



spotlight on VET

NORWAY

VET in Norway

The Ministry of Education and Research has overall responsibility for education and training at all levels. In upper secondary VET, both curricula and the VET system structure are laid down in national regulations; providers are required to comply with them. The regional county authorities are responsible for general education and VET provision, distributing VET financing provided by the State budget and ensuring apprenticeship placement and supervision.

All young people completing compulsory school have a statutory right to three years of upper secondary education. Half of them choose between eight VET programmes.

Upper secondary VET is conducted both in schools and in public and private enterprises. The county authorities must approve training establishments. The standard two-plus-two model normally includes two years in school, where students also participate in practical training in workshops and enterprises, followed by two years of formalised apprenticeship (training and productive work) in enterprises. The first year of training consists of an introduction to the vocational area. During the second year, VET students choose specialisations, and courses are more trade-specific, but core subjects are also included. Some crafts follow different models, with three years in school or one year in school followed by three years of formalised apprenticeship.

Upper secondary VET is completed by a practical-theoretical trade or journeyman's examination (*Fag- eller svenneprøve*) leading to an EQF level 4 qualification: a trade certificate (*Fagbrev*) for industrial and service trades or a journeyman's certificate (*Svennebrev*) for traditional crafts. The eight programme areas offer about 190 different certificates.

There are many possible ways to enter higher education (HE) via upper secondary VET. With a trade or journeyman's certificate, the options are:

- (a) via a one-year bridging course in core subjects (*påbyggingsår*);
- (b) direct admission to certain specially designed bachelor programmes (*Y-veien*).

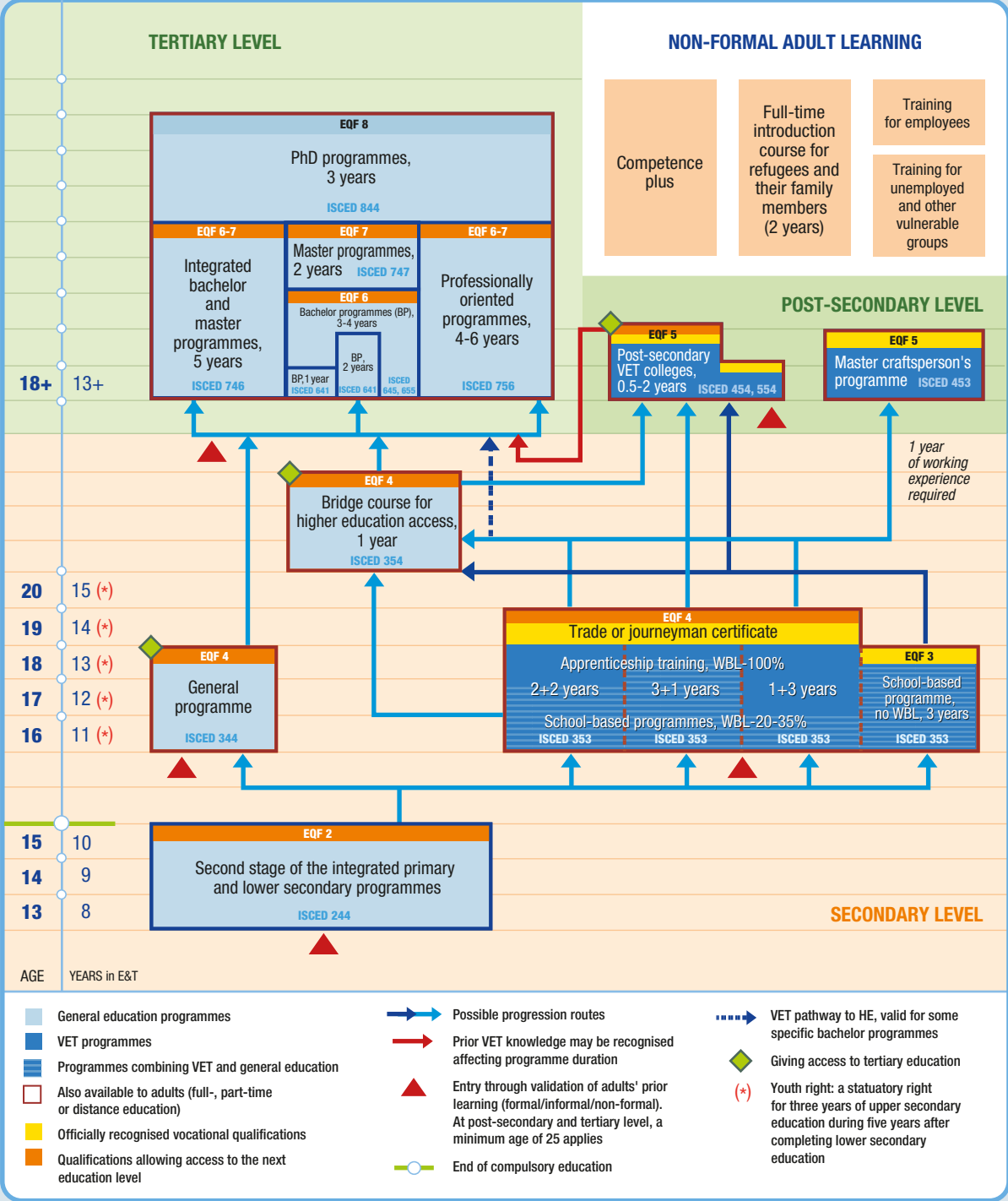
Without a trade or journeyman's certificate the options are:

- (a) five years' experience gained in work and/or education and passing a course in core subjects (for people aged 23 or above);
- (b) recognition of relevant formal, informal and non-formal learning for people aged 25 or above who do not meet general entrance requirements;
- (c) by completing the bridge course in core subjects after completing the first two years of a VET programme.

Legal rights shape adult VET and contribute to making vocational skills visible. People over 25 are entitled to upper secondary education or training adapted to their needs and life situation. Adults also have a right to have their prior learning assessed against national curricula, which may result in exemption from parts of training. The experience-based trade certification scheme enables adults to sit a trade or journeyman's examination on proof of sufficient relevant practice. The candidate must demonstrate comprehensive experience in the trade or craft, normally a minimum of five years. Master craftsman programmes are VET for holders of a relevant trade or journeyman's certificate with several years' work experience. These programmes, which are a public certification arrangement under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, combine general business management, marketing and vocational theory. Many of them are provided by tertiary vocational education colleges (*Fagskoler*) at ISCED level 4. Such colleges also offer a range of short VET programmes for students with an upper secondary qualification. Providers design their own courses and curricula. Each programme must be recognised by a national authority for quality assurance.

The comprehensive higher education system has no formal or other distinction between vocational and non-vocational education; they are equal for higher education admission.

VET in the Norwegian education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Norway.

Distinctive features of VET

At upper secondary level, Norway has a long-standing tradition of national and regional cooperation between educational authorities and the social partners. At national level, cooperation is organised in the National Council for VET (*Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring* – SRY), nine vocational training councils (*Faglige råd*), one for each programme area, and national appeal boards (*Klagenemnder*). Regional cooperation involves county vocational training boards (*Yrkesopplæringsnemnder*) and examination boards (*Prøvenemnder*).

Tripartite cooperation aims to ensure training provided to Norwegian VET students meets labour market and skill needs. It informs changes in the VET structure, curriculum development, regional structure and volume of VET provision, the framework of examinations leading to trade or journeyman's certificates and quality control at all levels. At ISCED level 4, the social partners participate in the National Council for Vocational Colleges. In higher education, institutions are requested to set up a consultative council for cooperation with social partners.

Norway has a unified education structure, with VET integrated as an equal to general education in upper secondary education. Most education at this level is provided by public schools. Since pupils have a right to attend upper secondary education, most choose to do so. Pupils are entitled to select upper secondary VET programmes of their choice.

More than half of trade and journeyman's certificates are awarded to people over 23.

Challenges and policy responses

The main policy measures in Norwegian upper secondary VET concern:

- (a) increasing the number of apprenticeship placements;
- (b) increasing the competence of vocational teachers.

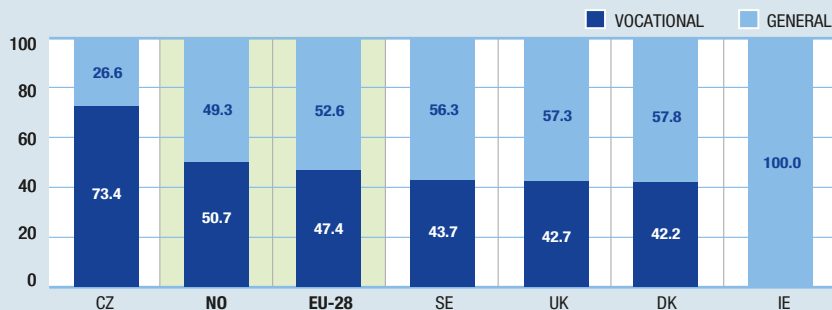
Most pupils who embark on upper secondary education in Norway choose a vocational programme but few complete a VET qualification. The most critical point in completing VET is the transition from school to apprenticeship training: each year, about 8 000 pupils are without apprenticeship. This lack of apprenticeship places prevents young people from completing their education and creates a shortage of qualified workers in the labour market. The government and the social partners are collaborating to increase the number of apprenticeship places and so enable more pupils to complete their education.

Norway will be in need of more skilled vocational education teachers in the years to come to help to produce competent tradespeople for the national workforce. Knowledgeable, competent vocational teachers make a key difference in the training. Many in upper secondary schools lack sufficient teacher training and need competence-building due to the constant development of working life in the subjects they teach. The government is addressing these challenges from November 2015 in its new vocational teacher promotion initiative strategy.



Education and training in figures

Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2014

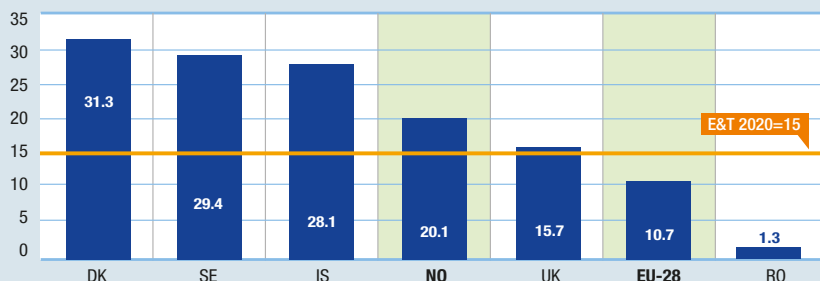


NB: 47.4% is the provisional weighted EU average for 2014 based on available country data (27 countries).

In Ireland it is possible to proceed to apprenticeship training following completion of lower secondary education (ISCED 2), but most learners continue to complete upper secondary education, which is general, rather than vocational, in nature.

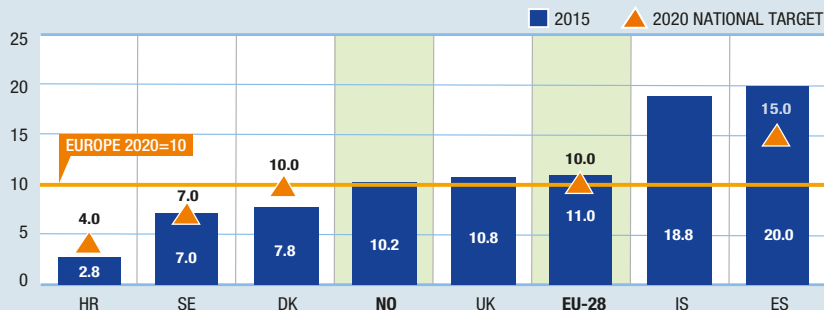
Source: Cedefop calculations, based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 6.12.16.

Lifelong learning
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2015



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 6.12.16.

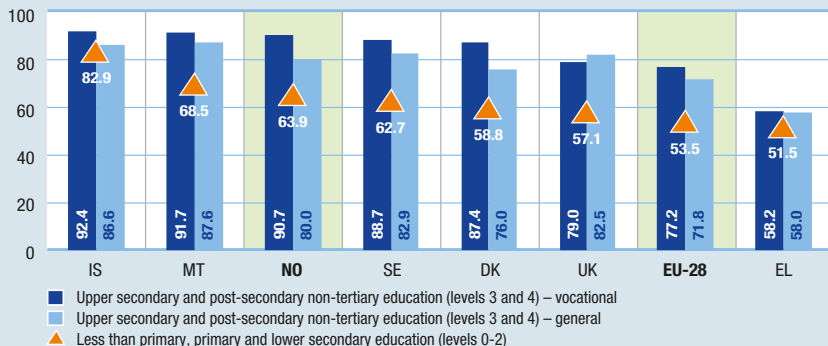
Early leavers from education and training
% of early leavers from education and training, 2015



NB: Low reliability in HR; definition for national target differs in SE, DK and ES. The UK did not set any national targets for early school leaving.

Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 6.12.16.

Employment rates of young graduates
% of 20 to 34 year-olds no longer in education and training, 2015



Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 14.10.16.



Further information

- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2016). *The education mirror: analysis of primary and secondary education and training in Norway* [in Norwegian]. <http://utdanningsspeilet.udir.no/>
- Cedefop; ReferNet Norway (2016). *VET in Europe report: Norway*.
- Eurydice (2013). Norway: overview. In: European Commission (ed.). *Eurypedia*. <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Norway:Overview>
- Information on the vocational teacher promotion initiative (in Norwegian): <http://bit.ly/2jI3PIZ>
- Information on increasing the numbers of apprenticeships (in English): <http://bit.ly/2kdyKQe>

www.kd.dep.no	Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research
www.ad.dep.no	Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
www.nhd.dep.no	Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
www.udir.no	Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training
www.siu.no	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education
www.vox.no	Norwegian Centre for Lifelong Learning
www.nokut.no	National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
www.ssb.no	Statistics Norway

This Spotlight is based on input from the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (ReferNet Norway 2016).



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