



# Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–17

## NORWAY



Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies

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policy in 2015-17**

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## Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Norway was above the EU average: 50.7% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 151); 50% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU <sup>(1)</sup>. However, only 31.2% of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) students were following work-based programmes in 2014, against 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 151). The employment rate of IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds) was high: 90.9% in 2015 compared to 76.9% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 151). Adult participation in lifelong learning was also high: 20.1% in 2015 compared to 10.7% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 151) (Table 1).

A social contract for VET had been adopted for the 2011-15 period, aiming to support cooperation between VET schools and enterprises, increase the number of apprenticeships, and encourage completion. Increasing the attractiveness of VET and fighting high dropout rates had also been the priority of the VET policy set out by the new government which took office in October 2013. The main lines proposed also emphasised cooperation between schools and companies and increasing apprenticeships, as well as giving students possibilities to alternate between apprenticeships and school-based training, encouraging students carrying out parallel studies combining VET and a general programme, reinforcing the access of VET students to higher education, and accessing higher education with a trade or journeyman's certificate. Pilot projects were carried out in 2014-15 <sup>(2)</sup>. The 2009-14 action plan for entrepreneurship in education and training had also been carried out.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Eurostat, data for 2015.

<sup>(2)</sup> For example regarding dual VET (*Vekslingsmodellen*) and in-company traineeship for VET teachers.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Norway and in the EU: 2010, last available year and recent trend

Indicator label	2010		Last available year			Recent trend (per year)		
	NO <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	NO <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	NO	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	50.7 <sup>b</sup>	48.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▬ -1.1	▬ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	31.2 <sup>b</sup>	34.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E2</sub>	'13-'14	▬ 1.6	▬ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	0.0 <sup>z</sup>	69.2 <sup>E3</sup>	'13-'14	▬ 0.0	▬ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	46.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	46.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	22.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	22.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	18.2		'15	20.1	10.7 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -0.4	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	97.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	97.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	42.3 <sup>b</sup>	42.7 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▬ -1.8	▬ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	45.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	45.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	39.0 <sup>b</sup>	33.0 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▬ -30.4	▬ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	12.1	5.3	'15	13.7	6.9	'10-'15	↗ 0.3	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	10.4		'15	12.9 <sup>C</sup>	4.3 <sup>bC</sup>	'13-'15	↗ 0.2	↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	18.9		'15	20.8	9.5 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -1.6	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	7.4 <sup>B</sup>	9.5 <sup>eB</sup>	'11	7.4	9.5 <sup>e</sup>			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	91.9 <sup>B</sup>	80.2 <sup>eB</sup>	'11	91.9	80.2 <sup>e</sup>			
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13		0.56 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E4</sub>			
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13		6.4 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E5</sub>			
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.7	0.8 <sup>e</sup>	'10	0.7	0.8 <sup>e</sup>			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	0.6 <sup>b</sup>	1.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E6</sub>	'13-'14	▬ -0.3	▬ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	34.3 <sup>b</sup>	30.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E7</sub>	'13-'14	▬ -0.3	▬ -0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	8.1	9.3 <sup>E8</sup>	'13-'14	▬ -0.1	▬ 0.4
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	58.5	41.5 <sup>E9</sup>	'12	54.4	41.6 <sup>E9</sup>	'10-'12	▬ -2.0	▬ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	90.7 <sup>b</sup>	77.2 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▬ 12.0	▬ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	10.7 <sup>b</sup>	5.3 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▬ 21.3	▬ -1.0

Indicator label	2010		Last available year			Recent trend (per year)		
	NO <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	NO <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	NO	EU
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	26.8 <sup>b</sup>	23.7 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 13.8	▪ -0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	86.8	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	61.6	55.2	'15	63.0	57.3	'10-'15	▪ 0.3	▪ 0.4
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	17.4	13.9	'15	10.2 <sup>c</sup>	11.0 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -1.5	↘ -0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	47.3	33.8	'15	50.9 <sup>c</sup>	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↗ 0.8	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	6.9	16.6	'15	7.0	15.8	'10-'15	↗ 0.1	↘ -0.1
Unemployment rate for 20-to 34-year-olds (%)		13.1	'15	6.4 <sup>b</sup>	12.9	'13-'15	↗ 0.6	↘ -1.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)		77.4	'15	90.9 <sup>c</sup>	76.9 <sup>c</sup>	'12-'15	↗ 0.3	↗ 0.4
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	19.1	27.3	'15	17.3 <sup>c</sup>	23.5 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.4	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)	79.6	68.6	'15	79.1	70.0	'10-'15	↘ -0.1	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	64.3	53.4	'15	60.5 <sup>c</sup>	52.6 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.9	↘ -0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	74.5 <sup>d</sup>	82.8 <sup>d</sup>			

<sup>(A)</sup> UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

<sup>(B)</sup> AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

<sup>(C)</sup> 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

<sup>(D)</sup> Forecast made in 2016.

<sup>(E1)</sup> Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

<sup>(E2)</sup> Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

<sup>(E3)</sup> Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

<sup>(E4)</sup> Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

<sup>(E5)</sup> Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

<sup>(E6)</sup> Partial information for NL.

<sup>(E7)</sup> Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

<sup>(E8)</sup> Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

<sup>(E9)</sup> Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

<sup>(b)</sup> Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

<sup>(u)</sup> Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

<sup>(z)</sup> Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

<sup>(e)</sup> Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 151.

## CHAPTER 1.

# MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

## 1.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training (DGVT), are two-fold:

- (a) increase the number of apprenticeships by making sure that all qualified applicants are offered an apprenticeship and more enterprises are involved in offering training places;
- (b) adjust the curriculum for upper secondary VET programmes so that all students have the opportunity of experiencing real work situations through the use of different learning contexts.

## 1.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

### 1.2.1. New social contract for VET

A new [social contract for VET](#) was adopted for 2016-20. It is aimed at increasing the number of apprenticeships and the number of adults acquiring a trade or journeyman's certificate.

### 1.2.2. The apprenticeship programme requirement

This new measure was introduced in 2016. Starting 2017, companies that participate in public-service contracts <sup>(3)</sup> are required to use apprentices. The requirement applies to Norwegian and international companies. Foreign companies bidding for public procurements must be approved as training establishments in Norway and have Norwegian apprentices, or apprentices/learners on practical training from corresponding apprenticeship schemes in their home country. Relevant legislation was updated accordingly.

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<sup>(3)</sup> Public authorities shall require the use of apprentices for contracts worth at least NOK 1.1 million (ex. VAT) that last longer than three months. Counties and municipal authorities shall require the use of apprentices for contracts worth at least NOK 1.75 million (ex. VAT) that last longer than three months.

### **1.2.3. Increasing the motivation and commitment of apprentices**

A 2015 [regulation](#) introduces continuous assessment as the basis for final assessment in apprenticeship programmes. The measure is expected to increase motivation and commitment of apprentices throughout the programme.

### **1.2.4. Increasing the financial incentives for training companies**

The economic incentives the state provides for training companies were strengthened during 2015-17. The basic funding for companies accepting apprenticeships has increased to a total of NOK 14 000 per training contract. The total effect on budget for this increase in funding was NOK 300 million.

### **1.2.5. Signalling training enterprises**

A special emblem distinguishing training companies was set up in 2015. It is intended to signal to customers that the supplier is an approved training establishment. The Directorate of Education and Training (UDIR) has also implemented an online national register <sup>(4)</sup> for approved training enterprises. All enterprises with at least one apprentice are listed and it is possible to filter by subject, geographic area or by name.

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<sup>(4)</sup> <https://nlr.udir.no/>

## CHAPTER 2.

# MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET <sup>(5)</sup>

A quality assurance national reference point was set up in 2010 at the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. At the beginning of the reporting period, a national quality assurance approach for VET was being prepared and was expected to be in place by 2020. Indicators for quality assurance in VET were being developed, taking the European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) indicators as a reference. Quality standards for VET providers are part of legislation and included in curricula. Legislation also requires regional counties to have a quality assurance approach, with county authorities being responsible for the quality assurance of their VET providers.

Norway conducts three large surveys for learners, apprentices and enterprises with apprenticeships every year. In 2015, it became mandatory for the counties to participate in the surveys. The information is used to design and update qualifications, occupational profiles, standards, programmes and curricula. The national council <sup>(6)</sup> for VET and the advisory councils <sup>(7)</sup> play an

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<sup>(5)</sup> Sources:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

ReferNet: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>

Priorities reported by Directors General for vocational training for the 2016-20 period;

EQAVET (2016 Secretariat survey, website, newsletters): <http://www.eqavet.eu>

2016 compendium of EQAVET NRP *Erasmus+* funding;

Council recommendations on the 2016 national reform programmes:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/2016/#>

Education and training monitor 2016 country reports:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en)

<sup>(6)</sup> The national council for VET is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research and is composed of social partners, representatives of the ministry and other stakeholders such as student organisations, pupil/apprentice organisations, and teacher unions.

important role in the translation of skill needs into national curricula and definition of study subjects.

## 2.1. Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET

The country's priority in this matter for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to ensure that the quality assessment system is in use:

- (a) for all administrative levels;
- (b) for all stakeholders.

In the reporting period Norway was working on implementing a national quality assurance framework for VET.

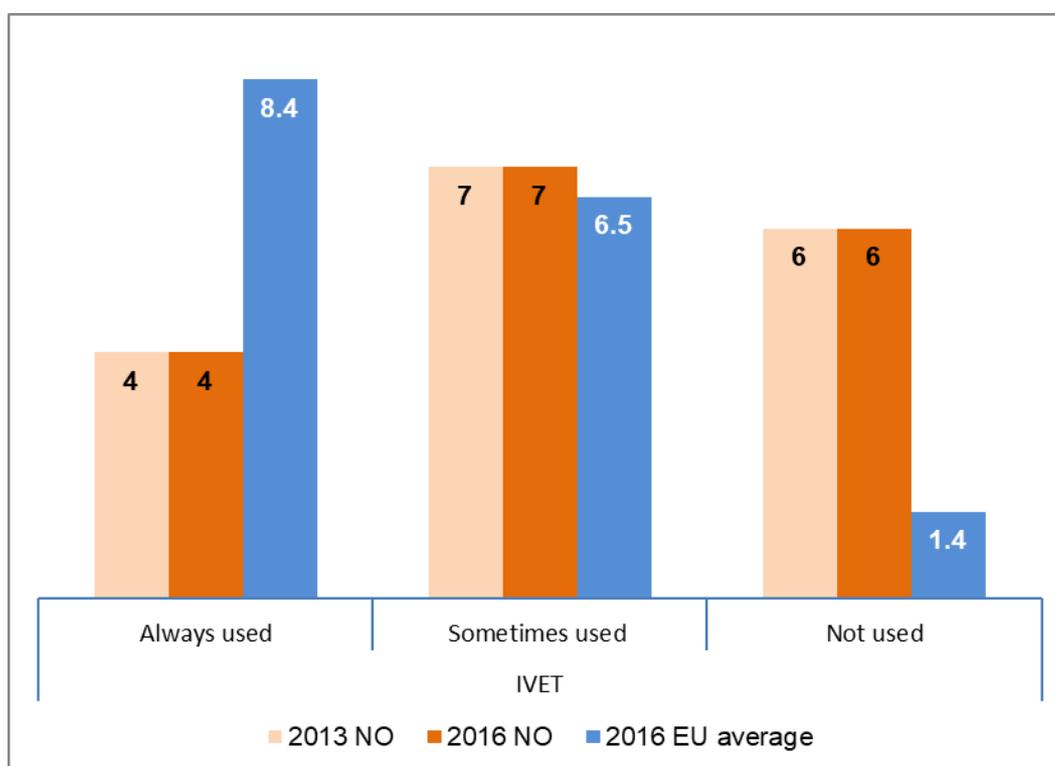
EQAVET indicators are not used to monitor continuing vocational education and training (CVET). In IVET, the extent of use has not changed since 2013: Norway remains below the EU average in the number of indicators 'always used' and above the EU average in the 'not used' indicators. The EQAVET indicators that are not used include the satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with the acquired skills/competences and data on mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market <sup>(8)</sup>.

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<sup>(7)</sup> There are nine advisory councils for VET, one for each of the main VET programmes.

<sup>(8)</sup> In Norway, both young and adults use the IVET system. The Norwegian assessment system has developed indicators that are different from those used in the EQAVET system.

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, four were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2016 in Norway, compared to 8.4 in the EU on average in 2016.

No information was provided for the use of EQAVET indicators in CVET.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys for 2013 and 2016 data.

## 2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this matter, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to review the national structure of upper secondary VET programmes.

Data on transitions and employability of VET graduates informed the review of the available VET programmes. The review recommended the development of new VET subjects which are now in consultation and should be completed by September 2017.

The Directorate for Education and Training is developing a new survey targeting skilled workers who have recently acquired their trade or journeyman certificate. The aim is to gather information on the level of skill matching between acquired training and the labour market.

Discussions in the national council for VET in the first quarter of 2017 included the economic and social effect of VET, the trade certificate at work (a newly proposed flexible pathway for adults to achieve a trade or journeyman's certificate while working), and links between general education and VET. New mandates for the national council for VET and the advisory councils for VET were also suggested.

### 2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in continuing VET

The country's priority for 2016-20 in this matter, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to gain information on employer satisfaction with graduates from higher education and post-secondary vocational education and training, and on the employment situation of graduates from post-secondary CVET.

Skills Norway (*Kompetanse Norge*, former VOX) supplies the national authorities with feedback regarding lifelong learning, through statistics and publications. In February 2017, it published the *Kompass* report on how to ensure competences in times of rapid changes, focusing on non-formal learning, skills for immigrants and future labour market needs.

## CHAPTER 3.

# MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

### 3.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The country's priorities in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are two-fold:

- (a) for young people: introducing the certificate of practice scheme (CPS) – a two-year practical education – as a permanent alternative to ordinary vocational training. CPS may be a goal in itself, or used as a building block towards a full craft and journeyman's certificate. After obtaining a certificate of practice, the candidates may apply for an ordinary apprenticeship;
- (b) for adults:
  - (i) strengthen the opportunities for young adults to complete upper secondary education and training;
  - (ii) make it easier for adults to combine education with work and other activities.

### 3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

#### 3.2.1. Guidance

In April 2016, a national committee for lifelong guidance delivered an official Norwegian report (NoU) on increasing the quality and accessibility of career guidance in schools. The report suggests equal rights to career guidance for apprentices and pupils and setting up an online platform for guidance in lower and upper secondary education. It also suggests opening career guidance centres for adults in all counties.

### 3.2.2. Permeability and flexibility

#### 3.2.2.1. *The certificate of practice*

The certificate of practice (*Praksisbrev*) <sup>(9)</sup> is a new pathway introduced in 2016, having been piloted and evaluated since 2008. It is a two-year practical training programme carried out in a company. Subjects comprise core components (work-oriented Norwegian, maths and social science) along with local components geared towards local labour demand. Certificate of practice programmes are offered by counties: each county is obligated to offer at least one such programme. Certificates of practice are initially targeted at upper secondary school pupils who have low motivation for ordinary school and greater interest in practical work, and whose profile (weak grades and/or high absenteeism despite neither learning difficulties nor special education needs) suggests high likelihood of underperforming/failing in regular programmes. However, the Certificate of Practice can also apply to adults, for example in the case of immigrants or low-education adults who were previously unable to complete a trade or journeyman's certificate. After completing the certificate of practice, candidates can proceed towards a trade- or journeyman's certificate.

#### 3.2.2.2. *White paper on low-skilled adults*

The white paper *From exclusion to new opportunities: coordinated efforts for adult education* was approved in the Council of State in February 2016. It targets the low-skilled adults at risk of exclusion from the labour market. It aims at increasing opportunities for training and recognition of prior learning. The white paper proposes three main measures.

#### **The Trade certificate at work**

This is a new pathway towards the trade and journeyman's certificates. It is targeted at low-skilled adults in employment. The distinctive principle of the scheme is to provide workers with upper secondary education and training within the workplace. Workers receive training while on-the-job, so they can continue earning their living. They can also be exempted from some core subjects and from part of the written test when applying to the certificate. The model was successfully piloted in five counties from 2011 to 2014 and then positively evaluated. Discussion in Parliament is expected to take place by the end of 2017.

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<sup>(9)</sup> <https://www.udir.no/regelverk-og-tilsyn/finn-regelverk/etter-tema/Fag--og-yrkesopplaring/praksisbrev-udir-2-2017/innledning/>

### **Modularising adult training**

Modules and options will be set up to increase adult training flexibility and tailor it to the needs of learners. This is expected to allow adult learners to combine training with work and caring responsibilities. From 2017 to 2020, the Directorate for Education and Training is piloting modularised VET curricula for adults in a limited number of subjects. Each subject is organised into five to seven modules. Completing all modules is a condition for qualifying for taking the Craft or Journeyman's exam.

### **European Economic Area recognition of foreign trade and journeyman's certificates**

As one of the adaptations to the internal labour market (through the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement), Norway and NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) have established a formal system for recognition of foreign trade and journeyman's certificates aimed to address the problems of migrant workers from the European Economic Area.

#### *3.2.2.3. Opening up VET to general education students*

In 2013, the white paper *On the right track: facilitating enrolment in VET* had pointed out that, while upper secondary VET students may change their pathway after the second year and continue with general education, there is no rule allowing for general education students to move towards VET without having to apply to start VET studies from the beginning. Based on the conclusions of the white paper, UDIR has piloted a model enabling learners to move to VET after completing a year at upper secondary general education. Experiments were carried out in building and construction, and climate, energy and environment work. During the reporting period, a reform proposal was set up and submitted to public consultation. The consultation process was completed in May 2017 and a possible regulation is expected. If the regulation is adopted, it will be implemented at the earliest in 2018.

### **3.2.3. Transparency, recognition, validation**

#### *3.2.3.1. National qualifications framework <sup>(10)</sup>*

A seven-level learning-outcomes-based Norwegian qualifications framework (NQF) <sup>(11)</sup> was adopted in December 2011. It was referenced to the European

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<sup>(10)</sup> Cedefop, 2017b.

<sup>(11)</sup> *Nasjonalt kvalifikasjonsrammeverk for livslang læring* (NKR).

qualifications framework (EQF) and self-certified against the qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in June 2014. NOKUT has been appointed as the national coordination point. The NQF presently covers only qualifications awarded by publicly recognised and accredited education and training institutions. A working group was set up in 2013 to open up the framework to private and non-formal education, and a proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Education in 2014. In the reporting period, post-secondary education and training (*fagskole*) have started to apply the learning outcomes approach in descriptions of their programmes. Opening-up the NQF to non-formal qualifications is still under consideration. The Ministry of Education is preparing a Government decree defining the overall position of the NQF in relation to different areas of education and training.

### 3.2.3.2. ECVET <sup>(12)</sup>

Cross-country VET mobility is part of a general policy of internationalisation of the whole training system. Transfer of learning outcomes acquired abroad is possible on a case-by-case basis: there is no framework that makes transfer automatic. Legislation supports transfer of learning outcomes within the same area of qualification; transfer to other areas/qualifications is possible for specific programmes, where bridges have been set up by national authorities together with social partners. VET is not modularised, but those who leave before completion can get certificates of competence. Since 2013 tertiary level VET has had a credit-point system, with possibilities for conversion to the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET). Units of learning outcomes and credits may be devised at local/provider level. In 2015, a public hearing was held to assess the possible implementation of ECVET. The results pointed to a number of possible actions, such as piloting ECVET for mobility or skills validation, and creating a forum for users to discuss and reach common understanding of it. Measures implemented are linked to three target groups that benefit from the use of ECVET principles. For young people who take part of their education abroad, ECVET tools are secured through the work of national ECVET experts coordinated by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU). A project coordinated by UDIR was initiated for adult education programmes, aiming for the modularisation of a range of curricula that can contribute to the validation of units of learning outcomes. A national body for the

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<sup>(12)</sup> Source: the ECVET users' group members.

approval of foreign vocational education was established for foreign workers. This is managed by NOKUT.

#### 3.2.3.3. *Validation* <sup>(13)</sup>

There is no single all-encompassing strategy for validation of recognition of prior learning (RPL, *realkompetansevurdering*) at national level. However, there are laws and regulations on validation of non-formal and informal learning for each level of education and training. The counties at regional level are responsible for validation of prior learning at primary and secondary level, and the Ministry of Education has developed guidelines for the validation process. There are also validation mechanisms in enterprises, such as the 2009-13 social partner agreements on documenting workers' competences.

In the reporting period, the main initiative relates to validation of skills for refugees and migrants. Measures have been taken to speed up the mapping and validation of skills and competences of refugees and other recent immigrants. The Ministry of Education and Research has allocated extra funding support from the 2016 budget. NOKUT is working on possible ways for fast track assessment of higher education qualifications and participating in a pilot project with similar methodology, the European qualifications passport for refugees. This passport provides an assessment of higher education qualifications, upper secondary VET qualifications and post-secondary vocational qualifications based on available documentation and a structured interview.

Also, a national procedure for the recognition of foreign trade and journeyman's certificates was established in 2016 <sup>(14)</sup>. Foreign certificates are assessed according to scope, level and content of comparable Norwegian certificates. The procedure is open to a selected number of German and Polish qualifications and is being developed to include more vocational qualifications and countries.

#### 3.2.4. **Promoting VET participation through increased attractiveness**

In December 2016, the Norwegian government presented the white paper *Skilled workers for the future* <sup>(15)</sup>. This has about 50 measures to make post-secondary vocational education more attractive as a fully equivalent profession-oriented alternative to university and university college education. New grant schemes are

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<sup>(13)</sup> Cedefop, 2017b; Cedefop et al., 2017.

<sup>(14)</sup> The requirements for the recognition were settled in October 2016 and the first applications were received in December 2016.

<sup>(15)</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/meld.-st.-9-20162017/id2522412/>

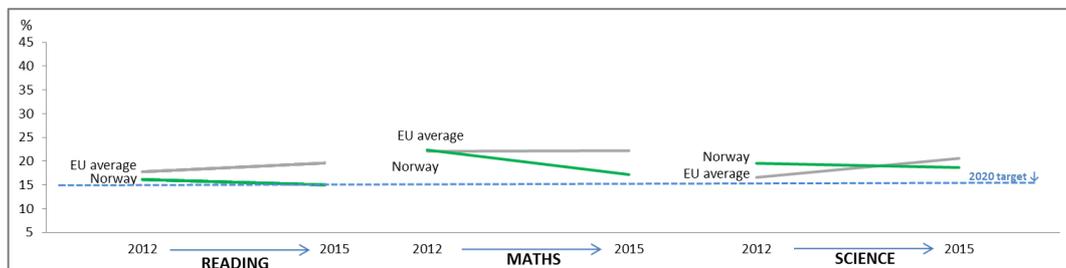
proposed. A new admission scheme will be set up, and the competences of vocational college teachers mapped and raised.

## CHAPTER 4.

# MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by a decreasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 2). The share of low achievers in Norway is also lower than in the EU on average, where the trend is reverse.

Figure 2. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (programme for international student assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolls 50% of all upper secondary learners in the country <sup>(16)</sup>, this trend is likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes. This is happening against a background where VET dropout <sup>(17)</sup> has been of great concern to the education authorities. Multiple measures have been implemented to strengthen the focus on five basic skills <sup>(18)</sup>, so that fewer pupils end up in the group at risk of dropping out <sup>(19)</sup>.

The picture might be different for adults. While general educational attainment of adults is high, there is an increased number with low key

<sup>(16)</sup> Calculated from Eurostat; data for 2015.

<sup>(17)</sup> About 60% only of VET learners complete their upper secondary training successfully within five years.

<sup>(18)</sup> The 2006 knowledge promotion reform defined five skills as basic to learning, work and social life.

<sup>(19)</sup> For more information on key competences in VET see Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016.

competences according to the PIAAC (programme for the international assessment of adult competences) 2014 survey.

#### 4.1. Key competences in initial VET

The country's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to ensure more vocational-oriented and relevant teaching in the common core subjects in VET programmes, and more focus on basic skills' training.

A national commission mandated by the government presented in 2015 an official Norwegian report on the school of the future. The report proposes a new strategy for the renewal of subjects and competences in education and training, including VET. The report underlines that education and training shall contribute to developing the learners' knowledge and competences in order to become active participants in an increasingly knowledge-intensive society. Changes are suggested: for example, subjects need to be renewed to satisfy future competence needs in society and the labour market. Digital skills should be connected more closely than today to subject-specific competence. Digital competence should be integrated with other cross-curriculum competences.

In April 2016, the government introduced a [white paper aiming at school subject renewal](#). Reading, writing, maths, communication and digital skills are suggested to remain as key competences and will be incorporated in curricula where relevant. It will be made clear which subjects are responsible for key competences, especially as regards digital skills and maths. Public consultation on the process was completed in June 2017.

In March 2017, the government presented a white paper titled [Desire to learn, early intervention and quality in schools](#) that foresees timely support for all learners (including in VET) with difficulties in reading, maths or writing.

#### 4.2. Key competences in continuing VET

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to increase the quality of provision in CVET.

The 2016 white paper [From exclusion to new opportunities – Coordinated efforts for adult education](#) (Section 3.2.2.2) supported the development of tools to map basic skills.

In March 2017, *Skills Norway* designed a tool on how to map key competences for young people not in education, employment or training

(NEETs), and for the public in general. The goal is relevant training for the target group. The development of tool questions is in progress.

In April 2017, Skills Norway completed designing an online learning platform for literacy, numeracy and digital skills and started to produce content for it. The platform is linked to the key competence module training for adults and the mapping of key competences.

## CHAPTER 5.

# MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors

The VET teacher system is facing challenges that the national authorities have been trying to address over the past few years. The teaching staff is ageing; attracting skilled workers from sectors that offer higher wages is challenging; there is a need for increasing teachers and trainers' professional and pedagogical competence; and establishing a sustainable culture of work-related focus, relevance and coherence in teaching remains an objective.

### 5.1. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Ministry of Education and Research, are:

- (a) to qualify teachers without formal teacher training;
- (b) recruit more VET teachers.

A national VET teacher promotion initiative was launched in October 2015, aiming to attracting new teachers to ensure sufficiency and quality of VET teaching staff. It builds on previous successful pilots. The programme is based on scholarships and flexible educational pathways for skilled workers. A scholarship scheme for non-qualified VET teachers who want to complete VET teacher education has been set up and is managed by the Directorate for Education and Training. A three-year decentralised vocational teacher-training programme, aiming at giving more workers the opportunity to choose a vocational teacher career, is organised by Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences. The scheme is made available as sessions-based teaching in all counties in order to reach students across Norway.

## 5.2. Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools

The country's priorities in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Ministry of Education and Research, are to:

- (a) expand opportunities for vocational teachers to improve and enhance their knowledge through developing new and more relevant courses;
- (b) provide informal training in enterprises, for example through work exchange programmes.

The 2015 VET teacher promotion initiative (Section 5.1) also provides for VET teachers' continuing professional development. Measures include:

- (a) giving vocational teachers the opportunity to develop their competences by creating new and more relevant courses;
- (b) supporting VET teachers with technological background who lack teacher training for upgrading their qualifications, through scholarships and increased supply of pedagogical training (one-year programme in educational theory and practice).

Continuing professional development (CPD) will be based on VET teachers' competence needs surveys that will inform the development of new and more relevant CPD courses. Courses will be offered in didactics, technological developments, specific subjects/disciplines, learning assessment but also in common core subjects. In 2017, school owners (public and private) were invited to apply for scholarships for staff in teaching positions who want to undertake vocational teacher training to qualify to become certified teachers.

Links with the business world will be further supported, through work exchange and work experience schemes, and schemes that allow participation in CPD courses organised by enterprises. Work exchange is a planned form of informal learning, in which teachers and trainers take part in professional work in contexts others than their own, in order to obtain experience relevant for their regular work.

A survey of vocational teachers' competence needs was carried out by the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU). The results showed that VET teachers need competence development in their discipline, didactics and new technological developments.

### 5.3. Continuing professional development for trainers and mentors in enterprises

The country's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to provide CPD opportunities for trainers.

Increased competence development for VET trainers is part of the 2015 VET teacher promotion initiative (Sections 5.1 and 5.2). Measures include increasing the access of company trainers (instructors) to visiting teacher/trainer schemes that allow better knowledge of the curricula and the school-based learning components. It supports the improvement of training quality in enterprises by providing increased expertise in the use of curriculum, instruction and adapted training. The work exchange/work experience strand of the VET teacher promotion initiative also covers trainers. County councils, who are responsible for VET trainer CPD, offer various courses.

## Conclusion

Since 2015, Norway has taken measures to increase the number of apprenticeships and practical training placements in VET, particularly through involving more training establishments. The follow-up of students' transition to the labour market has been reinforced to better inform the VET development strategy. Steps have been taken to open further the access of all to VET and qualifications, through setting up new opportunities for adults to train and obtain qualifications, improving permeability and flexibility, and actively addressing the issue of skills validation for refugees and recent immigrants. Progress is also being made towards setting up an overall approach for quality assurance in VET, and building a comprehensive national qualifications framework. Initiatives were taken to foster key competences in initial and continuing VET and a comprehensive 2015 VET promotion initiative has been taken to attract new VET teachers and improve the continuous professional development of VET teachers and trainers.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed, but information available to Cedefop at the time suggests issues that could benefit from further consideration:

- (a) initiatives supporting entrepreneurship education;
- (b) further expanding the use of EQAVET indicators in the monitoring of IVET and CVET;
- (c) initial training of in-company trainers and mentors.

## List of abbreviations

AES	adult education survey
CPD	continuing professional development
CPS	certificate of practice scheme
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for Vocational Education and Training
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
GDP	gross domestic product
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
NEET	not in education, employment or training
NIFU	Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education
NOK	Norwegian krone
NOKUT	Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
NoU	official Norwegian report
NQF	Norwegian qualifications framework
PIAAC	programme for the international assessment of adult competences
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
QF-EHEA	qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area
RPL	recognition of prior learning
SIU	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
UDIR	Directorate of Education and Training
VAT	value added tax
VET	vocational education and training

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