Danish University Colleges

Spotlight on VET - DENMARK

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Further information


1. **Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes**

   - % of all students in upper secondary education, 2012

2. **Tertiary education by type**

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

3. **Lifelong learning**

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

4. **Early leavers from education and training**

   - % of early leavers from education and training, 2013

Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 30.5.2014.
Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.
Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.
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This spotlight is based on input from ReferNet Denmark.
VET in 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 for 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 portability. 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 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 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 developing curricula to ensure responsiveness to local labour market needs. Qualifications at tertiary level are designed to equivalent qualifications from the academic profession (KVU) programmes or professional bachelor programmes at tertiary level.

Alternative routes to VET qualifications include:
- combined vocational and general upper secondary education. EU programme (new academic preparation programme) - 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; followed by a practical year of work experience; or
- new apprenticeship (Ny Mesterlære) programmes, where trainees are trained at a company instead of partly at a VET college. These programmes are attended by students with a practical approach to learning; aid individual VET programmes, attended by very few students, consist of single subject courses 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 plans can comprise elements from other adult education programmes.

Adult vocational training (arbejdsmarkedstræning) AMU provides participants with 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 programmes or level can provide equivalent qualifications from an academic profession (KVU) programmes or professional bachelor programmes at tertiary level.

The Danish VET system is characterised by a high degree of labour market orientation. Both education and training programmes are developed in close collaboration with social partners, vocational colleges, teachers and students, 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 and training in Europe. Participation rates reflect the national strategy to form systems that support workers in transition of their careers in IVET. The government has set a target that by 2020, 25% of all school leavers should enter an upper secondary education programme. It is a huge challenge to keep a focus on both weaker and stronger learners, increased quality in VET, teachers’ professional development and a new dividend from pupil results from the ongoing VET reform.

Challenges and policy responses

Education and training are considered a key to improving economic development and labour market participation. Denmark has one of the highest participation rates in adult education and training. As a result, Denmark is expected to accommodate an increasing and diverse 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. This, numbers of weaker learners entering VET will increase.

It is a challenge to secure the target rate in IVET. The government has set a target that by 2020, 25% of all school leavers should enter an upper secondary education programme. It is a huge challenge to keep a focus on both weaker and stronger learners, increased quality in VET, teachers’ professional development and a new dividend from pupil results 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 weakened 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 this problem. Unemployment, and particularly long-term unemployment, among young people with little or no work experience is one challenges for adult education and continuing training. Substantial upward mobility is required in order to mobilise VET, contribute a fixed amount per employee to a central fund. Enterprises are then financially reimbursed for providing training places and for employee participation in continuing training.
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 competencies 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 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, vocational and general programmes. Programmes are organised according to the dual principle, alternating between periods of college-based learning and work-based learning. This includes programmes (KVU) 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 plans can comprise elements from other adult education programmes.

Adult vocational training (arbejdsmarkedsk- uddannelse) aims to provide 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 programmes are more flexible in terms of their length and content, and are usually designed to be completed in the space of one week and are created, adapted or discontinued in response to labour market needs. At tertiary level, the VET and adult education programmes lead to EQF level 5 qualifications.

The Danish VET system is characterised by a high degree of dual work-based learning. Close cooperation with employers, vocational colleges, teachers and students is ensured on the basis of 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 the EU. Adult education participation rates reflect the national strategy to focus VET systems (SVET and IVET) on providing a high-quality vocational education and training, the large public sector, and a tradition of strong ties between educational institutions and the social partners.

In 2014, Denmark introduced an integrated lifelong learning strategy, which was supported by the implementation of several frameworks to improve 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 (Arbejdsgivernes Uddannelsesbidrag, employers educational contribution). In the current global financial crisis, in addition to unemployment, among young people with little or no income, upskilling and reskilling is necessary to avoid a possible increase in unemployment. Denmark’s response is expected to alleviate the problem, but as the current global financial crisis has further widened 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 this problem.

Unemployment, and particularly long-term unemployment, among young people with little or no work experience to face challenges for adult education and continuing training. Substantial upskilling and reskilling is necessary to avoid a possible decrease in the number of enterprises that contribute a fixed amount per employee to a central fund. Enterprises are then partially reimbursed for providing training placements and for employee participation in continuing training.

Education and training are considered a key factor in tackling the expected labour shortage in the future. As a result, VET is expected to accommodate an immediately higher number of students. 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 programme (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 define the optimal role in IVET. The government has set a target that by 2015, an equal number of youth entering and completing an upper secondary education programme. It will be a huge challenge 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.

Denmark's education and training system is characterised by an integrated lifelong learning strategy.
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 for new and updated skills.

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Initial VET is organised into 12 broad programmes, which maintain close dialogue with 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.

VET in Denmark

The Danish VET system is characterised by a high level of prestige and public support. Both employers and the social partners, vocational colleges, teachers and students have a say in the system, 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. Participation rates reflect the national strategy to focus on systems that provide better opportunities for recognition of non-formal learning and qualifications through standardised procedures for validation of prior learning. Adult education and training plays a significant role in pre-transition and in post-transition phases, ensuring a stable labour market. Adult education and training is therefore seen both as a key issue for ensuring a stable labour market and as an important issue for providing the necessary competences for smooth transition to the labour market.

Public financing in adult education

Public funding for adult education is based on a solidarity principle as defined in the national education law. The financing is intended to cover the cost of most adult education provision. All basic education, work experience and training that is not part of normal secondary or higher education is eligible for public funding. The adult education law also requires that local governments provide funding for adult education and training at the local level. The central funding is used to support the local education and training authorities in their work. The funding is calculated based on the number of population of working age in each municipality.

Education and training are considered a key tool to reduce adult labour market segmentation and increase. 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.

A challenge to VET is how to provide education and training to be of sufficient quality and to keep pace with technological change. An inclusive and flexible 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 for new and updated skills. VET is under the Ministry of Education’s jurisdiction, which maintains close dialogue with various levels, enabling horizontal permeability. VET is under the Ministry of Education’s jurisdiction, which maintains close dialogue with various levels, enabling horizontal permeability.
DENMARK

**Further information**

- Ministry of Higher Education and Science: www.uk.bm.dk
- Danish Agency for Higher Education: organisation/danish-agency-for-higher-education
- National Statistics Office / StatBank Denmark: www.statbank.dk
- Skills and labour market analyses: www.fagligeudvalg.dk
- Lifelong learning: % of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2013
- 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

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### Education and training in figures

#### Vocational and General

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This spotlight is based on input from ReferNet Denmark.
### Further information


### Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes

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### Early leavers from education and training

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Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.