



Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Denmark

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Introduction

Denmark reformed its career guidance structures and services, due to its involvement in the international reviews developed by OECD (2002). Below, the current guidance system (2019) is outlined, starting with the system aspects more related to the education sector and school-aged learners or young people, followed by guidance for employed and unemployed adults of all ages. Although there is an overlap, the second is more oriented to the employment sector.

The Danish guidance system consists of different elements (Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation, 2014) and involves:

- a. municipality-based career guidance on transition from compulsory education to upper secondary education (academic or vocational);
- b. regional guidance centres: career guidance on transition to higher education;
- c. educational institutions: guidance in relation to preventing drop out;
- d. the preparatory youth effort: guidance for NEETs;
- e. eGuidance (ICT-based): career guidance for all people;
- f. many different providers (trade unions, job centres, eGuidance, prisons etc.): career guidance for adults.

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Coronavirus Update

With the reliance on digital technologies for delivery of career guidance during the pandemic, access and wider social inclusion were an underlying theme in several countries. The Danish expert drew on the ideas of Peter Plant, a professor in the guidance field in Norway, who argued that while ICT enhances the use of and the access to lifelong guidance, some groups will likely be excluded who lack resources and ICT competences. Plant had rightly foreseen in 1989 paper though his concept of kitchen-table guidance, that ICT would become “part and parcel of everyday life in all its aspects” “with great force” and “with a sudden and unexpected leap”, which also necessitates a refocusing on the quality of these guidance interventions. Many career professionals at educational institutions in Denmark experience that the most vulnerable students, with the highest need for support, are very difficult to reach and support online or on the phone. Counsellors at eGuidance notice that the type of inquiries has changed character. They receive several inquiries from guidance seekers who are either searching for new opportunities in education or in continuing education because they are newly unemployed. The companies also contact eGuidance looking for similar information. Many adults who contact eGuidance have time to reflect on their future choices of jobs and careers. Some want to continue in the same field, while others want to go in a different direction.

HK Denmark (trade union) has collected resources on necessary things that individuals should know regarding online education, available learning opportunities, as well as resources related to financial support (e.g. agreement between employee and company, terms, national support “Omstillingsfonden”). For instance, HK Denmark promotes <https://www.hk.dk/onlinekurser>, a platform that gathers online courses for developing competences in a self-regulated pace (both whenever individuals have the time, but also the desire to do so). Some indicative topics of the courses IT, language, social media usage etc. In addition, HK Denmark ensured that counsellors are aware of the <http://www.voksenuddannelse.dk> (Adult Education) and its functions (e.g. filter between levels of education). In addition, there is an internal website with links and “how to”, that focuses on the available options of the unemployed, the fired, and the employed according to new legislation. It should be noted that these rules are often changed and it is vital for the counsellors working in HK Denmark to get a quick overview and find the correct help for the union members.

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Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

In order to ensure coherent and coordinated guidance provision, the different career guidance providers are obliged to cooperate (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019f, para. 25).

The municipal youth effort (Den kommunale ungeindsats)

In 2017, an agreement on improved educational and career pathways (*Aftale om bedre veje til uddannelse*

og job) was passed, establishing the municipal youth effort (*Den kommunale ungeindsats*) (Regeringen (Venstre, Liberal Alliance og Det Konservative Folkeparti), Dansk Folkeparti, Socialdemokratiet, Socialistisk Folkeparti og Radikale, & Venstre, 2017). This agreement removed the requirement that education guidance offered by local authorities must be within the framework of youth guidance centres. It is for the local council to decide whether they wish to keep, establish or shut down a local youth guidance centre. Local authorities are, however, under obligation to maintain the functions previously offered by the youth guidance centres and support the provision of professional career guidance independent of sectoral or institutional interests.

The municipal youth effort is expected to cooperate with regional guidance centres, education institutions, job centres, trade and industry, unions and employers' organisations, schools, providers of non-formal adult education, providers of education and training for young people with special needs, local education authorities including pedagogic-psychological counselling services, social services, the national knowledge and special advisory organisation (VISO) and other youth guidance centres when relevant. The centres must also work with parents. This cooperation includes concrete guidance activities as well as the development, planning and coordination of guidance provision as a whole (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019c).

Cooperation regarding student retention

Education institutions plan activities focused on student retention in cooperation with the municipal youth effort/youth guidance centres and regional guidance centres (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2017, para. 50, 2019c, para.12).

When a student under 25 drops out of, or completes an education programme, the institution must inform the municipal youth effort/the youth guidance centre. This also applies in cases where the education institution believes that the student is at risk of dropping out (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019c, para. 12c).

Reporting on the benefits of teaching

Institutions providing upper secondary education must report to the students' former schools and to the municipal youth effort regarding students' ability to benefit from the teaching they receive. Meetings between the parties are intended to support an appraisal of whether school's efforts to prepare the former student were adequate and appropriate, both academically and in terms of guidance provision. Furthermore, these meetings are intended to help institutions providing upper secondary education adapt introductory activities to optimise the individual student's transition to upper secondary education (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019c, para. 12).

Sources

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Access to guidance

Guidance in schools

The legal framework stipulates guidelines for the organisation of guidance provision. In 2014, the law was changed, making students deemed not ready for upper secondary education eligible for either group-based or individual guidance. All others receive collective guidance (years 7 to 10) in the form of class-based guidance activities (Undervisningsministeriet, 2019f, paras. 3 and 5). To the degree that they are relevant, career counsellors should refer young people to the national guidance portal and eGuidance.

The municipal youth effort (Den kommunale ungeindsats)

All students in municipal lower secondary education must be offered career guidance by the municipal youth effort. Furthermore, parents must be informed of the educational and career guidance available to young people within the municipality and the options for education and training after completing lower secondary education (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019c, para. 3).

Guidance from the municipal youth effort must include the following activities, as a minimum:

- a. introduction to the process of application to an upper secondary education program (vocational or general/academic);
- b. introduction to upper secondary education programs (vocational and general/academic);
- c. the municipal youth effort must ensure that digital tools are an integral part of guidance provision. In this respect, there should be an introduction to the national guidance portal (ug.dk) and to eGuidance;
- d. information meetings for students and their parents;
- e. taster courses to upper secondary education programmes (in form 8 and 10) (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019f, para. 4).

Regional guidance centres (Studievalg Danmark)

Regional guidance centres were established following comprehensive reform adopted by the Danish Parliament in 2003 (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2003, para. 11). The centres provide guidance for students in upper secondary education programmes in relation to transition to higher education. They also provide guidance in vocational education and training programmes regarding the option to continue to higher education. Other target groups are young people and adults outside the education system who wish to enter a higher education programme (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet, 2018).

Prior to 2018, the regional guidance centres were run by consortia following a public tender process. These consortia typically comprised educational institutions. As of 2018, the regional guidance centres are part of

the national budget and a managing director, tasked with running the seven centres, is employed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

eGuidance

eGuidance is an ICT-based career guidance service launched in January 2011 (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)). The service is integrated within the national guidance web portal Education guide and operated by the National Agency for IT and Learning. A team of career guidance professionals deliver personalised career guidance to all individuals who seek guidance on education and employment, supporting their choice of secondary education, higher education and continuing training.

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Quality assurance

Principles for ethics in educational and vocational guidance

Denmark has principles for ethics in educational and vocational guidance (*Principper for etik i vejledningen*). The principles were issued by The Joint Council for Associations for Educational and Vocational Guidance (FUE) (Fællesrådet for foreninger for Uddannelses- og & erhvervsvejledere, 2006). FUE was a Danish umbrella organisation for guidance associations, disbanded in 2012.

The municipal youth effort

The municipal youth effort must have a system in place for assuring and enhancing the quality of guidance provision. This system must, as a minimum requirement, document the scale, results and effects of guidance activities, as well as cooperation between the youth guidance centre and other stakeholders. Youth guidance centres compile annual follow-up plans aimed at improving guidance provision. At a minimum, the following elements must form part of the system for assuring and enhancing the quality of guidance provision:

- a. transition frequencies for transitions from lower secondary education to upper secondary education or other activities. Based on the transition frequencies, the municipal youth effort must set target for the following year in relation to which transition frequencies to be reached. The transition frequencies

compared with the target must be published at the municipality's website;

- b. the number of 15 to 17-year olds deemed not ready for upper secondary education (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019f, paras. 27 to 32).

The most recent user survey of youth guidance in schools is from 2016. This survey included all students in years 9 and 10 (students with special needs and disabilities were included) at every municipal and private lower secondary school (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut [Danish Evaluation Institute], 2016).

A public organisation, known as *UU DANMARK*, is the national organising body of youth guidance centres. One of the purposes of *UU DANMARK* is to develop guidance methods and practices. *UU DANMARK* will become a part of *Kommunernes Landsforening* – the National Association of Municipalities.

Regional guidance centres

Regional guidance centres must have a system in place for assuring and enhancing the quality of guidance provision. At a minimum, the quality assurance system must include:

- a. summaries of the scale, results and effects of guidance activities;
- b. developing the quality of guidance provision;
- c. user involvement creating a foundation for user-oriented development (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet, 2018, para. 12).

User surveys include students in upper secondary education programmes, students in vocational education and training programmes, and young people and adults not in formal education and training who have either contacted the regional guidance centres seeking information about higher and further education or want to change/drop out of a higher education programme. The latest user survey is from 2013 (Ministeriet for Forskning, Innovation og Videregående Uddannelser, 2013).

Practitioners employed at the Regional Guidance Centres are required to have significant competences in guidance.

eGuidance

Practitioners employed at the eGuidance centre are required to have significant competences in guidance, as well as in digital literacy and skills, including proficiency in handling and delivering information through various digital means along with a good overall knowledge of the education and guidance system in Denmark. An internal intensive three-month training programme is provided to all new eGuidance counsellors to drive the development of the competences required to provide quality guidance through virtual communication media.

User surveys of eGuidance are conducted regularly, most recently in 2016 (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut [Danish Evaluation Institute], 2016). Additionally, there are network partnerships with relevant stakeholders. Regular internal user surveys of eGuidance and the national guidance portal (ug.dk) are conducted by the National Agency for IT and Learning. Other quality assurance measures include biannual seminars and monthly supervision of eGuidance professionals within established teams, as well as biannual meetings with ambassadors for the national guidance portal (*UGambassadører*), who are career guidance professionals employed at the youth guidance centres, offering feedback regarding the content and functions of the portal ug.dk. eGuidance also plans and holds an annual conference focused on digital guidance.

(See also section [Evidence, monitoring and assessment](#))

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Career management skills

The concept of career management skills is used in the same context as career learning and career competences.

Education and Work (see section [Evidence, monitoring and assessment](#))

Education and work is a mandatory integrated topic in Danish schools from grade 0 to grade 9 (compulsory education) (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019a, para. 7), whereby career-related themes are intended for inclusion in all subjects. Teachers have the autonomy to decide how they integrate these themes. The objectives for students are stated as 'gaining the necessary competences to make career choices based on their own preferences and abilities, understanding the importance of lifelong learning and comprehensive knowledge regarding educational and vocational options'. Students should 'gain knowledge and skills preparing them to make educational and vocational choices and to understand these choices as a process involving both the individual's preferences and abilities and the educational and vocational options. By incorporating the societal context, students should become acquainted with different conditions and forms of life and learn about circumstances and conditions tied to education, career and the labour market in a global world [...] The topic of education and work should challenge students' own educational choices and enhance their readiness for upper secondary education. Students should gain a broad knowledge of society and an understanding of the labour market. Furthermore, students should gain knowledge about the different upper secondary programmes and which jobs and career opportunities they can lead to' (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], n.d.-a).

Schools are responsible for the topic of education and work, with lessons planned in cooperation with the municipal youth effort (den kommunale ungeindsats) (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019a, para. 7). Teaching should be integrated within the school and its subjects. There are no stipulations regarding the amount of teaching. In addition, the guidance provided by the municipal youth effort is supposed to build on the knowledge and skills students have acquired within the topic (Undervisningsministeriet, 2019f, para. 6). Last but not least, experience-based guidance activities called taster programmes are mandatory in schools. Here students in the eighth and 10th grade visit upper secondary education (academic or vocational route) to give the students a ‘taste’ of conditions, levels and requirements of different education programmes before choosing (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019e, para. 1).

Career learning in upper secondary education programmes

In 2016, career competence was included as one of the four competences which upper secondary education programmes should focus on. It is highlighted that career learning should be embedded in everyday teaching, when relevant, in relation to the aims of the subject in question and that students should gain insight into the real-world applications of the subjects they encounter at school. Career learning can also occur through internships and partnerships with institutions and enterprises. It should be complemented by improved opportunities for individual guidance with the aim of strengthening students’ understanding of the various educational options and possible career paths open to them (Regeringen et al., 2016, p. 22).

Insights and outlooks: career learning in the final years of compulsory education (Udsyn i udskolingen)

In 2014 Denmark implemented a reform of primary and lower secondary schooling. This reform placed renewed focus on career education and stresses that career education shall be included in the school and in teaching subjects. Teaching subjects shall provide students with the opportunity of difference forms of education and jobs, facilitate experience-based learning, open the school to society and support reflection in relation to career development (see the description of education and work above) (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2014). With the reform, teachers were given a new task, which many – generally speaking – did not have the educational or practical background to implement.

In consequence, a research and development project ‘Insights and outlooks: career learning in the final years of compulsory education’, was established. The aim of the project was to contribute to the development of methods and frameworks that allow all pupils in the final years of compulsory education (from 7 to 9) to encounter and experience upper secondary education and the world of work, understand and sort through these experiences (Poulsen, Thomsen, Buhl, & Hagmayer, 2016).

There are several ongoing local projects to enhance teachers’ competences to teach the topic of education and work; an example is in the Silkeborg municipality, where teachers are introduced to career learning, develop training sessions for students, and share their experiences with colleagues and others.

Career competences and career learning in upper secondary education programmes

The Act on improved upper secondary education programmes, where the focus on career competences and career learning in upper secondary education programmes is introduced (Regeringen et al., 2016, p. 22), is relatively new and schools are in the initial phase of finding out how to include these perspectives in schools and subjects. However, it must be noted that several institutions have trialled approaches integrating career learning in upper secondary education programmes (Katznelson, Lundby, & Møller Hansen, 2016).

The project 'Career focus in and after upper secondary education programmes' ([Karrierefokus i og efter gymnasiet](#)) is a collaboration between the Regional Guidance Centre Copenhagen (*Studievalg København*), 17 upper secondary education programmes and three higher education programmes. The objective is to prevent young people becoming 'unskilled students' who do not complete an education or training programme after obtaining their general upper secondary diploma. It is suggested that there is a need to begin working purposefully with young people's career competences at the upper secondary level, both through guidance provision and as part of the teaching (Karrierefokus i og efter gymnasiet, 2016).

Among other current projects, there are two development projects exploring how career learning can be incorporated within higher preparatory examination programmes (HF) and within higher general examination programmes (STX), higher commercial examination programmes (HHX), and higher technical examination programmes (HTX).

Implementing a student-centred learning (SCL) approach to career management competence (CMC)

Though the past 10 years Danish policies have recognised the urgent need to support graduate transition into work, there is very little knowledge about how to achieve this aim effectively. The University of Southern Denmark's (SDU) careers service development project 'Job creation and entrepreneurship' intends to overcome this deficiency (SDU RIO, n.d.). With a focus on students as future job-holders and job creators, the project has three components (Rott, 2015, p.76):

- a. a credit point (ECTS) carrying CMC course for all disciplines;
- b. an elective study module focusing on competence awareness, job seeking, job creation;
- c. measures supporting a change of attitude towards CMC among the academic staff.

The project relates to the overall SDU programme design which focuses on engaging students actively in their learning processes. Discarding the initial idea of a CMC course for all faculties, CMC courses (component 1) are now embedded in the content and adopt an interactive teaching/learning methodology of the disciplines. Content, teaching methods and assessment are tailored to each module. Experience has shown that the focus on student-centred learning goes well with the CMC focus, and that the structural reforms and political focus create a momentum for the career services to develop CMC activities. Simultaneously this approach has contributed to a change in attitudes among teaching staff (component 3).

The courses begin with student expectations, inputs from research on graduate labour market transition, career development theory, networking theories, and exercises. A range of learning activities are applied, with exercises varying from reflective writing in class, mapping of personal learning goals in relation to CMC, interviews with managers, CVs, job search and structured group discussions, feedback and further activities such as in-company training, product development and innovation. Assessment (written report and oral examination) is aligned to the content and methods applied, using, for example, reflexive questions on the learning process during the course. This makes the procedure meaningful from a student perspective. Evaluations have shown positive results and interesting aspects, like the relevance of peer group work. Students have made informative qualitative statements: 'The course pushed me to think about what I want to do with this education [...] because we had to think about who we are, what we can do and how we present ourselves'; '(The course) made me conscious of how I co-create my own future'; 'It was nice to work on concrete and tangible themes in which you see potential and which you can use immediately compared to more abstract teaching'; 'I have more courage to network in and outside the company. I have learned to initiate things' (Rott, 2015, p.76).

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Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Youth guidance

The past decade (2004-14) included several evaluations, surveys and research reports on the youth career guidance system in Denmark. Some were commissioned, and others were blue-sky research projects. 49 studies were identified. The issues in focus in the evaluations, surveys and research reports were analysed and categorised. This resulted in nine categories: organisation and collaboration between systems; the targeting of the guidance provided; career professional's qualifications; use of financial resources; implementation of legislation; choices; methods of guidance; concepts; user satisfaction (Skovhus & Thomsen, 2017, p. 117). None of the evaluations, surveys and research on youth career guidance in the period 2004-14 focused on evidence and monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of career guidance.

Education and work

In 2012, the teaching of 'Education and Work' in primary and lower secondary education was evaluated. This evaluation showed major differences in how the topic is prioritised and organised, both at the municipal level and between individual schools. Priorities at school level are highly dependent on individuals. If the school's management team does not prioritise the topic, the degree and quality of its integration in existing subjects is dependent on the individual teacher's assessment of its importance. There was a significant variation in the amount of time spent on the topic of education and work between schools. Approximately one in five head teachers had only limited knowledge of legislation, scale and practice in relation to education and work, and both teachers and head teachers expressed a degree of uncertainty regarding the content of the topic. Three quarters of the surveyed head teachers deemed the cooperation with youth guidance centres as well-functioning, while only one in five managers of youth guidance centres were of the same opinion. Uncertainty surrounding the division of work between schools and youth guidance centres concerning the topic of education and work was also apparent (Center for Ungdomsforskning, Pluss Leadership, & Epinion, 2012, pp. 4-6). 80% of the surveyed centre managers stated that teachers generally did not consider education and work a priority and suggested that schools often regard the topic as a distraction from the school's core tasks (Balslev Jensen, 2012, p. 13).

Career guidance: choices and learning (Vejledning: valg og læring)

Since the 2003 reform of the guidance sector (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2003), there have been several evaluations, surveys and research reports on the youth career guidance system in Denmark (Skovhus & Thomsen, 2017). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding how career guidance and teaching on the topic of education and work are practised and the interplay between the two, as well as how teachers and guidance counsellors work together.

In this respect, a PhD research project explores how career guidance and career education provided by youth guidance services are practiced in lower secondary education (grades 8-9/10, ages 14-16/17) in interaction with the school and structural conditions. Additionally, the research explores the meaningfulness of career guidance activities experienced by the students. The fieldwork was carried out between June 2013.

(See also section [Quality assurance](#))

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ICT in lifelong guidance

eGuidance

eGuidance is an ICT-based career guidance service launched in January 2011. The services can be reached by e-mail, chat or phone seven days a week with extended opening hours. eGuidance is for all individuals (young persons and adults) and offers a unified gateway to adult career guidance from 1 July 2018, according to an official decision (*Regeringen, fagbevægelsen og arbejdsgiverne* (The government, the trade unions and the employers), 2017, p. 17). This applies to anyone in search of guidance on education and employment or in need of help in making education choices.

The Education guide Ug.dk

The national guidance portal www.ug.dk was launched in 2004 and is an ICT-based careers information and guidance portal. It provides information on all education and training programmes in Denmark as well as insights into its labour market, along with a series of guidance and inspiration tools to support individuals in choosing their education and career paths.

The guide serves as a national knowledge resource for professionals in the educational and guidance sector of Denmark as well as an online gateway for the eGuidance service. The Education guide is funded by the Ministry of Education and operated and maintained by the National Agency for IT and Learning. The Education Guide addresses all individuals, ranging from young pupils and their parents to adults of all ages as well as teachers and practitioners of guidance.

Zooming in on Education

The tool ‘zooming in on education’ (*Uddannelseszoom*) allows comparison of information about different programmes according to various parameters. It targets students in the final years of lower secondary education, students in upper secondary education, young people and adults outside formal education, students in higher education and vocational education and training, parents and guidance counsellors. ‘Zooming in on education’ is based on register data from Statistics Denmark and data compiled by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

Youth database (Ungedatabasen)

The Ministry of education has developed Ungedatabasen (the Youth Database), that gathers data about all 15 to 29 year olds in relation to education and employment status. These data are made available to the youth guidance centres/the municipal youth effort and job centres to support their efforts in optimising their work with young people and young adults (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], n.d.-b).

Education and training providers are obliged to report to the youth database when admitting young people to courses or programmes expected to last for more than three months, as well as in cases where there is a high risk of dropout, and when young people either complete or drop out of a course or programme (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019f, paras.15 to 20).

The youth database discloses information regarding young person's current status to the youth guidance centres and job centres. Data are also submitted to the Ministry of Education's department of statistics.

Sources

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Training and qualifications

Career guidance practitioners employed at the municipal youth effort, are required to complete the diploma or master degree programme in educational and vocational guidance or the bachelor degree programme in public administration. Alternatively, guidance practitioners with extensive experience in the field can apply for assessment and recognition of their competences and prior learning (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019f, para. 33). The same is the case for career guidance practitioners employed at the Regional Guidance Centres (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet, 2018, para. 11).

Education and training providers of guidance qualifications

Six university colleges across Denmark offer the diploma programme on career guidance (*Diplomuddannelse i uddannelses-, erhvervs- og karrierevejledning*, DUEK) on a part-time basis. It is equivalent to 12 months of full-time studies and consists of three basic modules, two optional modules and a diploma project. It has a value of 60 ECTS points. The training programme is offered as an adult learning programme and corresponds to a diploma degree. Entry requirements are, as a minimum, a completed short-cycle (two-year) higher education programme and two years of relevant working experience (Studieordning Diplomuddannelse i uddannelses-, erhvervs- og karrierevejledning, 2017).

It is possible to follow a master programme in guidance at Aarhus University (*Master i vejledning*). This is equivalent to 12 months of full-time studies and has a value of 60 ECTS points. Entry requirements are, as a minimum, a completed medium-cycle (three-year) higher education programme and two years of relevant working experience (Studieordning for masteruddannelsen i vejledning, 2010).

Both training programmes are offered within the framework of the Danish adult education and training

system. They are aimed at and adapted to adults who already have another higher education degree and two years of relevant work experience.

The university colleges also offer a 3.5-year full-time bachelor degree programme in public administration, corresponding to 210 ECTS. The degree makes it possible to specialise within several areas of the public administration field, including educational and vocational guidance. The degree has compulsory and elective subjects, a six-month internship period and a bachelor project. Admission requirements are an upper secondary education or relevant vocational education (Professionsbachelor i offentlig administration - Studieordning, 2013).

Knowledge Centre for Career Guidance

The knowledge centre for career guidance provides a reading list, articles offering inspiration, and tools for career guidance professionals. The centre sends out weekly newsletters with information about relevant studies, policy measures, articles, tools, courses and conferences (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], n.d.-c).

eGuidance

eGuidance organises webinars on topics such as the national guidance portal (ug.dk) for other professionals: employees at job centres, trade unions and youth guidance centres. As such, eGuidance functions as a resource centre for practitioners. Other webinars and group chat sessions target parents of the young people in the transition to upper secondary education or vocational education and training and young adults in the transition to higher education.

Associations for career guidance professionals

In Denmark, there are two associations for career guidance professionals: The Danish Association for Career Guidance and the association for guidance counsellors within upper secondary education (*Ungdomsuddannelsernes Vejlederforening*). The two associations are in the process of merging.

The Danish Association for Career Guidance

The Danish Association for Career Guidance is an association for career guidance practitioners within the broad field of career guidance; namely practitioners from youth guidance centres, regional guidance centres, eGuidance, job centres, higher education institutions and universities, adult training centres, youth education institutions such as private boarding schools, productions schools, and continuation schools. The association is working towards eight objectives:

- a. to place career guidance on the political agenda;
- b. to give all people access to lifelong professional career guidance;
- c. to give all career guidance practitioners access to education, training and qualification;
- d. to cooperate with organisations, trade unions, decision makers and stakeholders;
- e. to influence legislation concerning career guidance;
- f. to be a lively forum for debate and knowledge sharing across career sectors;
- g. to support and publish research, evaluation and practice development in the field of career guidance;
- h. that career guidance builds on principles of ethics in guidance ('Danmarks Vejlederforening').

Danish Association of Counsellors in Youth Education (UUVF)

Danish Association of Counsellors in Youth Education (UUVF) is a guidance association working closely with the teacher organisations associated with upper secondary and vocational education and training programmes. UUVF members are from all areas of upper secondary education, covering upper secondary academic education programmes and vocational training institutions and adult education institutions. UUVF also have members working with career counselling in prison services and in army barracks.

The purpose of the association is to attend to members' professional interests. This purpose is promoted and pursued by the following actions:

- a. to cooperate with providers of diploma and further education for counsellors;
- b. to attend and participate in further training courses and conferences for counsellors;
- c. to convey relevant material and news to members;
- d. to set up work committees and support regional member initiatives;
- e. to seek representation and influence in relevant ministries, boards, councils, committees, organisations and other forums;
- f. to cooperate with guidance associations and guidance forums internationally, nationally, and regionally;
- g. to be a framework and platform for debate and sharing of knowledge between members in and across sections;
- h. to work for provision of guidance and other support for all individuals, based on the EU Declaration of lifelong guidance, FUE's ethical principles for guidance and the FUE guidance declaration guide for all (FUE was a Danish umbrella organisation for guidance associations, disbanded in 2012);
- i. to contribute to quality assurance and timeliness of the guidance offered;
- j. to contribute to and participate in political processes relating to national legislation and departmental orders related to counselling and career learning;
- k. to ensure reasonable working conditions for guidance practitioners ('UUVF- Ungdomsuddannelsernes Vejlederforening').

Sources

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Funding career guidance

In Denmark, career guidance is free for all citizens, apart from the guidance offered by unemployment insurance funds, trade unions and liberal adult education, all of which require paid membership.

The guidance provided by the municipal youth effort (see section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#) for a definition) are funded by the municipalities. The regional guidance centres are funded by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, while the national guidance portal www.ug.dk is funded by the Ministry of Education.

Career guidance for school pupils

The municipal youth effort (Den kommunale ungeindsats)

Career guidance in grades 8 to 10 (lower secondary school) must contain the following activities, as a minimum:

- a. introduction to optagelse.dk (a website where you apply for educational programmes) and the process of application for educational programmes;
- b. introduction to the Danish education system including career opportunities;
- c. introduction to how to work with the Education guide (ug.dk) and to eVejledning;
- d. information meetings for students and parents;
- e. 'taster programmer' for upper secondary education (academic or vocational route) in the eighth, ninth and 10th grade to give students a 'taste' of conditions, levels and requirements at different education institutions (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019f, para. 4).

Before completing lower secondary education (from nine or 10), students should have a plan for their further education and training, called the Personal education plan (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019c, para. 2c). This plan should include: student's goals for post-compulsory education; student's preferences in terms of upper secondary education; the optional Year 10; employment or other activities preparing student for upper secondary education; assessment of the youth guidance centre or school, of student's readiness for upper secondary education and any response from parents. For students choosing the optional Year 10, the education plan must outline student's goals for the year. Moreover, the education plan functions as an application for admission to vocational training, general upper secondary education or Year 10.

The municipal youth effort is responsible for compiling an education plan in cases where the student is assessed as not ready for upper secondary education. In all other cases, this responsibility belongs to student's parents or guardians (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019c, para. 2), although

the details are not defined in the relevant legislation.

Study choice portfolio

As of the 2017/18 school year, during Year 8 and Year 9 students must compile a personal study choice portfolio describing how they have benefitted from the guidance activities in which they have participated. The portfolio should reflect student's considerations regarding his or her study preferences based on self-insight, knowledge about and experience with the preferred education programmes. The study choice portfolio is to be included as an appendix to the personal education plan (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet, 2019, para. 12).

The municipal council are responsible for ensuring a coordinated youth effort across education, employment and the social sector for young people under the age of 25. The aim is to support all young people under the age of 25 to complete an upper secondary education programme, a vocational education and training programme, or to secure employment (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019c).

Sources

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Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education] (2019f). *Bekendtgørelse om vejledning om valg af ungdomsuddannelse og erhverv (Vejledningsbekendtgørelsen) [Consolidation Act on guidance in relation to choice of upper secondary (general or vocational) and vocation]*. BEK nr 1017 of 04/10/2019.

Guidance for VET participants

Guidance in education institutions in relation to completion of education

'The upper secondary schools (Gymnasium and VET colleges) are obliged to support students in a way that enables them to complete their education. Students enrolled in an upper secondary school will therefore have support from the school staff such as teachers, guidance counsellors or other professional staff members supporting students in various ways. The institutions are free to choose their methods and choose the appropriate staff to support students in completing their education. The work being done at institutions by guidance counsellors, teachers or other professional staff members is an important part of the national effort to reduce dropout from education and to support students in their effort to complete their education. Educational institutions cooperate with the youth guidance centres and the regional guidance centres to have coherence in guidance' (Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation, 2014, p.17).

Vocational College

The vocational college must provide students in need of support and guidance, in order to complete the

programme, they are enrolled in, with liaison teachers and mentors. The college determines the framework for the activities of liaison teachers and mentors. Additionally, the college must ensure that social, personal and psychological counselling is provided to students when necessary. If career guidance is part of the college's retention activities, it is to be provided by trained guidance counsellors (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019d, para. 63).

The vocational college compiles a personal education plan for each student in collaboration with the student and, if applicable, the company providing practical training. The parties have a responsibility to follow up on the education plan, revising it when deemed necessary, based, among other things, on regular appraisals of student's attainment. The vocational college is obliged to take overall responsibility for such revisions (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019d, para. 61).

Regional guidance centres (see section [Access to guidance](#))

All students of vocational education and training programmes and upper secondary education programmes must be offered guidance on higher education.

Please see the description of VET system in Denmark [here](#).

Sources

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Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education] (2019d). *Bekendtgørelse om erhvervsuddannelser [Consolidation Act on vocational education]*. BEK nr 570 of 07/05/2019.

Guidance for higher education students

Many education institutions offer career guidance to potential applicants and during the transition to the labour market, as with Aarhus University ('Vejledning på AU').

Guidance during academic profession programmes and professional bachelor programmes

'The academies of professional higher education and university colleges are obliged to support students in a way that enables them to complete their education. Students enrolled in an academic profession programme or professional bachelor programmes will therefore need support from the school staff such as teachers, guidance counsellors or other professional staff supporting students in various ways. The institutions are free to choose their methods and choose the appropriate staff to support students in completing their education' (Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation, 2014, p. 18).

Guidance at the Danish Universities: completion and career guidance

'The universities offer students at bachelor and master level guidance about their current programme, about access requirements for master and PhD programmes and about subsequent employment opportunities. Each university is free to decide how and by whom this guidance is offered. In general, completion guidance and career guidance are divided between different bodies. The universities publish and maintain instructions about bachelor and master programmes with examples of professions and jobs that these programmes may lead to. They also provide information about options and recommended configurations of the programme of interest to the student, including choice of master programme after completion of a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, universities have an obligation to give students who have been delayed in their studies special guidance in order for them to continue their education' (Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation, 2014, p. 18).

Regional guidance centres (Studievalg)

These centres can be utilised by anyone in search of guidance regarding higher education programmes and the related or associated occupations or professions.

Sources

Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation (2014). *Guidance in Education - the educational guidance system in Denmark*. <https://www.uvm.dk/-/media/filer/uvm/publikationer/engelsksprogede/2014-guidance-in-education.pdf>

Vejledning på AU [Guidance at Aarhus University]. <https://bachelor.au.dk/vejledning/>

Guidance for adult learners

In the following, an overview of the system of education, vocation and career guidance for adults is presented, including indications of target groups. In Denmark the system of career guidance for adults, unlike guidance for younger individuals, might be described as patchy, since guidance services and provisions for adults are scattered across different policy areas and consequently across different institutions (not under one umbrella). As a result, career guidance for adults for several years has been split between a range of different bodies.

Following the adoption of the tripartite agreement on enhanced and more flexible adult, continuing and further education and training (2018-21) (*Regeringen, fagbevægelsen og arbejdsgiverne* (The government, the trade unions and the employers), 2017) it was decided that eGuidance will offer a unified gateway to adult career guidance from 1 July 2018 (*Regeringen, fagbevægelsen og arbejdsgiverne* (The government, the trade unions and the employers), 2017, p. 17).

Institutions offering educational programmes for adults also provide career guidance. These institutions are presented here.

Centres for adult education and continuing training (VEU centre)

The centres were established in 2010. They offered guidance related to a wide range of education

programmes to adults, either employed or unemployed. The target groups for the centres were small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), skilled and unskilled workers, and unemployed young people with an education plan.

The VEU centres were shut down by the end of 2018, after an official decision to abolish them. Adults and enterprises in need of guidance or information concerning adult, continuing and further education and training are referred to eGuidance (*Regeringen, fagbevægelsen og arbejdsgiverne* (The government, the trade unions and the employers), 2017, p. 17).

Adult education centre (VUC'er)

The adult education centres (VUC) offer a range of educational opportunities for adults:

- a. Preparatory education for adults (FVU) is for adults over age 18 who would like to improve their reading, writing and calculating skills. Participants include adults who wish to improve their options in getting an education or who wish to improve the skills they need at work or in the wider society;
- b. General adult education (*almen voksenuddannelse*, AVU) is for adults over the age of 18 who would like to improve in one or more subjects at lower secondary level;
- c. VUC also offer the higher preparatory examination programme (HF Programme) or supplementary examination courses at general upper secondary level (GSK).

Vocational education and training programmes (Erhvervsskoler)

VET programs are intended for those interested in vocational training or further training in the form of an adult vocational training programme (AMU), as well as supplementary general upper secondary examination courses (GSK) (only offered at selected business colleges).

Institutions providing higher education

Higher Education institutions offer guidance to applicants/students during their studies in order to prevent dropout, and to students during their transition to the labour market.

Sources

Regeringen, fagbevægelsen og arbejdsgiverne (The government, the trade unions and the employers) (2017). *Trepartsaftale om styrket og mere fleksibel voksen-, efter- og videreuddannelse (2018-2021)* [Tripartite agreement on enhanced and more flexible adult, continuing and further education and training (2018-21)]. <https://www.uvm.dk/publikationer/uddannelser-for-voksne/2017-trepartsaftale-om-styrket-og-mere-fleksibel-voksen---efter--og-videreuddannelse--2018-2021->

Guidance for the employed

Unemployment insurance funds (A-kasser)

The unemployment insurance fund regularly conducts follow-up interviews with unemployed (insured) members to ensure that they are seeking jobs, but also offers career guidance for employed members. The unemployment insurance fund also provides the opportunity to send unemployed members on courses in order to improve their chances of returning to the labour market. Furthermore, the fund provides

information on the unemployed to the job centres.

Trade unions (Fagforeninger)

In some unemployment insurance funds and trade unions it is possible for unemployed and employed members to have a career guidance interview.

Guidance for unemployed adults

Apart from the Unemployment insurance funds (*A-kasser*) and Trade unions (*Fagforeninger*) (see section [Guidance for the employed](#)), the additional bodies providing career guidance for the unemployed are:

Municipal job centres

Municipal centres service the unemployed, as well as those receiving sickness benefits.

Liberal adult education (Folkeoplysning)

These institutions support adults and young adults in transition, such as the unemployed, who need some time to think and some inspiration before taking their next step. Guidance is reserved for students enrolled in a course.

Guidance for early leavers

Via outreach and follow-up activities, the municipal youth effort must offer guidance to young people aged 15 to 24 who have not completed and are not enrolled in upper secondary or higher education and who are not in full-time employment.

Guidance for NEET

Municipalities organise programmes and support diverse local providers offering employment, learning and training for young people, particularly activities fostering social and labour market inclusion through workplace-based training. They are also fully responsible for supporting all young people in being ready to complete an upper secondary education programme (academic or vocational) or to go into employment.

The work of the municipal youth effort with the young person must be based on his/her current situation, education and vocation wishes and the possibilities for realisation. This is supported by an education plan and/or an 'education order' (a directive to apply to and enrol in education or training as a prerequisite to get social benefits) as a professional process tool. The young person (NEET) can be enrolled in preparatory basic training (*den forberedende grunduddannelse* - FGU) which consists of various educational tracks or workplace-based training that can be adapted to the needs and interests of the young person. The purpose is to help the young person find the most realistic way to start and complete an upper secondary education programme (academic or vocational) or achieve lasting affiliation with the labour market (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019b).

The municipal youth effort (Den kommunale ungeindsats)

The municipal youth effort (*Den kommunale ungeindsats*) provides outreach services for young people under the age of 25 who are not involved in education, training or employment. The municipal youth effort is obliged to establish contact with these young adults and help them get back into education and training

or employment, also providing career guidance for other young adults under the age of 25 who contact the centres themselves for guidance.

Grantoftegaard

The ecological farm Grantoftegaard is a socio-economic company in the Ballerup region. A shop, a café and a canteen are also located within the farm area. The farm employs young dropouts and LTU (long-term unemployed) (referred to Grantoftegaard by the municipality), as well as VET apprentices and college students. Once engaged, participants benefit from counselling, needs assessment and personal career development plans. They are integrated in the farm work and undergo a tailored development programme, which is closely monitored by group managers.

The approach emphasises developing participants' self-esteem and their active integration into society, the world of work or education and training. Participants develop basic and career management skills; guidance and counselling strategies also engage their families. The programme is sustained by strong work ethics, with the goal of finding an appropriate work or apprenticeship placement, lasting a minimum of 13 weeks. During their 13-week programme participants also learn how to perform in a job interview, job searching techniques, and creating a CV; many attend the Grantoftegaard school where some are being taught for the first time how to read, write, calculate and use ICT. Results of the final assessments are communicated to the municipality, to show participants' progress, as well as to the participants themselves (Grantoftegaard - Øko-social virksomhed).

Way2go

Way2go is a 13-week guidance programme which prepares NEETs for participating in VET programmes. Four VET schools in Copenhagen collaborate in the Way2go programme, and job centres in the area guide young people in choosing education pathways and preparing them for participation in VET. The group of participants is typically composed of young people who can attend an education programme, but appear to lack interest in doing so, and also those who are interested but cannot, usually due to low educational skills, personal and/or social challenges they are facing. In Way2go, the former group is motivated to understand the benefits offered through education and guided in their choice of education, while the latter group is offered individual training to develop their educational skills to attain a compulsory level (lower secondary) qualification and, thereafter, be able to access a VET programme.

Each participant has a mentor to work with, to develop their personal and social skills and behaviour related to work, study and daily activities such as self-confidence, integration into an educational environment, finance management, daily programme and educational obligations, application for apprenticeship, and participation in interview. The mentor assists in all the transition stages among different parts of the education pathways in a VET programme. According to the evidence, 25% of the participants start a VET programme after participation in Way2go. Even those who do not start, they are referenced to other training activities ('Way2Go').

Sources

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Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education] (2019b). *Bekendtgørelse af lov om forberedende*

grunduddannelse [Consolidation Act on preparatory basic training]. LBK nr 606 of 24/05/2019.

Way2Go. <https://www.tec.dk/samarbejder/jobcenter/way2go>

Guidance for young people at risk

The legal framework stipulates guidelines for the organisation of career guidance provision in schools. In 2014, the law was changed, making students deemed not ready for upper secondary education eligible for either group-based or individual guidance. All other students receive collective guidance in the form of class-based guidance activities (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2019f, paras.3 and 5).

This clarification that only students deemed not ready for upper secondary education are eligible for individual or group-based guidance can be perceived as part of a tendency during the entire period from the 2003 reform of guidance services and provision to the present day. This tendency is for guidance counselling increasingly to target young people deemed at risk of being unable to choose, enrol in or complete a programme of upper secondary education (Skovhus, 2018), rather than, for instance, as an understanding of guidance as a lifelong process for all as found in the European resolution on lifelong guidance (Council of the European Union, 2008).

Upper secondary education programmes

The institution must set out guidelines for activities to ensure students' wellbeing and retention. The institution must strive to reduce student dropout. The institution must provide students who cannot be prevented from dropping out with guidance about their options in terms of alternative upper secondary programmes (Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education], 2017, para. 50).

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Undervisningsministeriet [Ministry of Education] (2017). *Bekendtgørelse om de gymnasiale uddannelser [Consolidation Act on upper secondary education]*. BEK nr 497 of 18/05/2017.

Guidance for special needs and disabilities

The municipal youth effort (*Den kommunale ungeindsats*) is expected to cooperate with regional guidance centres, education institutions, job centres, trade and industry, unions and employers' organisations, schools, providers of non-formal adult education, providers of education and training for young people with special needs, local education authorities including pedagogic-psychological counselling services, social services, the national knowledge and special advisory organisation (VISO) and other youth guidance centres

when relevant. The centres must also work with parents.

Guidance for immigrants

Language centres (*Sprogcentre*) are for foreign citizens entitled to Danish language programmes. Many centres also offer a wide range of courses, e.g. on the Danish labour market.

Guidance for other groups

Prison inmates are offered educational and vocational guidance.

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