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spotlight on VET
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DENMARK

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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 globalization 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 up-to-date 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 and vertical progression. 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 programmes within their field, by cooperating in local curricula to respond to local labour market needs.

Denmark has the highest participation in adult education and training of the 28 Member States of the EU in 2014, while participation rates reflect the national strategy to focus on systems which provide further training of enterprises. Enterprises, regardless of their involvement 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 exacerbated 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.

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The Danish VET system is characterised by a high proportion of public funding of training for enterprises, vocational colleges, teachers and students. Enterprises education and training 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.

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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 meet 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. Adult education and continuing training, are used. GVU study plans can provide qualifications equivalent to basic vocational education and training (EGU), attended by very young people (16 years old) with at least two years relevant work experience. AMU programmes Academy professions (KVU) programmes or professional bachelor programmes at tertiary level can provide access to relevant fields in 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. Adult education and continuing training, are used. GVU study plans can provide qualifications equivalent to basic vocational education and training (EGU), attended by very young people (16 years old) with at least two years relevant work experience. AMU programmes Academy professions (KVU) programmes or professional bachelor programmes at tertiary level can provide access to relevant fields in various levels, enabling horizontal permeability.

The Danish VET system is characterised by a high level of employer involvement. Social partners, vocational colleges, teachers and students cooperate in developing local curricula 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 the EU 2014, with participation rates reflecting the national strategy to focus on vocational education and training systems. It is a 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. 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 2014 (growth plan, 2014) are expected to alleviate this problem.

It is a challenge to improve completion rates in VET, contribute a fixed amount per employee to a central fund. Enterprises are then exchequed subsidised for providing training placements and for employee participation in continuing training. 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 (Arbejdsmarkedsselskabet Bispebjerg, employers educational contribution) where all enterprises contribute to the cost of education and training. VET, contribute a fixed amount per employee to a central fund. Enterprises are then exchequed subsidised for providing training placements and for employee participation in continuing training. 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 (Arbejdsmarkedsselskabet Bispebjerg, employers educational contribution) where all enterprises contribute to the cost of education and training.

Challenges and policy responses

Education and training are considered a key tool to enhance the social and economic participation of youth and adults, regardless of age and for employee participation in continuing training. VET, contribute a fixed amount per employee to a central fund. Enterprises are then subsidised for providing training placements and for employee participation in continuing training. 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 (Arbejdsmarkedsselskabet Bispebjerg, employers educational contribution) where all enterprises contribute to the cost of education and training. VET, contribute a fixed amount per employee to a central fund. Enterprises are then subsidised for providing training placements and for employee participation in continuing training. 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 (Arbejdsmarkedsselskabet Bispebjerg, employers educational contribution) where all enterprises contribute to the cost of education and training.

The 2014 growth plan includes funding for the gap between supply and demand of training places. Implementation of 50 practical training centres (2013) and the planned 1000 new placements in 2014 (growth plan, 2014) are expected to alleviate this problem. Unemployment, and particularly long-term unemployment, among young people with little or no experience to face challenges for adult education and continuing training. Substantial upheaval in the global economic climate is necessary for a considerable part of the workforce becoming permanent and unskilled workers from the labour market. The 2014 growth plan includes funding for the gap between supply and demand of training places. Implementation of 50 practical training centres (2013) and the planned 1000 new placements in 2014 (growth plan, 2014) are expected to alleviate this problem.

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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 both offer equivalent courses 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. Organised programmes are arranged according to the dual principle, alternating between periods of college-based training and work-based learning (apprenticeship training) in enterprises. A typical VET programme (ELD) 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, which recognise prior learning, can comprise elements from other adult education programmes. Adult vocational training (adultarbejdsmarkedstræning) aims to provide qualifications equivalent to VET. This programme 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, can comprise elements from other adult education programmes. Adult vocational training (adultarbejdsmarkedstræning) aims to provide qualifications equivalent to VET. This programme 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, can comprise elements from other adult education programmes.

The Danish VET system is characterised by a high degree of flexibility and retraining, both across and within programmes, based on the principles of consensus and shared responsibility. At a 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, and participation rates reflect the national strategy to focus VET systems on the needs of the labour market and provide lifelong career development. However, adult education is frequently cited as a primary reason for student drop-out. 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 (2012) 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 poses challenges for adult education and continuing training. Substantial employers educational contribution) where all enterprises, regardless of their involvement in enterprises, contribute a fixed amount per employee to participate in continuous training. The government has set a target that by 2015, at least 10% of each youth cohort 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 the new structure of provision resulting from the ongoing VET reform.

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Education and training are considered a key to the future success of adult labour market needs. As a result, VET is expected to accommodate an increasing number of newcomers to Denmark. 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 package (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 combine dual- and general education, as well as permeability between VET 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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Education and training in figures

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% 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

Further information


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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