered by the regional authorities.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Programmes of this type are not provided in Norway.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

Post-secondary, pre-tertiary IVET is not being offered in Norway. Vocational training provided at this level is CVET for holders of trade and journeyman's certificate. Ref. Thematic Overview 05.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Most tertiary education institutions in Norway are state owned, but the Ministry of Education and Research (MOER) has certified 26 private institutions to deliver recognised higher education programmes. All the public and most private institutions offer IVET programmes.

As of January 2005, the public higher education institutions comprise six Universities, five Scientific University Colleges, 25 State University Colleges and two National Colleges of the Arts (<http://www.utdanning.no>):

At least one University College is found in each of the 19 counties. The national university colleges of the art are found in Oslo and Bergen.

All the institutions carry out research and offer courses, included IVET courses leading to professional qualifications. In general, the university colleges, specialised universities and the colleges of the art are more occupied with professionally oriented training than the universities. The training programme in a certain field, as well as the mode of delivery of the programme, might vary slightly between the different institutions.

The 38 public higher education institutions are owned and financed by the Ministry of Education and Research, but have great autonomy in budgetary and professional issues.

There are no entry or tuition fees in public tertiary education institutions. In private institutions, the students have to pay a fee to cover the part of cost that is not provided by the Ministry.

The vocational training paths are fully integrated in the total higher education provision, and there are no major differences between general and vocational paths in terms of status and credits. Credits are awarded in accordance with the ECTS system (European Credit Transfer System) for passed examinations in courses that normally have duration of 6 or 12 months. One full study year normally equals to 60 credits.

For most higher education studies, the students obtain a bachelor degree after three full years of study, a master degree after two further consecutive years, and a PhD after three more years. But there are some exceptions:

- There still exists a few training programmes of two years duration. The students receive the qualification as a College Candidate.
- Teacher training programmes have duration of four years. The students obtain a Teacher Certificate.
- Some professional studies have separate degree systems; e.g. medical doctor (cand.med.), veterinary (cand.med.vet), psychology (cand.psychol.) and theology (cand.theol.), due to deviating duration of studies.
- Some study programmes leading to Bachelor degrees have longer duration than three years. The same apply to some studies awarded with a master degree, which have more than 5 years duration.

In general, all universities and colleges use the same admission requirements, decided by the Ministry. For those entering a tertiary IVET, the general entry requirement is successful completion of three years of general upper secondary education. For some training paths, e.g. Engineering, Medical studies and Pharmacy, there are additional specific access requirements, often related to students' background - level and mark - in mathematics and natural sciences.

A 6 months theoretical bridging course is provided for skilled workers who want to meet the general entry requirements to higher education.

Adult applicants above the age of 25 may obtain right of admission to specific tertiary studies based on the assessment of his or her total formal and non-formal qualifications, including work experience. Each institution is responsible for the assessment of the individual applicants' qualifications and to take the final decision on admittance. A positive assessment means that this particular institution considers the applicant properly equipped to conduct the particular study programme in question, according to the mode of delivery at this institution. Right of admission does not automatically imply that the applicant will have access to another study programme or even to the same study programme delivered by another institution.

Admission to many areas of study is competitive since demand exceeds the number of places available. Entry to higher education is thus regulated quantitatively and is determined by the capacity of the individual institution. This applies to study at university and non-university institutions alike.

Most applications to undergraduate studies at public and some private institutions of higher education in Norway are processed by a central unit called Samordna opptak (Universities and Colleges Admission Service - UCAS). The rationale is to improve access and utilisation of available resources. Most of the applicants get access to the study they want, but not necessarily at the institution they have prioritised. Annually, UCAS coordinates the admission for around 80 000 applicants to 48 institutions and 1 100 different courses.

Students in higher general and vocational education are entitled to financial support through Statens Lånekasse for utdanning (the State Educational Loan Fund). Students can apply for both grants and loans, depending on their financial situation and civil status.

As of October 2003, there were a total of 209 000 students registered at the tertiary education institutions. The female share of students were 60 %. 38 % studied at the universities, whereas 62 % attended the various colleges. The majority of students were in the age group 20 – 26 (52 %), but a considerable number is found even in the age groups 30 – 34, and 35 and above: 10.7 % and 23 %, respectively. <http://www.ssb.no>. There are no age restrictions to attendance in any higher education programmes.

Counsellors in the upper secondary schools, at the employment offices and at the study sites are available to assist the individuals in identifying suitable programmes and assist in the application process. Applicants with specific disabilities can be exempted from intake competition and are entitled to individual adaptation of study programme delivery and examination.

The universities and specialised university institutions offer IVET programmes with duration of 4 – 7 years, and PhD programmes. Medicine, odontology, psychology, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, theology and law are among the vocationally oriented university programmes. Successful candidates obtain a Master degree.

For purposes of IVET, the university colleges are of particular interest. They vary in size from less than 200 (Saami University College) to more than 10,000 students (Oslo University College) and offer programmes in teacher education, health and social work, engineering, business administration and a range of studies corresponding to traditional university subjects for the Bachelor degree. In general, these programmes have 2 – 4 years duration. Some University colleges provide training at Master level, and one is approved for providing PhD programmes.

Teacher education programmes comprise training of pre-school teachers, general teachers in compulsory education and teachers in vocational training. Health and social work training comprises the following fields: child welfare work, laboratory technology (bio-engineering), occupational therapy, physiotherapy, radiography, social work,

nursing, social education work, audiography (2 years), dispensing, dental hygiene and prosthetics and orthotics. A large part of the training under these programmes is supervised practice in direct contact with patients or clients.

The private institutions cover a wide range of studies such as theology and religious studies, teacher education, nursing, social work education, engineering, computer technology, business administration and marketing, ballet and music. These programmes are either recognised as similar to programmes in public (i.e. state) higher education, e.g. in nursing and social work, or as alternatives at the same level, e.g. teacher training for anthroposophical schools (Rudolf Steiner). Private education institutions that deliver training approved by the Ministry, receive financial support from the state.

The five scientific university colleges, the two colleges of the arts and most of the private institutions deliver training only within their particular area of specialisation, e.g. economy and Veterinary Science. The other institutions, including all universities and university colleges, offer both vocational and general courses. Most of the institutions offer regular CVET programmes. Furthermore, a vast majority of the institutions provide tailor-made courses for local industry and public institutions. Open and distance learning options are becoming more common.

General guidelines concerning structure and main topics of study programmes are given by the Ministry. The government agency NOKUT – *Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen* (Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) is responsible for the accreditation of higher education institutions and quality assessment of programmes and institutions, public as well as private (cf. <http://www.nokut.no>). The detailing of curricula within this national framework is in general the responsibility of the individual higher education institutions.

The public higher education institutions are organised in the Norwegian Council for Higher Education. The mission of the Council is to coordinate, strengthen and support higher education in Norway with the aim to ensure and improve quality. The Council has established separate expert councils for four major vocational / professional programme areas: Teacher education, Engineering, Economics and Administrative Subjects, and Health and Social work. The Councils give general political advice and work with the aim to strengthen both IVET and CVET within the respective professional areas.

In general, there is only one entry point for the training in a specific subject or profession. Hence, it is not possible to receive training in one profession for one year, and then switch to another programme, entering at second year level. It is possible to switch between programmes, but one has to start all over. But once a student has passed an exam as part of a professional study programme, he or she will get credits for that completed part, even if he / she switches to another subject or professional programme.

Most higher education institutions are offering only standardised studies for bachelor degrees, implying that the possibilities to combine credits across study programmes to obtain a bachelor are few. At some institutions, however, the student may combine credits from various training programmes in a Bachelor's degree, provided the requested number of credits is met. The opportunities to switch apply for both general and vocational paths, and between the two. Credits obtained at one institution will automatically be recognised if the student moves to another university or university college to continue the higher studies, no matter if the credits obtained are from vocational and he / she is switching to general academic studies, or vice versa.

Training within a specific programme normally follows a fixed path and progress. Individual students may, however, be granted a deviant training path, e.g. a break of one year or delay of compulsory practice, by application to the training provider. Evening courses, part-time courses and distant learning schemes are available at many of the institutions, for theoretical parts of programmes. Those who wish to complete the training in shorter time than the normal path may sit for a private examination. The institutions are not obliged to have flexible arrangements, but the general trend is that the institutions are becoming increasingly market-oriented and adjust according to local demands. This can partly be explained by the fact that financing of the institutions is depending on the number of students and results.

No general subjects are taught as compulsory parts of tertiary IVET programmes.

The institutions implement examination of candidates in accordance with national guidelines, but external experts are always involved in the final evaluation of candidates.

To ensure the right for all citizens to have their knowledge and skills formally assessed, at tertiary level as well as at lower educational levels, examinations for private candidates are arranged. Whoever satisfies the relevant admission requirements, as well as other requirements for taking the examination in a given discipline or course of study, is entitled to sit for the examination. This also applies to students who have not been admitted to the discipline or course of study. Private candidates are charged a fee to cover costs of examination arrangements.

Graduates from higher education programmes with a vocational orientation, generally have a stronger standing in the labour market than those with general academic education at the same level. The general standing in the population varies considerably between the various types of specialisation, and it varies over time. But there is no sign that the appreciation of graduates from vocationally oriented studies is less than for graduates from general academic studies.

Most study programmes do not have general attendance requirements in theoretical subjects, but participation in compulsory practice elements must be well documented. Most study programmes have compulsory student projects and individual papers on selected issues. These form an important basis for the progression assessment. Oral and/or written examinations are arranged at the end of study modules or at the end of each term. Practical examinations are organised in vocationally oriented programmes. External evaluators always participate in the assessment.

Vocational programmes in health-related trades, e.g. medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, nursing, odontology and psychology give access to regulated occupations. Most other IVET programmes lead to recognised specialisation that strengthens job-opportunities and higher salaries than those without this documented qualification, e.g. teacher education and social worker. Even unqualified may get short-term employment and practice as teachers and social workers provided the employer consider them fit for the job and qualified candidates are not available. But according to public regulations, unqualified candidates cannot get permanent employment in these public services.

The majority of students in the shorter IVET programmes enter the labour market after completion. In times when jobs are scarce more graduates opt for further studies.

0501 - BACKGROUND AND MAIN TYPES OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

In general, Norway has a well-developed CVET system with work-relevant education and training as well as courses with a more personal development orientation. Public provisions and supporting arrangements primarily cover general education and training for work participation, whereas private training providers offer both work-relevant programmes and courses for pleasure and personal development.

CVET in the perspective of Lifelong learning (LLL) has been given increasing attention since the 1980ies. As of today, an estimated one quarter of the adult population participates in organised education and training every year. This reflects an increasing political awareness among the politicians and social partners of the general importance of a highly educated population, but also actual needs for a highly qualified workforce felt by the industry, as well as private motives of self-realisation or to strengthening own position in the labour market.

There is a tendency that those with highest education most often seek and attend continuing vocational education and training (CVET) than those with less formal training, resulting in an increasing educational gap. Thus, the government and social partners have given high priority to the development of improved framework conditions – right to educational leave, financing - and access to adapted training opportunities for adults with a weak educational background.

All adults have a statutory right to primary (from 2002) and secondary (from 2000) education and training, in principle with a similar content as those on option to regular pupils and students. The municipalities and counties, respectively, are obliged to organise appropriate schooling, free of charge. Official statistics show that a total of 10 723 adults (<http://www.ssb.no/>) received primary education in separate classes around the country in October 2002. The participation rate by gender was 50/50. At the same time, 35 643 adults followed upper secondary education and training under the adult training scheme. 75 % of these received training in ordinary classes, whereas the rest had alternative arrangements. 55 % of the participants were women and the distribution between general and vocational training was 60/40 (<http://www.ssb.no/>).

Over the last decade, the government has given considerable attention to the development of ICT skills in the population for professional and private use. ICT courses all levels and for all age groups is available nationwide.

Training arrangements are frequently utilised by the various public authorities in national employment, regional development and gender equality policies. This also applies to the work with integration of migrants and other minority groups.

Many types of education and training provided within national higher education represent both initial (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training. Unfortunately, there is at present no available data distinguishing between the two groups of participants, which are generally following the same classes. With this limitation, the overview of the Norwegian CVET system is as follows:

A. CVET FOR ALL WITHIN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Technical schools offer *training as a technician* to students who have completed the training for a trade or journeyman's certificate. In 2003, some 3 300 students were registered at the 9 different study programmes delivered at 51 technical schools nationwide. Almost 96 % of the students were male.

Training as a Håndverksmester (Master Craftsman) is CVET for holders of a craft or journeyman's certificate and several years of relevant work experience that wish to set up their own business or qualify for a managerial position in a craft enterprise. The Master Craftsman certificate is awarded in 65 different crafts. The annual participation figure is in the range of 1200 – 1600. In 2003, a total of 501 new master certificates were awarded, only around 10 % to women.

The gender imbalance in both Technician and Master training must be seen in light of the available study options, which are mainly within traditional male occupations.

24 higher education institutions offer *Praktisk-pedagogisk utdanning* (practical-pedagogical training) as CVET for candidates who have completed their academic or vocational training and want to work as a teacher. The training combines pedagogical theory and teacher practice under supervision, and is offered both as full-time and part-time studies. Between 1600 and 2000 students attend this training annually.

Since 1995, *universities and colleges* are responsible for organising *CVET for external clients* in their own subject areas. On a yearly basis, 80 000 – 100 000 individuals attend some form of CVET provided by public and private higher education institutions, delivered as full-time and part-time studies, and by means of distance education and E-learning. In addition, some 40 000 – 50 000 persons annually complete university or college level education organised by a recognised distance education institution or Adult Education Associations (see below), allowing them to sit for the relevant formal exams as external candidates.

B. TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INTEGRATION

Training elements are embedded in several of the public measures targetting the unemployed and other vulnerable groups in the labour market. The various measures available vary according to fluctuations in the labour market, assessment of experiences and the number of people with specific needs of support.

In 2003, the total annual average number of participants (1) in the various labour market measures with qualifying elements, fully financed by the labour authorities, was 59 063. Of these, 47 763 places were reserved for people with various *vocational disabilities*. Most of these received vocational training and work practice (2). These are run by some 100 commercial *Arbeidsmarkedsbedrifter* (labour market enterprises) with state financial support.

The total **annual average number of participants** in *ordinary* labour market measures with training elements was 11 300. Of these, *Rehabilitering* (Rehabilitation) and *Arbeidsmarkedsopplæring – AMO* (Labour Market Training) were the most significant in volume (Aetat, Report no 4/2004).

Rehabilitation measures often imply that the beneficiaries receive financial support for retraining within a regular education programme with a duration of 1 – 3 years.

AMO courses in general have a duration between 1 week and 10 months and are "tailormade" to meet specific labour market needs. Long-term unemployed with weak educational background are given priority. The local

employment offices buy the AMO courses from upper secondary schools, specialised training centres and private suppliers. Some of the courses are broad and lead to a trade and journeyman's certificate or other formalised qualifications. Others provide specific skills and updating of qualifications to meet acute needs in the local labour market. In 2003, almost 33 800 individuals received training under the AMO training scheme. The annual average number of participants was 5 408 (Statistics Norway, Utdanningsbarometeret 2002).

For many years, *adult immigrants have been offered introductory language and social studies* training, in general free of charge. In 2003, 30 433 immigrants participated under such arrangements, which are organised locally. A small majority of the participants were women.

From September 2004, refugees and other legal immigrants from "third world countries" are entitled and obliged to follow a two-year, full-time "Introduction course" to the Norwegian society, comprising *language training, social studies* and training for work. The participants receive a salary during the two years, paid by the government. Immigrants from the EEA countries and other industrialised countries are not entitled to the introduction course.

C. CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE EMPLOYERS AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

A recent study indicates that more than 210 000 employees in the private and public sector attend *in-service courses* organised by the workplace or relevant social partners annually. Almost 50 000 employees received in-service training at their workplace over the years 2000 – 2003 under *Kompetanseutviklingsprogrammet – KUP* (the competence development programme) that was introduced as part of the Competence reform (cfr. 050102). In-service training is organised internally or delivered by public higher education institutions, upper secondary schools and various private providers, including *Studieforbundene* (Adult Education Associations). There is a clear tendency that larger enterprises more often than small companies offer CVET to their staff, but there is no significant correlation between participation rate and the size of the company of those who receive a training offer (Statistics Norway, Aktuell utdanningsstatistikk 2002).

D. CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Individuals have many different reasons for seeking CVET. Their visions and plans of how they might utilise the new qualifications differ as well. Unfortunately, comprehensive data collection on CVET, including information on the individual participants' rationale and objectives, has only recently been made an issue. Methodologies are still in the process of being developed to perfection. Hence, for various reasons, available data are still scarce and incomplete.

A recent Norwegian initiative, *Kompetanseberetningen* (the Competence Account), operated and financed by the Ministry of Education and Research will be a permanent assessment system for CVET. The government intends to use this annual assessment of CVET efforts as one instrument for further policy decisions on LLL. The Competence Account 2003 shows that more than 70% of the population between 16 and 74 participate in some form of activity with learning effects, formal as well as non-formal. Organised non-formal learning at the workplace and learning through the daily work are considered the clearly most important types of CVET by the respondents. People with a strong education background and groups in tertiary production are the most positive to organised formal and non-formal training (www.kompetanseberetningen.no).

As part of the Competence account, an annual survey, *Lærevilkårsmonitoren* (the Learning Condition Monitor) was introduced in 2003 (<http://www.fafo.no/>). The first issue shows that 1.3 million (54 %) of the 2.4 million economically active population 22 – 66 years old, take part in some form of education and training each year and that "during the last year":(3)

11.3 % attended some kind of "formally recognised CVET",

57.2 % attended some kind of "courses and other organised training", whereas,

58 % have learned through their "learning intensive" work

(<http://www.norgesuniversitetet.no/>).

The rationale and purpose of the individuals for participating in formally recognised CVET and other types of organised courses and training, was investigated as part of the Learning Condition Monitor. Data indicate that work-related motivations are strong.

Training is provided to the individuals by three major provider structures. But these institutions are also major providers of training organised by the enterprises, as well as training within public, national programmes to adults.

Studieforbundene (the Adult Education Associations) are non-government organisations that deliver a variety of training courses at all levels throughout the country. 21 publicly acknowledged institutions in 2003 reported a total of 735 162 participants in their courses, of which 42 % women. 79 000 of the participants were offered to sit for some kind of formal exam, 29 000 at university level (Statistics Norway, Statistical Yearbook 2004).

In 2003, almost 20 400 participants (50 % women) completed a *distance training* course organised by a total of 12 recognised *Fjernundervisningsinstitusjoner* (Distance Education Institutions). The courses cover both training according to public, national curricula on secondary and tertiary levels, and personally oriented courses (Source: Statistics Norway, www.ssb.no/).

There are 79 *Folkehøgskoler* (Folk high schools) around the country (2004). They are boarding schools owned and run by religious organisations, independent foundations, NGOs and county authorities. The Folk high schools offer a variety of non-traditional and non-academic subjects, as well as some academic studies. But they do not grant degrees or conduct exams. The schools build on a "holistic view of the students and challenge them to grow individually, socially and academically".

The Folk high schools offer both one-year courses and short courses. In 2003, more than 50 % of the 21 767 participants in short courses were above 50 years of age and 61 % were women. Among the 6 127 attending the long courses (2003), 60 % were female, 468 non-Norwegians and 74 % were 19 years of age or less (Source: Statistics Norway, Statistical Yearbook 1997, 2002, 2004 and Aktuell utdanningsstatistikk 2004).

Finally, one should not underestimate the value of the comprehensive, informal training taking place through everyday work in the workplace. In Norway, almost half of all new trade and journeyman's certificates are awarded adult so-called *Praksiskandidater* (Practice candidates), who sit for the final examination on the basis of skills developed at work.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EXISTING CVET PROVISIONS

In general, Norway has a well developed, varied and flexible system of further training that in principle offer training opportunities to all groups at all levels in all parts of the country. A high number of public and private training providers deliver adapted and standardised courses by means of traditional and modern approaches to a high number of participants.

Existing CVET provisions are being continuously assessed by the relevant public authorities, the social partners and the providers themselves. Training is frequently adjusted to identified needs and changes in the relevant environment. There will always be a potential for improvements and it will be important to maintain and strengthen the system of frequent quality control and course development.

Whereas the available training on offer seems satisfactory, there is an ongoing political debate regarding the volume of labour market training and the training for immigrants. The latter concerns whether language training should be compulsory or not, and the volume of language training that the individual should be entitled to. The arguments follow the traditional political divide, with parties to the centre – left arguing for an increased volume of both.

On the recipient side of CVET, there is an obvious potential of improvements in motivation of those with least education to attend. The trade unions could possibly take more responsibility for initiatives to this end. Similarly, small SMEs, which dominate the Norwegian economy, could give higher priority and more time to training of their staff during work hours, as well as be more flexible towards requests for study leave. Financial arrangements for employees during study leaves could be improved further.

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- (1) I.e. the number of participants at any given date during the year. This means that the actual number of participants in the programmes is higher, since the duration of training and other measures varies and can be as low as one week.
(2) 7 900 of the places are considered permanent and are meant for individuals with little hope of finding work in the ordinary labour market.
(3) Data were collected in the second quarter of 2003. "The last year" hence refers to the period from the second quarter of 2002 until the second quarter of 2003.

0502 - PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

In general, planning and forecasting of CVET needs and delivery is a continuous exercise by all training providers (cfr. 0501).

In the public sector, the following arrangements are in operation:

To ensure a high priority and rapid progress of the so-called Competence reform, the government in 2002 established Forum for kompetanse og arbeidsliv (Forum for competence and working life), that meets four times annually. Ministers from 9 ministries are represented, as well as high-level representatives of major social partners and associations of CVET training providers. The Forum has established Kontaktgruppen for kompetanse og arbeidsliv (the Contact group for competence and working life) with representatives from the same ministries and organisations, that meet monthly. Both the Forum and the Contact group discuss CVET policy issues as well as more concrete strategies and plans. Quality assurance and evaluation are between the overriding crosscutting issues. The introduction of the "Competence account" can be seen as a result of the work of these bodies.

Utlendingsdirektoratet – UDI (the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration) has the national responsibility for reception and localisation of refugees and other legal immigrants, and for financing and mandating the implementation of the compulsory Introduction programme, including language training. The individual receiving municipalities conduct the detailed planning and organisation of the training. Scale and details are adapted to the needs of the incoming immigrants.

Planning and forecasting of labour market measures is based on information about labour market needs and actual skills of the unemployed. Updated labour market information is obtained by a close co-operation between labour market authorities, the social partners and the private industry at national, regional and local levels.

Planning of overall structure and content of the provision in Teknisk fagskole (Technical schools) is coordinated in the Ministry of Education and Research. But the delivery is planned and organised at county level, since this CVET administratively is categorised as upper secondary education and training. Both at national and county levels there is comprehensive contact and co-operation with the social partners and the production sector to ensure a needs-based provision (cfr. Thematic report 4).

Planning and forecasting of the Master of crafts education is conducted by *Mesterbrevsnemnda* (the Master Craftsman Certificate Committee), where the labour market actors hold the majority of seats. The provision of training, delivered by the largest Adult Education Association, is continuously adjusted according to developments within the relevant crafts.

Private providers of CVET, including the Adult Education Associations, the Folk High Schools, the Distance education associations, E-learning organisations and sector organisations, conduct continuous training needs assessment in the form of market research. These are internal processes and results are in general not available to external actors.

Recent research indicates that almost 1.3 million individuals in the economically active population, which in 2004 totals 2.4 million (<http://www.ssb.no/>), receive some kind of education and training each year (<http://www.fafo.no/>). The report concludes that the high figure should be seen as a result of the LLL policy over the last years, the Competence Reform included. The researchers indicate that 700 000 employees at present do not utilise fully their available CVET opportunities but may do so in the future (<http://www.norgesuniversitetet.no/>). In the public debate on LLL, the market for CVET in Norway has been estimated at some 40 milliard NOK (4.8 milliard €).

Even if the detailed forecasting and planning of CVET are mainly in the hands of the labour market actors and the various training providers, indications are strong that the government and social partners intend to follow the development closely and ensure appropriate framework conditions for participation also by the most vulnerable groups.

0503 - DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

The government and the social partners over the last years have improved the framework conditions – right to educational leave, financing - and access to adapted training opportunities for adults with a weak educational background.

CVET is provided by both public and private institutions. Public provisions and supporting arrangements primarily cover general education and training for work participation, whereas private training providers offer both work-relevant programmes and courses for pleasure and personal development.

The social partners in general do not organise and provide vocational training, with the exception of organisational training for elected representatives. Some sectoral organisations, however, actively encourage and facilitate relevant training in connection with important technological or market developments.

All adults have a statutory right to *primary* (from 2002) and *secondary* (from 2000) *education and training*, in principle with a similar content as those on option to regular pupils and students. The municipalities and counties, respectively, are responsible for the schooling, which is free of charge. Furthermore, adults above the age of 25 from 2001 may be admitted to higher education based on assessment of prior learning. The education is delivered by regular public schools, often in separate classes.

Qualification arrangements, all to be categorised as CVET, are frequently utilised by the various public authorities in national employment, regional development and gender equality policies. This also applies to the work with integration of migrants and other minority groups.

A. CVET PROVISIONS WITHIN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

One of the few pure CVET provisions within the public system is the training provided at *Tekniske fagskoler* (technical schools) to students who have completed the training for a trade or journeyman's certificate. Most Technical schools are owned and operated by the counties, but also some private institutions are authorised to provide the training in accordance with national curricula.

Training as a *Mester* (master craftsman) is a public certification arrangement under *Nærings- og handelsdepartementet* (Ministry of industry and trade), administered by the publicly appointed *Mesterbrevsnemnda* (the Master Craftsman Certificate Committee). The master craftsman training is delivered by the largest *Studieforbund* (Adult Education Association). These are non-government organisations (see below).

24 public universities and university colleges offer *Praktisk-pedagogisk utdanning* (practical-pedagogical training) as CVET for candidates who have completed their academic or vocational training and want to work as a teacher.

Public universities and colleges provide CVET both through regular programmes and tailor-made to meet needs of enterprises and public institutions in the local community.

Coordinated by *Norgesuniversitetet* (the Norwegian University Network for Lifelong Learning - UNET), many of the CVET courses described above are being delivered also by means of distance education and E-learning.

B. TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INTEGRATION

Introductory language and social studies training for immigrants is organised by the local municipalities, delivered either by public or private training providers and financed by *Kommunal- og regionaldepartementet* (the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development).

Labour market training (Arbeidsmarkedsopplæring – AMO) and rehabilitation is organised and financed by the labour authorities. The employment authorities buy the AMO courses from upper secondary schools, specialised training centres and private suppliers.

Other types of labour market measures with elements of competence development comprise e.g. rehabilitation of the occupationally disabled. Ten thousands of people receive rehabilitation grants every year, in most cases as support for regular school attendance for those in the need of re-education. To others, vocational training in sheltered workshops is an appropriate solution. There are some 100 commercial *Arbeidsmarkedsbedrifter - AMB* (labour market enterprises), which are running sheltered workshops as part of their activity, financed by the labour market authorities.

C. IN-SERVICE TRAINING

CVET organised by the workplace is often delivered by public higher education institutions and specialised training centres established by the upper secondary schools. Private providers are also frequently used, including *Studieforbundene* (Adult Education Associations).

The Adult Education associations are non-government organisations that deliver a variety of training courses at all levels throughout the country. Almost half of the some 735 000 participants (annually, in 2003) attend courses that are personally oriented, whereas a large part take courses relevant to current or future work, in addition to study programmes at upper secondary or tertiary levels.

In 2003, more than 20 000 participants completed a distance training course organised by a total of 12 recognised *Fjernundervisningsinstitusjoner* (Distance Education Institutions). The courses cover both publicly acknowledged training – some of those delivered through the arrangements described above - and personal oriented courses. The Distance education institutions are non-public institutions.

Recognised Adult education and Distance education institutions receive financial support from the government and county authorities.

The 79 *Folkehøgskoler* (Folk high schools) around the country are boarding schools owned and run by religious organisations, independent foundations, NGOs and county authorities. The Folk high schools offer a variety of non-traditional and non-academic subjects, as well as some academic studies. The Folk high schools offer both one-year courses and various types of short courses, many of them with a practical and aesthetic orientation. The Folk high schools are supported financially by the public.

0504 - ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES

The requirement for admission to the training as a technician is a passed final examination for the trade or journeyman's certificate. Similar intake requirements apply for the Master of craft programme, with the addition that the applicant must have at least 2 years of relevant work practice after the final examination for the trade certificate.

For access to the one-year practical-pedagogic training, the student must possess a trade or journeyman's certificate or an academic degree – bachelor, master or similar.

Participants in regular programmes at higher education institutions as CVET in general have to meet one of the following regular intake requirements:

- Completed upper secondary general education; or
- Completed upper secondary vocational training (trade or journeyman's certificate) and additional theoretical bridging course; or
- Documented work practice, training and other personal experiences (non-formal competencies) relevant for the study. Adults above the age of 25 from 2001 may be admitted to higher education based on assessment of prior learning.

For CVET tailored to the needs of the customer there are no formal intake requirements, provided the training does not lead to a publicly recognised higher education exam.

All the universities and most university colleges run their own kindergartens or have a special arrangement with the local municipalities that gives priority to students' children. Special priority arrangements with local kindergartens also apply to many upper secondary and technical schools. The purpose is to facilitate attendance of students. With the same effect, most of the public higher institutions and some private offer programmes delivered by the means of ODL and evening and part-time courses.

Labour market training and rehabilitation measures are only provided to those who have registered as jobseekers and have gone through standard assessment organised by the local employment office. Motivation and former qualifications of the jobseeker and labour market needs are factors influencing on final decisions on what type and design of measure will be chosen. Lack of available and appropriate work or training options might represent obstacles to participation. Free child-care can be arranged for female jobseekers who participate in some of the labour market measures.

Participation in introductory training to the Norwegian society is compulsory for all incoming legal immigrants from developing countries. Hence, there are no specific intake requirements, except that they must be registered and accepted as legal immigrants.

Regarding the work-qualifying part of the training, immigrants with some former education are offered to establish and document their qualifications in the county system for validation of former acquired competencies, in order to identify the relevant type and level of training and work practice.

In January 2001, according to the government strategy on adult learning, employees on certain conditions got the right to leave of absence to attend adult training courses. According to *Arbeidsmiljøloven*, (the Work environment Act), the study leave may last up to three years, full-time or part-time. The right is not restricted to full-time employees. During the study leave the employee does not receive a salary, but she may receive grants and loans under the public education financing arrangement, like all students. Financing arrangements for adult students have been improved in order to better meet the needs of this group.

Study leave is granted on certain conditions: the employee must have been working for at least three years, and with the actual employer for the last two years. The employee must participate in organised courses during the leave of absence, education at upper secondary level or higher and the training must be relevant. If the leave will cause major difficulties for the employer, the employee may have to wait until the employer has been able to organise a proper substitute arrangement. Disagreement over the issue of study leave may be brought to a complaint council which will decide on the matter.

Passing a formal examination often will change the status of the worker and a higher salary, according to wage agreements between the social partners. This can be seen as an incentive for engaging in CVET.

Kompetansereformen (the Competence Reform), which is the result of a tripartite co-operation between the government, the trade unions and the employers' organisations, introduced the system of offering competence-based training for adults. An individual may be accredited for non-formal and informal learning and be offered training for what is lacking to reach the level of upper secondary examination or the journeyman's certificate. The Competence reform comprises several projects focusing on developing new models for adult learning and new initiatives in developing adapted and flexible learning environments.

Different forms of evening courses and distance education courses, including elearning, are developed by a broad range of training institutions. The aim is to offer flexible courses which in principle make CVET accessible to all groups of the population. In 2003, more than 750 000 participants were registered in a variety of courses under these arrangements, delivered by *Studieforbund* (Adult education associations), *Fjernundervisningsinstitusjoner* (Distance education institutions) and *Folkehøgskoler* (Folk high schools). The majority attends courses with a personal orientation, but the institutions also offer training within publicly acknowledged programmes at upper secondary and tertiary levels. Candidates that follow these courses are offered to sit for the formal examinations as private candidates.

0505 - BRIDGING INITIAL AND POST INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As a means to promote LLL, especially among those with a weak formal education, all adults are legally entitled to receive primary and secondary education and training, delivered by the municipalities and counties, respectively. The provision is free and can be provided in ordinary classes or under alternative arrangements, for instance evening classes, according to the needs of the applicants. Adults using this path may obtain a trade- or journeyman's certificate or a certificate allowing for entrance to university college or university. Employees have the right to an unpaid leave of absence to attend training that can be defined as relevant to the professional life of the individual. Adult students may apply for financial support in terms of grants and subsidised loans from *Statens lånekasse for utdanning* (the State Educational Loan Fund), on similar terms as ordinary students.

Theoretical "bridging courses" of one year are available for students who have followed a vocational training programme for at least two years at school. Holders of a trade or journeyman's certificate can choose to attend a theoretical bridging course with a duration of 6 months. Successful completion of the bridging courses gives general access to tertiary education.

All adults above the age of 25 may be granted access to a particular higher education programme, even if they do not meet normal entrance requirement. The intake in these cases is based on assessment of the applicant's educational background and work practice.

There are no upper age limit to restrict participation in adult training / CVET programmes at any levels of education.

0506 - RE-EDUCATION AND RE-TRAINING NEEDS DUE TO LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY

In 1976, Norway as the first country in the world introduced a separate Act on Adult Education. From 1980, adults has had the right to formalise their vocational competencies obtained through practical work of at least five years duration. They sit for the regular trade- and journeyman's examination as private / external candidates, even if they have not attended formal training. The arrangement is still in operation.

Particularly from the late 1980ies, the government and the social partners have given increasing attention to the competence in the workforce as a competitive resource. The need for frequent updating and further training and accessibility within a national system of LLL has during the last decade been reflected in several comprehensive reforms:

1993: Introduction of a new Core curriculum covering primary, secondary and adult education, including vocational training, in which humanistic, creative and social aspects of education and knowledge were emphasised.

1995: Introduction of a new act relating to universities and university colleges, which placed the responsibility for offering or organising continuing education within their respective subject areas by the 38 public and 20 private higher education institutions.

1999: A new Education Act covering primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education and training, placed the responsibility by the municipalities and counties for providing primary, lower and upper secondary training to adults, cost-free to the participant.

1999: The training for technician, which is open to holders of a trade or journeyman's certificate, was restructured and curricula were updated in order to better meet new labour market needs.

1999: A new "Competence Reform" that targets adults in and outside the labour force, introduced several new measures to strengthen the access and rights of adults to improve their knowledge and skills throughout life. The reform was the result of a tripartite co-operation between the government and the social partners. Planning, financing and management of the various elements of the reform is supposed to be a joint venture between trade unions, employers' organisations and the government.

As of 2004, these are the most important achievements within the framework of the Competence Reform:

- 400 million NOK were allocated to the support of joint development projects between training providers and working life, with the aim to develop the market for continuing education and training.
- Adults were given a statutory right to upper secondary education and primary and lower secondary education.
- Adults above the age of 25 may get access to higher education based on assessment of non-formal competencies, including work practice.
- From 2001, adult employees were given a legal right to study leave, on certain conditions.
- Study financing arrangements have been strengthened to better meet adults' needs during periods of further training.
- Systems of validation of prior learning have been tested and established in each county.

Public authorities and the social partners are constantly working to improve the general framework and incentives to promote education for all population groups. Several national arrangements have been established with the aim to motivate for, facilitate and promote CVET for employees. They comprise legal and financial measures as well as political and administrative arrangements. They target the social partner and sector organisations as well as the individual enterprises and the individual employee and adults in general.

For several decades, enterprises have been granted tax deduction for all investment in training of staff. There are no entrance or tuition fees at any public education institutions at any level for any participant, and there are no age limitations for attendance. Financial support has been provided to *Studieforbund* (Adult Education Associations) and *Fjernundervisningsinstitusjoner* (Distance Education institutions) for the provision of training to individuals. All students in upper secondary education and training and students at higher education institutions, as well as adult students in all recognised study programmes, may obtain study grants and loans through *Statens Lånekasse for Utdanning* (the State Education Loan Fund. As part of the Competence reform (see above), the study financing for adults has been strengthened.

Sector organisations and individual enterprises within this framework take responsibility for particular training in accordance with technological and market developments in order to maintain and improve market positions. The largest sector organisations have established separate "schools" or training departments for organisation and delivery of relevant courses requested by their members.

0601 - GENERAL BACKGROUND

Teacher education programmes are offered by most public as well as two private universities and university colleges and comprise:

- Pre-school teacher programmes (3 years, full-time),
- General teacher training for teachers in primary and lower secondary education (4 and 5 years, full-time),
- Vocational teacher training (3 years, full-time),
- Practical-pedagogical training for candidates with a completed academic or vocational education (1 year, full-time or 2 years, part-time).

In addition to these regular teacher training programmes, some of the university colleges and county vocational training authorities offer supervision / tutoring courses for company staff with apprenticeship training responsibilities. Duration of these courses vary between 1 week and 1 year. The 1 year courses offered by the colleges are recognised as tertiary CVET courses and successful candidates are awarded with 60 credits (ECTS).

All regular teacher training programmes comprise studies in relevant school subjects, pedagogic theory and compulsory, supervised work practice in relevant institutions. Duration of practice varies between programmes and training institutions.

Demographic estimates indicate that the number of pupils and students will increase at all levels of education in the years to come. During the last decade, the average age of the teacher population has been increasing, teacher salaries have not kept up with salaries of other groups with comparable education and the teacher profession esteem has in general decreased. In a situation with low unemployment, these facts have resulted in a growing concern for the general recruitment of teachers. Recruitment campaigns and some recent salary increase have led to a slight increase in the number of applicants to teacher training programmes, but the quality of applicants in terms of former school performance has been lower than desired. Results from recent international surveys of pupils' performance and teacher competencies have added to the concern.

On this background, the government has planned a general strengthening of teacher training as part of the planned reform of primary and secondary education that will be implemented from August 2005. Public funds for updating training of teachers have been increased and specific intake requirements in teacher education regarding qualification levels in Norwegian and Mathematics have been imposed by the Ministry of Education and Research.

As part of the many education reforms during the last decade, project work has been introduced as a compulsory pedagogic method at all levels, for all pupils and students. Accordingly, in-service pedagogic training has been provided to teachers. This also applies to the updating of teachers on the pedagogical use of ICT.

0602 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

The pedagogical education for teachers in vocational as well as for teachers of general subjects in upper secondary school is offered as a pre-service course of one year duration, but the candidates may alternatively opt for a more time-consuming bachelor or master degree programme. The one-year programme is also offered as a part-time study over two years. This facilitates the insertion from a professional career to a teacher's career for vocational teachers.

The one-year practical-pedagogical training builds on studies from a university, university college or a combination of vocational theoretical subjects and experience from professional life. Most students have completed an education and training at an advanced level. Minimum entrance requirement for would-be teachers in upper secondary vocational training is a trade- or journeyman's certificate and some work practice. Teachers in vocational subjects normally train at a university college, while teachers of general subjects, who have an academic background, most often choose to attend the course at a university.

The training comprises pedagogy, practical pedagogical training and vocational didactics and qualifies for teaching of specific subjects at primary school, at lower secondary school, upper secondary school and adult education and training. The overall principle is that the pedagogical training should be closely related to the teaching subjects. The programme is also targeting people with training responsibilities for apprentices in private and public enterprises, provided they meet the minimum intake requirements.

Vocational education and training is fully integrated in the educational system in Norway and many of the generic subjects, such as tolerance, ethics, methodology, learning environment and the pedagogical use of ICT, are implemented in all types of teacher training. In-service courses in these themes are similar for general and vocational teachers.

Specific courses for updating teachers in vocational subjects are offered, for instance if new technologies are introduced in the relevant industries. These courses are delivered mainly by a Vocational tertiary education institution and may be taken as part-time or full-time courses.

In-service courses for teachers in vocational training may be organised by the individual school or by the county authorities, and the training is usually provided by colleagues at another public training institution or by a co-operating company.

When reforms or changes in curricula are introduced, the regional authorities are responsible for updating the teachers in vocational training. There is no fixed model for this type of updating in-service courses. The social partners influence the decisions on content, duration and organisation of this type of courses through their representation in all major counselling bodies at national and county levels.

0603 - TRAINING OF TRAINERS/TEACHERS AT THE WORKPLACE (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND CVET IN ENTERPRISES)

There are no specific IVET arrangements for enterprise-employed instructors and tutors with a responsibility for training of apprentices within upper secondary education. However, in the process of recruitment and approval of enterprises for the training of apprentices, the county education administration conducts an evaluation of the individual enterprise. The level of professional competence of the enterprise in general, and the professional and personal qualifications of the responsible persons in particular, are emphasised. There are no formal requirements as regards pedagogical training.

Following the comprehensive upper secondary training reform of 1994 the Ministry of Education and Research presented an action plan for the updating and further training of trainers to ensure high quality in vocational training. This CVET initiative targeted teachers and instructors, as well as business managers and members of the county examination boards.

The training programme, which is still relevant, contains four modules, which may be taken at different points of time. The modules cover relevant rules and regulations, planning and organising of training in the enterprise, basic pedagogical and adapted training, evaluation and quality improvement in training.

Training Offices, owned and run by the companies are established with the aim to recruit companies for apprenticeship training and co-ordinate activities between member companies that share responsibility for the training of individual apprentices. The Training offices also follow up on the quality of training and engage in enhancing the competence of trainers and the employees of the companies themselves, e.g. by organising or / and providing in-service courses for teachers and company instructors.

0604 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OUTSIDE ENTERPRISES)

All trainers in public CVET programmes that are being delivered by public training establishments, i.e. technical training and Master of Crafts training have successfully completed a pre-service practical-pedagogical training programme of one year or more. The minimum intake requirement for this teacher training programme is relevant academic studies at Bachelor level or higher, alternatively completed vocational training for a trade or journeyman's certificate and some work practice. The educational and professional background varies with the subjects to be taught by the candidates.

Formal teacher qualification requirements normally also apply to teachers that deliver CVET in private training institutions, although the private institutions are not obliged to employ fully qualified teachers. As long as the students, i.e. customers are satisfied and the quality of the provided training is satisfying, the private institutions are free to use trainers without a teacher certificate. These trainers are not involved in the examination or marking in public examinations, since the students are private candidates and sit for the exam at a formally recognised institution.

CVET programmes that are not formally recognised by the Ministry might in principle be delivered by anyone. But often companies and other purchasers of training prefer qualified teachers to do the job. As a result, many private CVET providers prefer to use certified teachers in order to avoid losing (potential) customers.

Private CVET providers, such as *Studieforbundene* (the Adult Education Associations) most often do not have full-time teachers among their regular staff. Instead, they hire qualified teachers on a part-time basis to run the courses. In these cases, the institutions do not offer in-service updating courses to the teachers but leave that responsibility to the individual teachers themselves. If the trainers do not update to meet new requirements of course curricula, the institutions will hire another teacher that possess the necessary knowledge and skills.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

The education authorities at all levels in general acknowledge that the private sector actors most effectively identify new labour market needs and demands for specific qualifications and skills. This is reflected in the formalised system for decision-making and implementation of training, where the social partners hold the majority of seats in all advisory bodies.

In upper secondary vocational and post-secondary, non-tertiary technical education, the social partners participate actively in decisions concerning training programme structure, curriculum development and updating and quality control at national, county and local levels. At national level, the relevant major social partner organisations are directly involved in the preparation of Green papers and give input to the parliamentary decision making process on national reforms, budgetary questions etc. Teachers', students' and pupils' organisations are also participating in these processes. The relevant employers' organisations, sector organisations and trade unions collaborate in operating the 20 trade-specific *Opplæringsråd* (Vocational Training Councils) and appoint two thirds of the members in these advisory bodies to the Ministry. Planning and decision-making regarding provision structure, new training paths and content of training within the various trades are based on the inputs from the private sector, coordinated through *Rådet for fagopplæring i arbeidslivet – RFA* (the National Council for Vocational Training), where the social partners appoint two thirds of the members.

At county level, representatives of the employers' and employees' organisations hold the majority of members in *Yrkesopplæringsnemnda* (the Vocational Training Committee) and the trade-specific *Prøvenemnder* (Examination Boards). These bodies are formally appointed by the county parliament for periods of four years. Important tasks of the Vocational Training Committee are to give advice on the overall provision in the county to meet local labour market needs, to arrange apprenticeship places and to place students in training establishments.

Through the described structure, changes in technologies and labour markets and their implications for training needs are rapidly communicated from the market actors to the decision-making bodies.

In higher education, formal decisions on training programme content and updating of curricula are made by the Boards of the individual institutions. They have no formal obligations to recruit members from the private sector to the Board. Hence, there is no formalised mechanism for rapid identification and inclusion of new training needs at the individual institutions. However, many of the higher education institution Boards actually have members from the

private sector. Furthermore, in major areas of training, e.g. engineering and teaching, the institutions themselves have formed national boards with the prime task to ensure high quality in training. These national boards give advice to the institutions even on updating of curricula.

The direct communication of immediate and anticipated skills need is thus partly conducted through the formal decision-making structures and processes at national and county levels. In addition, within the curriculum framework for the individual training programme decided by public authorities based on the advice from the social partners, the detailed training specifications are formulated by an expert group appointed by *Utdanningsdirektoratet* (the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education). Representatives from the relevant trade are always members of the curriculum development teams.

Every new education reform is accompanied by evaluation of process and results, conducted by autonomous research institutions on assignment from the Ministry of Education and Research. Findings from these studies contribute to the market information provided through the tripartite political-administrative system.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Equality and flexibility in access to education and training, as well as equality regarding the general acknowledgement of general and vocational training are major political principles in Norway. Over several decades, changing governments have followed multiple strategies to approach the realisation of these ideas and objectives. As by 2004, the education and training system has a structure and content with many of the characteristics of a national qualification framework. This concept is however not used in the general discourse on training.

All parts and levels of education and training is anchored in a common Core Curriculum that provides a holistic perspective on societal and human needs, rights and abilities. It describes the various aspects of man – the spiritual, the creative, the working, the liberally-educated, the social and the environmentally aware human being – and presents a vision of "the integrated human being" with the various human qualities and competencies. The document obviously promotes equality between various forms of training by explaining the mutual interdependence between the different types of competencies (cfr. <http://www.ls.no/>).

Another equality promoting measure has been to integrate general and vocational training physically at institutional level as well as legally and administratively, as far as possible.

One important measure taken to contribute to increased flexibility is the modularisation of all new curricula in both general and vocational training. It is possible for the individual learner to study part-time, at home or in organised training, by taking one module at a time and sit for the examination in each subject or module as a private candidate. A variety of courses, including modules and subjects within national mainstream primary, secondary and tertiary education, is available to adults through Adult education associations, Distance education institutions and Folk high schools. An increasing number of courses are being offered by Elearning. The government and some counties support these course providers financially to keep tuition fees low and promote availability and flexibility of training opportunities.

IVET at both upper secondary and higher education level in general has equal formal status as general studies at the same level. Differences in administration and operation are minimal and directly related to the nature of the different types of training. The system has been designed so as to allow for switches between the two main strands of training.

According to the nature of the different training paths, the curricula vary in content as regards practical training and trade-specific theory. But all vocational curricula taught during the two years at school, contain general theory similar to theory in the curricula in the general education path up to a certain level. The rationale for this is to make it easier for vocational students to switch to general education during upper secondary training, if they so wish. One-year theoretical bridging courses are available for vocational students who wish to switch to general education and obtain formal qualifications for higher education. For students who have completed the training for a trade and journeyman's certificate, a theoretical bridging course of 6 months is available for those who wish to take up tertiary studies.

It is more difficult to make a switch the other way around, from general to vocational education, since every vocational curriculum right from the start contains trade-specific theory and practical training which is necessary for further studies. Hence, students in general upper secondary education have to start all over if they want to switch to a vocational path.

Cooperation between training institutions and enterprises is increasing and often formalised by a partnership agreement. The cooperation may include educational lectures by company staff, study visits to the enterprise, student projects related to the production of the enterprise, placements of students and joint organisation of in-service courses for teachers and company staff with responsibilities in training.

In higher education, there is in general only one entry point for the training in a specific subject or profession. Hence, if students choose to switch between programmes, they must start all over. This applies to both general and vocational programmes. But once a student has passed an exam as part of a professional study programme, he or she will get credits for the completed part, even if he / she switches to another subject or professional programme. The opportunities to switch apply to both general and vocational paths, and between the two. Credits obtained at one institution will automatically be recognised if the student moves to another university or university college to continue the higher studies, no matter if the credits obtained are from vocational and he / she is switching to general academic studies, or vice versa.

Adults above the age of 25 may apply and get access to tertiary studies based on the assessment of prior learning, including work practice. The assessment is conducted by the individual training institution. Non-formal learning and work practice of the student must be relevant to the study in question. Access to one study programme at one tertiary institution does not automatically give access to other study programmes or institutions for these candidates.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet – UFD (the Ministry of Education and Research) has the overall responsibility for decisions on structure and content of the curricula in primary, secondary and technical education and training. The Ministry gives instructions and guidelines for the curricula and their development, but the operational responsibility for the development process is placed by *Utdanningsdirektoratet* (the Directorate of

Primary and Secondary Education). The Directorate appoints teams of relevant professional academic and vocational experts and teachers for the work.

The participatory principle is vital in Norwegian education, as in other policy areas. Development and change of training programmes, content and modes of delivery may be advocated by the Ministry, parents, students, employers, trade unions and others. Renewal and development of new curricula are based on prior democratic processes where the relevant stakeholders take part. Employers' organisations, sector organisations and trade unions give input to curriculum development through the trade-specific *Opplæringsråd* (Vocational Training Councils) and *Rådet for fagopplæring i arbeidslivet – RFA* (the National Council for Vocational Training), where the social partners appoint two thirds of the members.

Curricula are made flexible by modularisation. The curricula are described as a frame in which one may choose to focus more on some aspects than on others. This gives a possibility to adapt the work to the ability and need of the individual student, but also to exploit specific events or local differences.

New methods are tried out by the introduction of projects launched by the ministry. Project work is an integrated, compulsory exercise in all training programmes and at all levels of education. Basic skills like national and foreign language skills and ICT skills are integrated in the learning process in different ways. A basic principle in vocational training is to integrate the subject in cross-curricular work and projects. The development of digital skills is integrated in the curricula of all training programmes and almost every subject, demanding the use of ITC as a tool. Language skills may be integrated in the learning of vocational subjects by focusing not only on the general language skills, but on vocational jargon. For instance, in a project the final presentation by the students may comprise a written report in Norwegian and a short presentation in English, or a letter in English. The presentation may be evaluated by the vocational teacher and the language teacher or the mother-tongue teacher together.

New curricula are distributed in electronic format only, through the website of the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education. The same applies to relevant rules and regulations, changes and news, guidelines for teachers, school management and for students and parents. A database has been established under the Directorate, containing all curricula within upper secondary education and training (cfr. <http://www.udir.no/>).

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

All public education and training provided at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including adult education in national programmes is regulated by laws given by the national assembly, and by directives and guidelines provided by *Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet* (the Ministry of Education and Research) and the autonomous government bodies *Utdanningsdirektoratet* (the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education) and *NOKUT*, the body for quality assurance in higher education. Relevant acts include the Education act, the Act on Universities and university colleges and the Adult education act.

Whereas structure and content of national training programmes is decided centrally, the delivery and formal validation of public upper secondary training is the responsibility of the counties. All training institutions that provide publicly recognised training programmes, including private training institutions, report regularly on results and are subjected to the quality control and supervision of the county authorities and the Directorate. Central authorities may also engage Research Institutes to study special features of the learning environment to evaluate processes and results of the system.

Concerning the implementation of upper secondary IVET, the counties have full responsibility for all parts of training both in the schools and in the enterprises. But the social partners hold the majority of seats in the major bodies actually handling vocational training on behalf of the county authorities: *Yrkesopplæringsnemnda* (the Vocational Training Committee) and *Prøvenemndene* (the Examination boards). Both are appointed by the regional parliament (Fylkestinget) for a period of four years.

The Vocational Training Committee is an advisory body to the county and bears a major responsibility for implementing vocational training on behalf of the county authorities. The social partner organisations in the county propose four of the seven members of the committee, two from each side. The remaining three members are appointed by the county, one being an apprentice and two having backgrounds respectively in business and in school.

Important tasks are to give advice on the overall provision in the county to meet the local needs and to arrange apprenticeship places. The Committee approves training enterprises and supervises the training in them. It has the authority to withdraw the right to take on apprentices. Furthermore, the Committee is responsible for approving apprenticeship contracts, for ensuring that the trade and journeyman's examinations are held in accordance with formal requirements, for appointing members to the Examination boards and for issuing trade and journeyman's certificates.

The vocational training committee has a secretariat that carries out the day-to-day work. It has regular contact with the training enterprises and provide expert advice and assistance in practical matters. Normally, the administration of the committee is integrated with the county education and training department.

In principle, each county has (at least) one Examination board for each trade, but in areas with few candidates, counties in some cases establish joint boards. Each board has two members who have formal competence and ideally also work experience in the relevant trade. The main tasks of the boards are to organise and implement the practical part of the trade and journeyman's examinations and evaluate the results. Examinations are organised in accordance with instructions provided by the Directorate. The Directorate is responsible for conducting quality control of all parts of upper secondary training, including apprenticeship training and examinations.

Tertiary education and training institutions are organised directly under the Ministry. NOKUT is responsible for accrediting training institutions, new programmes and actual delivery of training. Its major task is to evaluate and to assist in the process of enhancing quality. NOKUT is also responsible for evaluating and approving education taken at foreign training institutions.

Examinations within higher education and training are organised by the training institutions themselves, but external experts in the relevant topic is always involved in the preparation and correction of the examinations. Formal certificates and diplomas are issued by the training institutions themselves.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Documentation and recognition of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning has for decades been emphasised by the Norwegian government. Since 1980, adults have had the opportunity to document their qualifications obtained through relevant practical work by registering for the trade and journeyman's examination as a private candidate. One major condition is that the candidate can document relevant work practice of at least five years.

The private candidate arrangement applies also to every individual subject in general primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as technical and Master of Crafts training programmes. Hence, knowledge and skills acquired through self-studies and other non-formal and informal settings can be formalised and candidates may complete formal training programmes anywhere and at their own pace. The private candidate arrangement is regulated by the same acts that regulate formal training: the Education act, the Act on Universities and university colleges and the Adult education act.

The Competence reform has been one of the drivers for a project called "*Realkompetanseprosjektet*" aiming to develop and establish a national system for the documentation and validation of non-formal and informal qualifications even for applicants who are not able to meet documentation requirements regarding volume and type of practice.

The social partners, the education system, voluntary organisations, associations for adult education and distance learning institutions took part in the planning, monitoring and implementation of the "*Realkompetanse prosjektet*". The broad participation gives legitimacy to the national system that was presented in the final report of the project.

As by December 2004, every county has established a unit that conducts *Yrkesprøving* (vocational testing) according to recognised national training programmes. The candidates receive a document stating their qualifications within the relevant trade, but this document does not have the same status as a trade and journeyman's certificate, for instance regarding wage level. However, the *Yrkesprøving* unit may recommend to the county Vocational training committee that the candidate is given the opportunity to sit for a regular trade and journeyman's examination, and this advice will in general be followed. Hence, the new system facilitates the documentation of prior learning, regardless of the candidate's ability to document how the knowledge and skills was acquired.

From 2001 adults above the age of 25 years may be accepted to enter tertiary education based on assessment of non-formal qualifications. The training institutions themselves are obliged to consider other factors than certificates and credits when selecting applicants, including relevant work experience, voluntary work etc. Applicants that meet ordinary entrance requirements based on general upper secondary education are exempted from this entry path and have to compete for entrance according to regular entry procedures. If there are specific requirements to enter the study in question, the candidate must meet these requirements.

Candidates that are accepted for studies at one tertiary education institution will not automatically be accepted by other institutions. The reason is that the qualification assessment is related to the particular curriculum and pedagogical methods of the individual institution, and these are not completely similar at all institutions. Information about the criteria on which the training institution bases their evaluation of non-formal learning, the applicant should address the relevant training institution directly.

Everything that is presented to be evaluated as realkompetanse, should be formally documented. Certificates from work experience must be dated, indicate the duration, and the kind of work. The duration should be at least six months. Studies and childcare may be accepted. Voluntary work in organisations should be relevant to the type of study and must be documented by a responsible person from the management.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

Vocational and career guidance is provided by different public institutional arrangements, and also by some private companies.

Oppføringsloven (the Education Act) states that pupils in primary and secondary education have the right to "necessary guidance on education, careers and social matters". The schools themselves are responsible to define what to do and how to ensure that "educational and vocational guidance shall be interdisciplinary topics regarded as the responsibility of the school as a whole" (Ministry of Education and Research).

Vocational and career guidance is provided by regular teachers as an integrated part of the subject "social studies". In addition, the schools have appointed teachers who function part-time as counsellors. They provide both educational/vocational guidance and welfare counselling, partly in the classes and partly on an individual basis. ICT programmes for identifying talents and interests and provision of information about relevant training and work to the identified profile of the individual, are commonly utilised. In primary and lower secondary school, as well as in upper secondary vocational training programmes, all pupils get some work experience through 1 – 2 weeks of placement in an enterprise or public institution. Establishment of student enterprises for entrepreneurship training is encouraged and actively supported by the schools and cooperating local enterprises.

Targetting pupils in primary and secondary education and training, the counties each year organise "education and career" fairs where a variety of training providers and representatives of many different occupations gather for information and recruitment purposes. Pupils in the upper classes of lower and general upper secondary, and students in upper secondary vocational training, who will soon have to choose between different options for further education or work, have the opportunity to visit the fairs alone or with their parents, if they so wish.

In addition to guidance services in schools there are two other guidance services for young people: the county follow-up service and the youth information centres. The follow-up service is obliged to follow up all young people aged 16–19 who are neither in school nor at work, with the aim to organise an appropriate training and / or job

arrangement for the individual who has dropped out of the education system. The 13 youth information centres in Norway are part of a network of some 7 000 centres around Europe and they are designed to serve people aged 13–30. The centres provide information on many different issues relevant to youth in Norway, including youth policy, training and employment opportunities etc.

Every tertiary education institution has a study guidance service linked to the faculties and departments. They deal mainly with study choices and are not equipped to deal with career choice or job-entry issues. A few universities have set up career centres to address this. For instance, the guidance centre at the University of Oslo offers one-hour individual career guidance interviews and regular three-hour group sessions on the labour market, how degrees can be utilised and job application techniques. One result of the recent *Kvalitetsreform* (Quality Reform) is that the training institutions have become more responsive to labour market needs and more active in linking students to the world of work.

Aetat, the public employment service, has developed a new range of fee-charged services for employers, including hiring of temporary workers and consultancy on restructuring, staff selection and skills enhancement. Its main objectives are to contribute to an efficient labour market by helping job-seekers to quickly find suitable vacancies and by addressing the needs of those experiencing particular difficulties in the labour market. This incorporated vocational guidance results in the development of an action plan for the individual client. The aim is to encourage as many as possible to enter work, partly to reduce disability benefit payments, but mainly to increase the number of people in the labour force.

In addition to its targeted services *Aetat* operates a range of services to the general public. These are largely on a self-service basis. A register is maintained of all job vacancies that are notified to the service or advertised in the public media. These are available on the *Aetat* website (www.aetat.no).

Aetat has 200 offices spread across the country, access to their website is provided on a walk-in basis, along with printed vacancy information, word – processing facilities for writing job applications and curriculum vitae, free telephones for contacting employers, and some limited personal counselling. Vocational guidance has been subsumed within the general placement services. In the new in-house web-based training programme vocational guidance has proved to be one of the most popular options

Aetat does not actively provide guidance or market their services in the education institutions. But each year *Aetat* issues a catalogue, *Mer utdanning?* (More education?) with comprehensive updated information about education and training options in Norway (<http://www.aetat.no>). The catalogue is distributed to all students in upper secondary education and has proved a very useful tool for both students and school counsellors.

A small number of private agencies provide career guidance on a commercial basis. They tend to make more extensive use of psychometric tests than most public guidance services do. In addition there are a range of private "head-hunting" and job placement / substitute employee services. The latter are mainly dealing with temporary staff. The removal in 2000 of the public employment service's formal monopoly of placement activities has in principle provided a stimulus to such enterprises.

Aetat's services include an Employment Counselling Office in each county, staffed mainly by psychologists and special-needs teachers, which offers intensive rehabilitation counselling services for those with disabilities. Similar bodies are also established within the education system, targeting regular pupils. Some municipalities and counties have established separate adult education departments for organisation and delivery of primary and secondary education to this group. Educational and career guidance is often provided as an integrated part of their services.

At present, the social partner organisations do not provide systematic vocational or career guidance services. However, they are often represented at the county education and career fairs, by invitation or as partners in organisation of these events.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Career guidance in Norway is fully integrated in primary and secondary education and training. Teachers are especially assigned to perform this task and it is an integrated part of the general curriculum. Links between school and companies are encouraged and provide a background for information about occupations, types of work and career opportunities.

Many guidance activities organised by the education institutions, including education and career fairs and visits to various training institutions are concentrated to periods when the learners are approaching the deadline of application for further studies, rather than by a more long-term development process. There is concern that pupils do not have access to individual skilled counselling when they need it. A survey in Oslo found that the average amount of such help received by pupils in grades 8-10 was 10 minutes (*Teig, 2000: Skolerådgiving – Status og Utdanningsbehov*). However, there are significant differences between the training institutions regarding the organisation and provision of individual guidance.

In addition to the organised counselling services, the pupils receive information on education and work through activities integrated in various subject curricula. The county follow-up service is actively assisting drop-outs and other youth at risk, organising tailor-made, individually adapted provision of training and work.

For the public employment service, *Aetat*, (Labour Market Administration), the main target groups are those experiencing difficulties in the labour market. In the early 1990s the services were mainly focused on the need of the unemployed. When unemployment fell, the service budget was reduced. In 2004, priority groups have been defined as the long-term unemployed, plus two groups that tend to be on the edge of the labour market: vocationally disabled people, i.e. people with physical, mental or social handicaps that reduce their job opportunities, and immigrants. These groups are offered a variety of training and placement services addressed particularly to them.

Aetat has developed a range of self-help tools, many of them web-based. These tools include a career choice programme which offers self-assessments of interests, work values and skills plus an occupational matching facility and job-seeking assistance (*Veivalg*); a career learning programme (*Gradplus*) adapted from the UK and addressed mainly to higher education graduates. These tools are available also to pupils and apprentices in lower and upper secondary training, who also receive a catalogue, *Mer utdanning?* (More education?) which is updated annually. There are proposals to set up a call-centre, based on the concept of *LearnDirect* in the UK, which will respond to information enquiries relating to learning and work. The Norwegian Euroguidance centre and the

Norwegian Eures centre, which provides information on European employment opportunities, are also hosted and operated by Aetat.

As part of the Norwegian strategy for elearning, there is considerable emphasis on vocational and career guidance provided as electronic rather than printed information. A variety of web-based databases with information on education and vocational opportunities has been developed, and some of them have been closed. As of December 2004, a portal (<http://www.utdanning.no>) is the single most central entry point to all significant information on the education system and relevant public bodies at different levels, providers of training, available courses and programmes, entry requirements etc.

There is currently no vocational and career guidance service specifically targeting the employed or underemployed. However, the regular counselling services of Aetat are available also to these groups, if they seek advice. The private counselling companies are open to all groups, including regular pupils, unemployed or employed, youth and adults.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

In primary and secondary schools guidance is provided by experienced teachers with the appropriate social skills and personal abilities for the task. They are in general well acquainted with the Norwegian education system and recruited by an internal process among the teaching staff. They have reduced teaching load according to a formula under a collective agreement which provides for a minimum of one hour of counselling per week per 25 pupils.

Several tertiary education institutions offer "counselling" as an option within the regular provision structure. These programmes may be taken as part of regular teacher education (IVET) or as CVET for teachers who already have been appointed or wish to compete for the position as a school counsellor. The training is formally recognised by central authorities and accredited according to the ECTS system. Sometimes the programmes are delivered specifically on request from the county education authorities. About half of the counselling teachers have attended counselling training at a university college.

In 2004 there are no formal requirements set at national level for pre-service specialised training of school counsellors, despite that the social partners and the school counsellors' own organisation for many years have requested such qualifying measures. The Ministry of Education and Research has for some years been testing various systems and investigating alternative training options, but has still not made a final decision on the matter. Some counties and municipalities have introduced minimum training requirements for their own schools, others have not. As a result, a large part of school counsellors only have limited in-service training or no specific counselling training at all to prepare them for the task.

The organisation of the compulsory follow-up service varies between the counties. In some counties the follow-up service consists of a small central unit and the school counsellors, who sit close to the students. Staff in the central unit is often trained psychologists or teachers specialised in working with students with specific needs.

Concern has been expressed about the breadth of the school counsellor's role and the risk that the experienced increase in and pressing nature of students' personal and social problems may reduce available time of the counsellors for vocational guidance. The latter requires regular updating to be informed about the development in the labour market and in training opportunities and this may not be given sufficient attention within an integrated model.

Accordingly a three year project was launched by the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education with the aim to test a "split counselling service", placing the social and the vocational guidance responsibilities by two different individuals. The three-year pilot project was also concerned with identifying alternative models for improved co-operation between counsellors in lower and upper secondary schools, in order to coordinate training and prepare for a smooth transfer of students.

The general experience from the project showed that the division of the counselling service was beneficial to the vocational guidance part. Based on the findings the Directorate has issued methodological handbooks for the institutions and local training managements on how to organise a split counselling service and how to work with vocational and career guidance in general (cf. <http://drt.utdanningsdirektoratet.no/>). So far, no national instructions regarding the local organisation of the vocational guidance service have been issued.

In tertiary education the general educational requirement for counsellors is education at university level (Bachelor degree or Master), but there is no requirement for a specific guidance training for these counsellors.

The services of Aetat, (Labour Market Administration) includes an employment counselling office in each county, staffed mainly by psychologists and special-needs teachers, which offers intensive rehabilitation counselling services for those with disabilities. Counsellors at the employment offices are normally equipped with education at Bachelor level or higher in addition to in-service guidance training.

There are no formal requirements regarding educational background of counsellors in private career guidance services. However, in order to stay in business, the (few) private guidance companies must deliver quality services. Hence, most often the staff is well qualified in psychology or pedagogics. Some of them have specialised counselling education from Switzerland at Bachelor level.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

The Norwegian Constitution of 1814 states that the provision of education is a major responsibility of the national authorities. For decades, equal access to basic education regardless of geography and personal characteristics, as well as high quality in the provision have been fundamental principles for changing governments, directing education policy and influencing the cost level in education. The general public and political opinion is that a highly educated population is by far the most valuable asset for any country in the international knowledge economy characterised by an increasingly fierce international competition for market shares.

As of 2004, all groups, including adults, are legally entitled to primary and secondary education and training provided by the relevant public authorities. All individuals that meet the formal intake requirements have access also

to tertiary education. There is no political controversy over the current policy of free education delivery to all pupils and students at all levels in public training institutions. Costs of public education are covered over public budgets.

Regarding CVET that goes beyond mainstream education, the general principle is that this should be the main responsibility of the beneficiaries, i.e. the enterprises, the social partners and the individuals. However, since it is in the interest of the nation to have a well educated population and a competitive private industry, public authorities have established a system of indirect co-financing by means of targeted subsidies and tax reliefs.

Local democracy has a strong standing in Norway. It is a general agreement that the elected bodies of municipalities and counties should have some self-governing rights and flexibility in prioritising and implementing public services within the regulatory and financial frameworks set by the national authorities. This explains the system of direct income taxation, which consists of national, as well as county and municipality elements, and the lump sum system for the transfer of national financing support to the implementation of obligatory decisions made at national level.

The municipalities and counties, which deliver primary and lower secondary, and upper secondary education and training, respectively, receive block grants from *Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet* – UFD (the Ministry of Education and Research) covering an estimated 80 – 85 % of total costs. The grants include financial support to enterprises that take responsibility for the training of apprentices. The remaining part is covered over the budgets of the local authorities that own and run the training institutions.

Public universities and university colleges are owned by and organised directly under UFD, which also finance most of their costs (80 – 90 %) through block grants which are calculated on the basis of a multi-element formula. The remaining part of their budgets is covered by contracted research and other types of projects (8 – 9 %), as well as provision of tailor-made CVET to private enterprises and public institutions (8 – 9 %). Total budget of all the public universities and university colleges in 2004 was in the range of 18 billion NOK (€2.1 billion).

The current (2004) government and majority in parliament argue that students should have the opportunity to opt between public and private training institutions everywhere and without economic constraints. Their view is that the increased competition will enhance the training quality in all parts of the system. Consequently, the government has introduced a more liberal practice in recognising private primary and secondary education institutions for the provision of public training programmes. These receive financial support at the same level as public institutions and cover the remaining part of their budgets by tuition fees paid by the students. Also at tertiary level recognised private institutions receive financial support from the government according to the same financing model as the public ones, but the rates used for one of the financing elements, the "basic administrative contribution", is lower. The political opposition is opposing the gradual privatisation of education, claiming that this policy is weakening the public education and training system.

In order to ensure equal access regardless of family economy, students in upper secondary and tertiary education and training, including apprentices, may receive personal grants and subsidised loans from *Statens Lånekasse for Utdanning* (the State Education Loan Fund).

Internationalisation is a major principle and political objective in upper secondary and tertiary education. All students in tertiary education are encouraged to take at least half a year of their studies in another country. Consequently, at least 15 000 Norwegians are studying abroad at all times, financially supported by the State Education Loan Fund.

CVET delivered by formally recognised *Studieforbund* (Adult Education Associations), *Fjernundervisningsinstitusjoner* (Distance Education Institutions) and *Folkehøgskoler* (Folk High Schools) is subsidised by the Ministry, but these non-profit organisations cover most of their budgets by participant fees.

CVET organised by the enterprises is not directly supported by the public authorities. However, since investments in training qualify for tax deduction in line with other types of investments, the training is subsidised by the government.

Individuals who invest in training may qualify for financial support from the State Education Loan Fund, and their tuition fees are subsidised if they attend CVET courses organised by recognised training providers (see above). Under special circumstances individuals may apply for a tax relief related to personal investments in education.

Training for employment under the labour market measures, as well as training of legal immigrants for integration purposes, is financed 100 % by the government.

The overriding financing principles and priorities have not been subjected to significant changes during recent years. The same applies to the administrative structure that governs the funding of VET.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

IVET is provided at upper secondary and at tertiary levels. Both are delivered cost-free to the students in public training institutions. Training according to national curricula is also delivered by private training institutions authorised by *Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet* - UFD (the Ministry of Education and Research). There have been no recent changes in administrative arrangements, management principles, the balance of funding or funding mechanisms.

Mainstream *upper secondary IVET*, including apprenticeship training, is financed 80 – 85 % by the Ministry by direct block grants to the owner of the authorised training institutions, whether these are private or public. The public institutions are owned by the counties. They cover the remaining part of the costs over their regular budgets based on regional taxation. Private upper secondary training institutions receive financial support at the same level and through the same administrative bodies and mechanisms as do the public institutions. The remaining costs are covered by participant fees.

The estimated training costs for apprentices in public upper secondary IVET are covered by direct contributions from the county to the individual apprenticeship enterprise. The funding, which is supposed to cover the training part of the apprenticeship period, is shared between the government and the county according to a similar formula as for the upper secondary schools.

Individual students in upper secondary IVET are entitled to grants and subsidised loans through *Statens lånekasse for utdanning* (the State Education Loan Fund) if they come from low income families. This opportunity is available also to adult students. In principle, awards are the same throughout the country. However, students from the two northernmost counties can obtain an additional subsistence grant if they have to stay away from home to attend

training. Students in upper secondary vocational school with particularly high expenditures related to purchase of compulsory equipment may obtain extra support. Loans are only reluctantly given to students in upper secondary level, most of the individual support to this group is provided as grants. Study loans in general carry no interest charges during the period of study.

The public tertiary education institutions are owned and organised directly under the Ministry. The public institutions, as well as private tertiary institutions that are formally recognised by the Ministry, receive direct funding from the Ministry. For public institutions, the direct funding is supposed to cover some 80 - 90 % of the total budget, calculated by a formula with several elements, one variable being the number of students registered and successfully completing their studies. The remaining part of the budget at public tertiary institutions is covered by research and other projects contracted by public or private institutions (8 - 9 %), and by commercial delivery of tailor-made CVET to enterprises and public institutions (8 - 9 %). Private tertiary institutions cover the remaining part of the budget mainly by student fees.

There are no collective IVET funds in Norway.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

Primary and secondary education and training for adults, as well as CVET are priority areas of Norwegian education and training policy. The objective of the public authorities at all levels is to encourage, facilitate and support the enhancement of competencies in the adult population. This objective is pursued by means of an appropriate regulatory and financial framework and stimulating measures that will ensure the development of relevant, updated and flexible training opportunities. To the individual, the enterprises and the society in general, a dynamic and flexible CVET system is of crucial importance to maintain competitiveness under conditions of frequent changes in technologies, products and markets. New competence can give individuals greater freedom of choice and possibilities to realise their wishes and needs.

All adults are entitled to receive primary and secondary education and training delivered cost-free for the participant. Municipalities are responsible for the provision of primary and lower secondary education, whilst the counties is obliged to organise appropriate upper secondary education and training for adults on request. This distribution of responsibilities is similar to the one applying to ordinary pupils and students. Financing of the basic adult education is covered 100 % by *Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet* – UFD (Ministry of Education and Research) under the Adult Education Act.

A. PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET FOR ALL

1. Post-secondary, non-tertiary technical training, provided by Technical schools, most of them public. These institutions are administratively a part of public upper secondary training and hence owned and run by the counties. Financing principles and mechanisms are similar to those of the upper secondary schools: 80 - 85 % of the budget is covered by UFD through block grants to the county, whilst the remaining part is covered over the county budget. Private technical schools delivering according to national curricula receive government support at the same level as the public institutions, channelled through the county administration. The remaining part of the budget is covered by participants' fees. Students may apply for individual grants and loans through *Statens Lånekasse for Utdanning - SLU* (the State Education Loan Fund).

2. Master of Crafts training, provided by a *Studieforbund* (Adult Education Association), is delivered according to national curricula and is awarded by a public certificate under the administration of *Nærings- og handelsdepartementet* - NHD (the Ministry of Industry and Trade). Costs of training are shared between the Ministry and the individual participant. NHD financing consists of direct support to the *Studieforbund* for guaranteeing delivery at 80 different places nationwide, according to a formal agreement which is negotiated regularly. In addition, the Ministry subsidises the participant fees according to the general arrangement for *Studieforbund* (see below). The remaining costs are covered by participant fees.

3. CVET delivered by public and private universities and university colleges is partly delivered through the regular study programmes, where IVET and CVET students as a general rule follow the same classes and are not easily identified. Some regular study programmes are organised specifically as CVET for Teachers, Engineers, Health personnel and other groups. In public institutions, all regular study programmes are delivered cost-free to the participants. The institutions are owned by UFD and receive direct financial contributions from this Ministry covering some 80 - 90 % of their total budgets. The remaining part is covered by income from various contracted research and other assignments with public and private institutions.

Authorised private institutions receive financial support directly from UFD according to the same financing model as do the public institutions for the delivery of publicly recognised training programmes. Depending on the type of training and commercial potential of the training institution, the state share of budgets in the private institutions vary between 22 % and 90 % of total budgets. The remaining part of costs is covered by tuition fees. Students in both public and private institutions are entitled to individual grants and loans through *SLU*.

4. Upper secondary and tertiary public and private training institutions deliver tailor-made CVET to public and private enterprises and institutions on a commercial basis. The general principle is that the customer covers the total costs related to the training. Individual participants are not entitled to individual support from *SLU* and there is no direct financial support to the purchasing enterprise or institution. However, the customer organisations are entitled to tax relieves for investments in training.

There have been no recent changes of financing administrative arrangements, management principles, in the balance of funding or in funding mechanisms.

B. ENTERPRISE-BASED CVET

Enterprise-based training is organised partly as in-service courses, external courses or by means of E-learning for the individual employee. Except for necessary training delivered cost-free to the enterprise by commercial partners in relation to the introduction of new products and tools, and for staff participating in regular training programmes at a public training institution, the enterprise is fully responsible for the direct financing of training. There are currently (2004) no public arrangements for direct financial support of CVET in enterprises.

However, there are various forms of indirect financial support available to enterprises that organise CVET for their staff:

- The enterprise are entitled to tax relief for investments in staff training,
- Individual adult students/employees are, under certain conditions, entitled to public grants and loans from *SLU*,
- Training delivered by publicly recognised *Studieforbund*, *Fjernundervisningsinstitusjoner* (Distance Education Institutions) and *Folkehøgskoler* (Folk High Schools) is subsidised by UFD, reducing the participation fee and hence the costs of the enterprise.

Under certain conditions enterprises may take advantage of an arrangement under the labour market measures, *Bedriftsintern Opplæring* (internal training), and receive indirect financial support for staff training through *Aetat*, the Labour authorities. The arrangement is available for SMEs with less than 100 employees and its aim is to encourage organisational adaptation, adjustment and restructuring in order to prevent future unemployment. *Aetat* can contribute a maximum of 50% of salary costs for a substitute in a period when a staff member is on necessary training leave. The basic condition for support is that an appropriate substitute can be found among the registered unemployed and that *Aetat* selects the candidate, since the main purpose of the arrangement from the point of *Aetat* is to qualify the unemployed for an ordinary job.

There have been no recent changes of financing administrative arrangements, management principles, in the balance of funding or in funding mechanisms.

The figures provided in the table for enterprise-based CVET show that the investments of Norwegian enterprises in human resource development in 1999 was at the average level of enterprises in the EU 15 (2.3 % of total labour costs), and lower than in the other Nordic countries. However, the major difference was related to the costs carried by the employees, whilst the difference in terms of company investments was far less. In the perspective of the recent reforms in adult education, updated figures would probably show higher figures for Norway in both total costs and direct costs.

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Labour market training (AMO) and rehabilitation of the unemployed, work placements for those with vocational disabilities and various other labour market measures with qualifying elements and aspects are under the authority of *Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet* - *ASD* (the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). The operational agency subordinated to the Ministry is *Aetat – Arbeidsdirektoratet* (Directorate of Labour) with regional and local offices.

Training for employment is in general organised nationwide, close to the target groups. The local *Aetat* purchases the training from local providers, often public upper secondary schools and local training centres. All costs are covered by *Aetat*. The financing source is *ASD*, and the money is channelled through the *Aetat* system from *Aetat Directorate of Labour* to the training provider.

Training for integration is provided to all legal immigrants and is compulsory from 2004. With the exception of training provided to unemployed immigrant residents that fall under the labour market measures, integrative language and social studies training, as well as work-qualifying training, is the responsibility of the local municipalities that receive the immigrants for permanent settlement. The training is provided by local public or private schools, training centres and enterprises and is fully financed by direct grants from *Utlendingsdirektoratet – UDI* (the Directorate of Immigration). *UDI* is a subordinate agency under *Kommunal- og regionaldepartementet* (the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development).

There have been no recent changes of financing administrative arrangements, management principles, in the balance of funding or in funding mechanisms.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

No doubt, the recent prioritization by the government and the social partners of education and training in general, and adult education and the development of a comprehensive LLL system in particular, will continue. Recent and planned reforms of various parts of Norwegian education and training do not indicate any significant changes in VET funding. With the increased focus on higher education, vocational training and LLL within the EU, external influence will ensure a further development of the system in terms of quality, efficiency and flexibility.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

Norway has a long history of close relationship and co-operation with other European countries and is a member of the single European market through the EEA agreement. The EU is the most important market for Norway regarding both imports and exports. There is a general political agreement that the only possible political strategy for maintaining and strengthening the relations and utilise the potential of the single market is to be an active partner in available EU initiatives on education, training and labour market policies.(1)

Hence, Norway participates in the EU programmes Youth, Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci and in the activities under CEDEFOP and Eurydice. The Bologna process, the Lisbon strategy and the Copenhagen process is followed actively and closely by the national authorities. The mobility of Norwegian trainers, students and young workers within Europe is actively promoted under these programmes and under bilateral agreements with Germany and France. Several recent reforms are coherently reflecting the national ambitions regarding a modern, dynamic system of Lifelong and Lifewide Learning. The European influence on Norwegian policies in this field is obvious and massive.

Major elements of the Bologna process have already been implemented through a recent reform of tertiary education, *Kvalitetsreformen* (the Quality Reform). The introduction of the European Credit Transfer System - ECTS, strengthening of quality assessment and assurance measures and prioritation of entrepreneurship and internationalisation in tertiary education are among the most important.

The introduction of a new degree system of a three years Bachelor's degree and a five years' Master's degree has implied major changes in programme curricula. The degree system, which applies to both general and vocational tertiary education, is modularised and hence has a built-in flexibility. The adaptation to systems of other European countries will obviously promote transparency and facilitate mobility in higher education and in the labour market. The application of the ECTS will facilitate the recognition of Norwegian Diplomas abroad, as well as the accreditation of studies taken abroad by individuals coming (back) to Norway for work or further studies.

Statens lånekasse for utdanning (the State Education Loan Fund) provides scholarships and subsidised loans to Norwegian students who choose to go abroad for upper secondary and tertiary studies, as well as apprenticeship training. *Nasjonalt Organ for Kvalitet i Utdanninga - NOKUT* is a government body with main responsibility for quality control of tertiary training institutions and programmes in Norway. NOKUT is furthermore the accrediting authority for studies and vocational training taken in other countries.

According to the Quality reform, all students in higher education and training shall have the possibility of including a placement in another country as an integrated part of their study or training if they wish to do so. The placement may be in a training institution or, for vocational educations where practice is mandatory, in a company. Higher training institutions are organising an increasing number of their programmes in such a way that the placement is an integrated part of training.

Educational opportunities for adults and lifelong learning are two important tenets in Norwegian educational policy. Adults are entitled to primary and secondary education provided cost-free and adapted to their specific needs, if they so request. The general aim of Norwegian adult education is to raise the level of education in the entire population, with a particular view to meeting the labour market's need for knowledge and skills and to give the individual an opportunity for professional, social and personal development. Adults above the age of 25 may be accepted for tertiary education and training based on the assessment of qualifications acquired in non-formal and informal settings.

In conformity with the political processes of the EU, the Norwegian government has given priorities to the development of systems for validation of prior learning, including competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning. For some types of training, this opportunity has been available since 1980. In 2004, additional and more extensive arrangements have been established in all counties. According to the Adult education act, all individuals without three years of upper secondary education are entitled to a formal evaluation of their non-formal or informal competence.

(1) Norwegian access to participation in labour market and regional development EU programmes, including the arrangements under the Social Funds, is restricted. Under special terms, participation in the R&D Framework programme and the InterReg programme is possible.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

English is a mandatory subject in vocational training as well as in general studies. The language learning is built on prior knowledge, as English is taught all through primary and lower secondary school. All students in vocational training (upper secondary education) have two hours of English for two years. The jargon of the trade is taught, but the curriculum is also providing a general knowledge of English language and culture. French or German is taught in the hotel and catering training paths as second or third language. The methodology is, according to the core curriculum, flexible and the learning environment should be adapted to the individual student's needs and ability. This caters for a possibility to integrate different kinds of projects, such as international mobility, in the curriculum.

Norway has a long tradition in distance courses and students have access to these courses. Learners also have access to education and training pathways in other countries. One year of secondary education abroad is to be considered equivalent to one year taken in a Norwegian institution according to the regulations decided by the Ministry. *Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanninga - NOKUT*, a national institution for quality in higher education and training, is assigned to evaluate the equivalence of upper secondary vocational and higher education and training taken abroad. A database for information has been set up as part of this work.

On request by Stortinget, the Norwegian Parliament, the government initiated a comprehensive work aiming to develop a system for validation of prior learning. By the end of 2004, all counties had established systems for accreditation of non-formal knowledge and skills for adults.

From 2001 adults above the age of 25 may get access to study programmes at universities and university colleges on the basis of non-formal competencies. When selecting applicants, the training institutions are obliged to consider and assess other factors than formal certificates and credits, including relevant non-formal learning and work practice, voluntary work, activity in organisations such as NGOs or trade unions, or in-service training. Only applicants without a general upper secondary certificate allowing for entrance to higher education institutions, are entitled to this option. If there are specific requirements to enter the study, these must be met also by these candidates.

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