Danish University Colleges

Spotlight on VET - DENMARK

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DENMARK

Education and training in figures

Further information


Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2012

Tertiary education by type
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2013

Lifelong learning
% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2013

Early leavers from education and training
% of early leavers from education and training, 2013

This spotlight is based on input from ReferNet Denmark.
Vocational education and training (VET) plays a key role in Danish strategy for lifelong learning and meeting the challenges of globalisation and technological change. An inclusive and flexible initial VET system helps ensure that all young people have an opportunity to obtain relevant competences for smooth transition to the labour market. Adult education and continuing training respond to structural and technological changes in the labour market and provide the workforce with the tools to create new and updated skills.

The Danish education and training system comprises a mainstream system providing qualifications at all levels, from compulsory schooling to doctoral degrees, and a parallel adult education and continuing training (CVT) system. The adult education and CVT system is designed to meet needs of adult learners, for example by offering part-time courses. The two systems offer equivalent qualifications at various levels, enabling horizontal permeability. VET is under the Ministry of Education’s jurisdiction, which maintains close dialogue with the social partners to respond to labour market needs. Initial VET is organised into 12 broad entry routes and includes technical, agricultural, commercial, social and pre-professional programmes. Programmes are organised according to the dual principle, alternating between periods of college-based learning and work-based learning (apprenticeship training) in enterprises. A typical IVET programme (EUD) lasts three-and-a-half years with a 2:1 split between workplace and college-based training, although there is considerable variation between programmes.

Individual study plans are compiled for all students, with VET colleges and the social partners sharing the responsibility for designing them. At national level, stakeholders cooperate in developing local curricula to respond to local labour market needs.

Denmark has the highest participation in adult education in Europe, and Danish participation rates reflect the national strategy to focus on systems that support local governments and firms in meeting the challenge of retraining in non-traditional settings. Denmark has a long tradition of adult education and training, which has a tradition of strong ties between educational institutions and the social partners. An integrated lifelong learning strategy was introduced in 2007 and supported by implementation of a national qualifications framework. It improved horizontal and vertical permeability within the education and training system. It also improved guidance services and provided better opportunities for recognition of non-formal learning and qualifications through standardised procedures for validation of prior learning.

Public financing is central to the VET system. VET colleges receive performance-based block grants. Apprenticeships and further training of employees are subsidised according to a solidarity principle – coordinated in the AUB system (Arbejdsgiveres Uddannelses Bidrag, employers educational contribution) where all enterprises contribute a fixed amount per employee to VET. A new social assistance reform (2014) makes it mandatory for unemployed people under 30 receiving social benefits to participate in education and training. Thus, numbers of weaker learners entering VET will increase.

Public sector initiatives seek to alleviate the problem, but the current global economic crisis has further stretched the gap between supply and demand of training places. Implementation of 50 practical training centres (2013) and the planned 1000 new placements in “Vækstplan 2014” (growth plan, 2014) are expected to alleviate the problem.

Unemployment, and particularly long-term unemployment, among young people with little or no work experience to ease challenges for adult education and continuing training. Substantial upskilling and reskilling is necessary to avoid a considerable part of the workforce becoming permanently detached from the labour market. The 2014 growth plan includes funding for the unemployed to become skilled workers through targeted adult VET programmes.

**VET in Denmark**

**VET in Denmark’s education and training system**

**Distinctive features of VET**

The Danish VET system is characterised by a high degree of social ownership and structures based on the principles of consensus and shared responsibility. At national level, stakeholders play a key role in advising the Ministry of Education on overall VET policy and determining the structure and general framework for training programmes within their field, by cooperating in national trade committees. At local level, stakeholders cooperate in developing local curricula to respond to local labour market needs.

Denmark has the highest participation in adult education in Europe, and Danish participation rates reflect the national strategy to focus on systems that support local governments and firms in meeting the challenge of retraining in non-traditional settings. Denmark has a long tradition of adult education and training, which has a tradition of strong ties between educational institutions and the social partners. An integrated lifelong learning strategy was introduced in 2007 and supported by implementation of a national qualifications framework. It improved horizontal and vertical permeability within the education and training system. It also improved guidance services and provided better opportunities for recognition of non-formal learning and qualifications through standardised procedures for validation of prior learning.

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**Challenges and policy responses**

Education and training are considered a key tool to reduce the risk of labour market entry. As a result, VET is expected to accommodate an increasingly heterogeneous student population. Two reforms will have significant influence on development of VET in Denmark. The VET system reform (2014) establishes VET teachers’ minimum qualification requirements and VET students minimum entrance requirements, thus increasing quality in VET. A new social assistance reform (2014) makes it mandatory for unemployed people under 30 receiving social benefits to participate in education and training. Thus, numbers of weaker learners entering VET will increase.

It is a challenge to coordinate participation rates in IVET. The government has set a target that by 2015, 15% of each youth cohort will participate in an upper secondary education programme. It is a huge challenge to keep a focus on both weaker and stronger learners, increased quality in VET, VET teachers’ professional development and the new structure of provision resulting from the ongoing VET reform.

Lack of suitable training placements in enterprises is frequently cited as a primary reason for student dropout. Several policy initiatives seek to alleviate the problem, but the current global financial crisis has further stretched the gap between supply and demand of training places. Implementation of 50 practical training centres (2013) and the planned 1000 new placements in “Vækstplan 2014” (growth plan, 2014) are expected to alleviate the problem.

Unemployment, and particularly long-term unemployment, among young people with little or no work experience to ease challenges for adult education and continuing training. Substantial upskilling and reskilling is necessary to avoid a considerable part of the workforce becoming permanently detached from the labour market. The 2014 growth plan includes funding for the unemployed to become skilled workers through targeted adult VET programmes.
**Vocational education and training (VET) plays a key role in Danish strategy for lifelong learning and meeting the challenges of globalisation and technological change. An inclusive and flexible initial VET system helps ensure that all young people have an opportunity to obtain relevant competences for smooth transition to the labour market. Adult education and continuing training respond to structural and technological changes in the labour market and provide the workforce with life-long learning and updated skills. The Danish education and training system comprises a mainstream system providing qualifications at all levels, from compulsory schooling to doctoral degrees, and a parallel adult education and continuing training (CET) system. The adult education and CET system is designed to meet needs of adult learners, for example by offering part-time courses. The two systems offer equivalent qualifications at various levels, enabling horizontal permeability. VET is under the Ministry of Education’s jurisdiction, which maintains close dialogue with the social partners to respond to labour market needs. Initial VET is organised into 12 broad entry routes and includes technical, agricultural, commercial, social and health care programmes. Programmes are organised according to the dual principle, alternating between periods of college-based learning and work-based learning (apprenticeship training) in enterprises. A typical VET programme (EUD) lasts three- to four-year periods with a 2:1 split between workplace and college-based training, although there is considerable variation between programmes. Individual study plans are compiled for all students, with VET colleges and the social partners sharing the responsibility for developing curricula to ensure responsiveness to local labour market needs. Qualifications at each level provide equivalent qualifications to an academic foundation (KVU) programmes or professional bachelor programmes at tertiary level.**

**Alternative routes to VET qualifications include:**
- combined vocational and general upper secondary education.
- EU program, a relatively new pathway, which lasts around four years, attended by highly motivated students aiming at obtaining access to higher education along with a vocational qualification;
- new apprenticeship (My Meisterlærer) programmes, where the trainee training at a company instead of partly at a VET college.

**These programmes are attended by students with a practical approach to learning. Individual VET programmes, attended by very few students, consist of single subjects and elements from EUD programmes;
- basic vocational education and training (EUD), attended by lower secondary graduates with a practical approach to learning. The programme caters for young unemployed, and lasts for three to four years, with work-based learning (WBL) lasting at least 75%.

**Basic adult education (grunduddannelse for voksne, GVU) provides qualifications equivalent to VET. GVU is aimed at adults (minimum 25 years old) with at least two years relevant work experience, but without formal qualifications. Individual study plans, which recognise prior learning, are used. GVU study programmes can comprise elements from other adult education programmes.**

**Adult vocational training (arbejdsmarkedsgymnasium, AMU) provides skills and competences relevant to the labour market and is primarily directed towards specific sectors and jobs. Programmes may either deepen a participant’s knowledge in a particular field or extend it to related fields. AMU level 5 programmes are the highest level where trainees are supervised and trained professionals. AMU programmes take two years to complete.**

**Denmark’s VET system is characterised by a high degree of co-operation between labour market partners, vocational colleges, teachers and students.**

**Danish for foreigners (FVU) education**

**In-service education**

**Including notation for students’ career planning and degree of study:**

**Lack of suitable training placements in enterprises is a key reason for students not entering the labour market.**

**The Danish VET system is designed to offer better opportunities for recognition of adult learners’ prior learning and qualifications.**

**An integrated lifelong learning strategy was introduced in 2007 and supported by implementation of a national qualifications framework.**

**A new social assistance reform (2014) makes it mandatory for unemployed people under 30 receiving social benefits to participate in education and training.**

**The government has set a target that by 2015, 10% of each youth cohort will follow an upper secondary level education.**

**A huge challenge is to keep a focus on both weaker and stronger learners, increased quality in VET, teachers’ professional development and the new structure of provision resulting from the ongoing VET reform.**

**Lack of suitable training placements in enterprises is frequently cited as a primary reason for student dropouts. Several policy initiatives seek to alleviate the problem, but the current global financial crisis has further weakened the gap between supply and demand of training places.**

**Implementation of 50 practical training centres (2013) and the planned 1000 new enterprises in Vækstplan 2014 (growth plan, 2014) are expected to alleviate this problem.**

**Unemployment, and particularly long-term unemployment, among young people with skills or no experience to less challenges for adult education and continuing training.**

**Substantial upskilling and reskilling is necessary to avoid a permanent shadow behind the considerable part of the workforce becoming permanently marginalised from the labour market.**

**The 2014 growth plan includes funding for the unsuccessful to become skilled workers through targeted adult VET programmes.**
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Individual study plans, which recognise prior learning, but without formal qualifications. These programmes are attended by students with a practical approach to learning.

Vocational education and training (VET) is under the Ministry of Education's spotlight on VET qualifications. Discontinued in response to labour market developments.

The Danish VET system is characterised by a high degree of cooperation between labour market partners, vocational colleges, teachers and students, which is based on the principles of consensus and shared responsibility. At national level, stakeholders play a key role in advising the Ministry of Education on overall VET policy and determining the structure and general framework for training programmes within their field, by cooperating in national trade committees. At local level, stakeholders cooperate in developing local curricula to respond to local labour market needs.

Education and training are considered a key to success in a globalised labour market, which is expected to grow at an increasing rate. As a result, VET is expected to accommodate an increasing number of young student population. Two reforms will have significant influence on development of VET in Denmark. The VET system reform (2014) establishes VET teachers’ minimum qualification requirements and VET students’ minimum entrance requirements, thus increasing quality in VET. A new social assistance reform (2014) makes it mandatory for unemployed people under 30 receiving social benefits to participate in education and training. Thus, numbers of weaker learners entering VET will increase.

The dual billing reform introduced in 2007 and supported by implementation of a national qualifications framework improved horizontal and vertical integration within the education and training system. It also improved guidance services and provided better opportunities for recognition of non-formal learning and qualifications through standardised procedures for validation of prior learning.

Public financing is central to the Danish VET system. VET colleges receive performance-based block grants and VET programmes are mainly funded through the block grants.

The Danish VET system under the current financial crisis.

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<td>23.5</td>
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Tertiary education by type

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