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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

# NORWAY

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SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/norway-u3>

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- References.

## CHAPTER 1.

# Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

### Summary of main elements

The Ministry of Education and Research has overall responsibility for education and training at all levels. In upper secondary vocational education and training (VET), VET curricula and system structures are both laid down in national regulations, and providers are required to comply with them. There is close cooperation between education and training authorities and the social partners on upper secondary and tertiary VET.

The 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 schooling have a statutory right to 3-4 years of upper secondary education and training. Half of them choose one of the 10 VET programme areas leading to one of 197 different professional skills (trade certificates, journeyman certificates or similar).

Upper secondary VET is offered in schools and enterprises, approved by the county authorities. The main model comprises 2 years at school, including practical training in workshops and enterprises, followed by 2 years of formal apprenticeship (training and productive work) in enterprises. The first year of training consists of an introduction to the vocational programme. In the second year, VET students choose specialisations and courses become more trade-specific, but core general education subjects are also included. Some trades and crafts follow other models, for example 3 years of school-based training or 1 year in school followed by 3 years of formal apprenticeship.

In the main model, upper secondary VET (2 years in school +2 years in company/enterprise) is completed with a practical-theoretical trade- or journeyman examination (*Fagprøve* or *svenneprøve*) leading to an EQF level 4 qualification: a trade certificate (*Fagbrev*) for industrial and service trades or a journeyman certificate (*Svennebrev*) for traditional crafts. The 10 programme areas offer 197 different certificates. Some crafts are provided as 3 years of school-based learning with integrated WBL, completed by a final exam and EQF level 4 qualification.

There are several routes to higher academic education via upper secondary VET, both with and without a trade- or journeyman's certificate.

Legal rights shape VET and contribute to making vocational skills visible. Those over 25 are entitled to upper secondary education or training, adapted to their needs and life situation. Adults also have a right to have prior learning assessed towards 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 examination based on sufficient relevant practice, usually over a minimum of 5 years in the trade or craft.

VET colleges offer a wide range of vocational programmes at EQF level 5 for students with a trade or journeyman certificate. Some programmes at this level are also accessible for students with upper secondary general education.

## Distinctive features

Norway has a long-standing tradition of close national and regional cooperation between education authorities and the social partners. National cooperation is organised in the National Council for VET (*Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring, SRY*), 10 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 that training provided to VET learners 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 certificates, and quality control at all levels. At EQF level 5, the social partners participate in the National Council for higher VET (*Nasjonalt fagskoleråd*) and six national higher vocational education councils (*Nasjonale fagråd*). In higher education, institutions are requested to set up a consultative council for cooperation with social partners.

Norway has a unified education and training system including both VET and general education as equal. Most education at upper-secondary level is provided by public schools. Young people have a right to attend upper secondary education, and most choose to do so. They also have the right to enrol in one of their top three choices.

More than half of trade and journeyman certificates are awarded to people over 25.

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[27] [Ministry of trades, industry and fisheries](#)

## CHAPTER 2.

# Main challenges and policy responses

Skilled workers with VET qualifications will play an important role in the reorganisation of the Norwegian economy. Figures from the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) show that many enterprises lack such employees and consequently lose business. Statistics Norway (SSB) estimates a shortage of almost 100 000 skilled workers by 2035 (1) .

The VET system is becoming more flexible, digital, labour market relevant and attractive. Initiatives aimed at increasing the number of students who complete their education, as well as teacher competences including digital, are continuous works in progress.

Important developments took place in 2022/23:

- the completion reform, White Paper 21 (2020-2021) (*Fullføringsreformen*) was agreed upon by the Government and is a priority for the next 10 years. The reform looks at all aspects of upper secondary education and how the content of upper secondary education will change;
- modular structured adult training has been initiated and will be implemented from 2024.
- an evaluation of the national qualification framework has been conducted and one recommendation is to allow VET to expand to level EQF 6 and above;
- a White Paper for higher VET is planned to be published in spring of 2025. Work has started and different stakeholders and social partners are involved;
- a report on a possible national centre for VET has been published.

## CHAPTER 3.

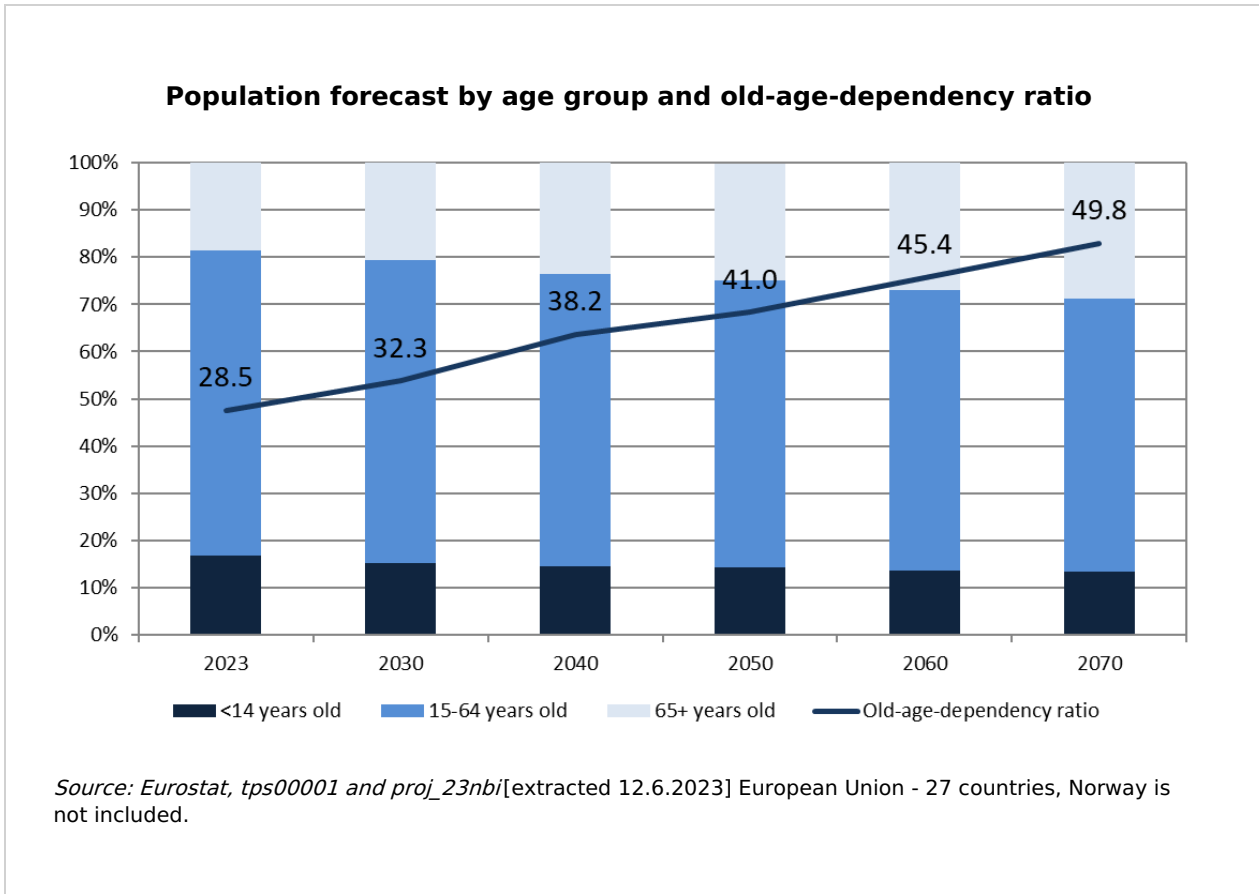
# External factors influencing VET

## 3.1 Demographics

In the second quarter of 2023 Norway had a population of 5.5 million (2) . The rate of natural change (birth rate minus death rate) is positive in Norway and has been the past 50 years. However, the rate of natural change fell to 5 700 more births than deaths in 2022, after staying between 12 000 and 18 000 the past ten years. The particular low rate in 2022 is due to both a lower birth rate and a higher death rate following the Covid-19 pandemic (3) . The general trend, however, is a development towards a higher old-age-dependency ratio, as shown in the figure below.

The growth in the population is still positive due to positive rate of natural change and immigration, but this is expected to change in the next 30 years. An older population combined with a lower fertility rate will result in immigration being the main reason for growth in the population (4) . The immigration rate is very positive, at almost 58 000 in 2022. This is an increase on more than 400% compared to 2020. This is mostly due to the war in Ukraine (5) In total there were 877 227 immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in Norway in 2023 according to Statistics Norway (6) . Relative to the total population, this group represents 16% of the total population (7) . The immigrant population is spread all over the country, with the majority living in Oslo, where they make up 34.4% of the population (8) .

In 2023, the age group 65+ amounts to 18.5 % of the population, an increase of one percentage point (p.p.) from 2017 (9) . By 2070, this age group is estimated to amount to almost 28.8% of a population of 6.1 million (10) . By the same time, the age group 15-64 years old will fall from 64.8 to 57.9 % . As shown in the figure below, the old-age-dependency ratio in Norway is expected to increase from 28.5 % in 2023 to close to 49.8 % in 2070.



At national level, in the fall of 2022, there was a small majority of students in vocational education and training for the first time in almost ten years (11) . We see, however, a clear divide between rural and urban areas, according to Statistics Norway (12) . In rural areas, VET is often the preferred choice of education, whereas youth in the cities more often choose general education. In the capital, Oslo, 31% of the learners participated in VET in 2021. The proportion gradually decreases the less central environment the learners grow up in. In the medium-sized municipalities, there is a preponderance of students in vocational education. Among learners from the smallest district municipalities, 68% choose vocational education.

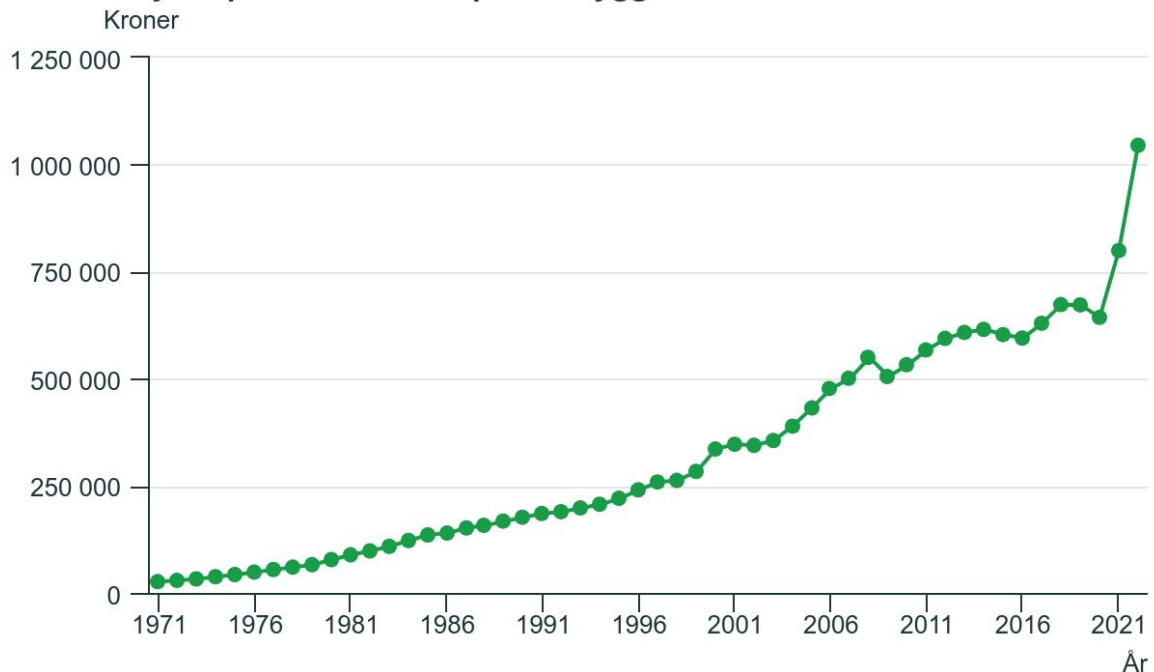
### 3.2 Economics

Norway's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was NOK 1.05 million in 2022, or about EUR 100 000. This was 112% bigger than the EU average (13) . In 2020, the Norwegian GDP was about NOK 643 000. The figure below shows the extensive growth in the GDP per capita since 1970. The graph shows the development since the start of the oil and gas era in Norway. The oil- and gas production is the most significant single factor explaining the extensive growth in GDP.



## GDP in Norway per capita 1971-2022 (Norwegian Kroner)

### Bruttonasjonalprodukt i kroner per innbygger



Kilde: Nasjonalregnskap, Statistisk sentralbyrå

Source: Statistics Norway [extracted 8.1.2024]

The total number of enterprises in Norway is close to 647 000 in 2023 (14). Of these, as much as 68% are one-person enterprises without any employees. In total, 99.9% of all the enterprises are in the category small and medium sized enterprises (SME), meaning that they have less than 250 employees.

In 2022, 62% of all the companies were relatively equally distributed (9-11% of the total) between the six categories (1) wholesale and retail services, (2) construction, (3) professional, scientific and technical services, (4) agriculture, forestry and fishing, (5) real estate activities, and (6) human health and social work activities.

## 3.3 Labour market

### Employees and apprentices

The building and construction sector counts 235 000 employees, and 11 800 apprentices, which makes it the sector with most apprentices per employee. About 70 000 people work in the oil and gas sector, as shown in the table below (mining and extraction). Together with the industry sector, it amounts to more than 270 000 employees. In 2022 there were about 9 800 apprentices related to these two sectors. Apprentices in electrical engineering and computer technology counts 9 500 and is the third largest group of apprentices. This group is relevant in all the abovementioned sectors, and more.

The biggest sector in terms of employees is health and social services with close to 600 000 employees. In 2022 there were close to 9 000 apprentices in this sector.

### Employment by production sector 2022

Sector	Number of employed, all trades
All sectors	2 849 000
Agriculture and forestry	44 000
Fishing and aquaculture	19 000
Mining and extraction	70 000
Industry	207 000
Electricity, water and waste disposal	36 000
Building and construction	235 000
Merchandise, repair of motor vehicles	346 000
Transport and storage	136 000
Accommodation and catering	110 000
Information and communication	124 000
Financing and insurance	60 000
Technical and commercial service provision, property management	335 000
Public administration, defence, social insurance	177 000
Teaching	235 000
Health and social services	575 000
Personal service provision	128 000

Source: [Statistics Norway](#), [November 2023]

### VET education programmes and number of apprentices in 2022

VET education programmes	Number of apprentices 2022
Agriculture, fishing and forestry	1 676
Building and construction	11 819
Crafts, design and product development	988
Electrical engineering and computer technology	9 570
Hairdressing, floral, interior and retail design	400
Healthcare, childhood and youth development	8 914
Information technology og media production	707
Restaurant and food processing	2 028
Sales, service and tourism	4 514
Technological and industrial production	9 897

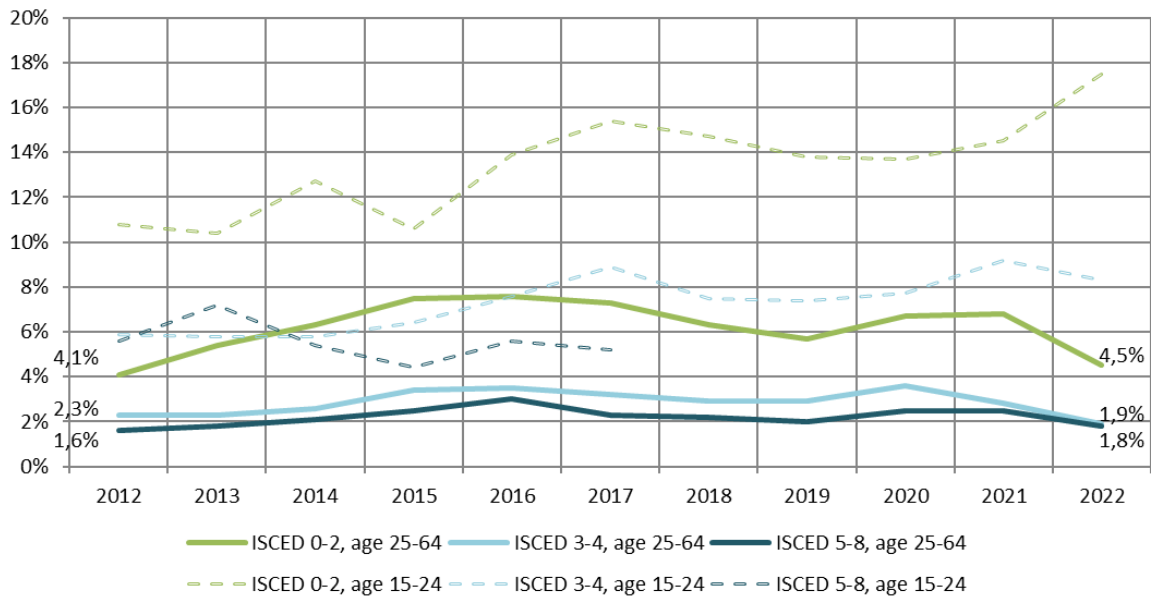
Source: [Statistics Norway](#). [August 2023]

### Unemployment

In 2022, the total unemployment rate of the active population (aged 25-74) was 2.1%. This is down 0.7 percentage points since 2018. The comparable unemployment rate for EU27 is 5.4% (15) .

The figure below shows the unemployment rate for the age groups 15-24 and 25-64, for the different ISCED levels of attained education. The unemployment rate has been relatively stable or decreasing for the oldest age group, regardless of attained education level. For the age group 15-24, and especially those who have not finished upper secondary education, the unemployment rate has been increasing the past 12 years. This can be interpreted as an expression of the increasing problem of young people not in employment or education and training (NEETs). It is possible that the Covid pandemic has affected this development negatively, but the trend is not new, as the figure below shows.

## Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2012-22



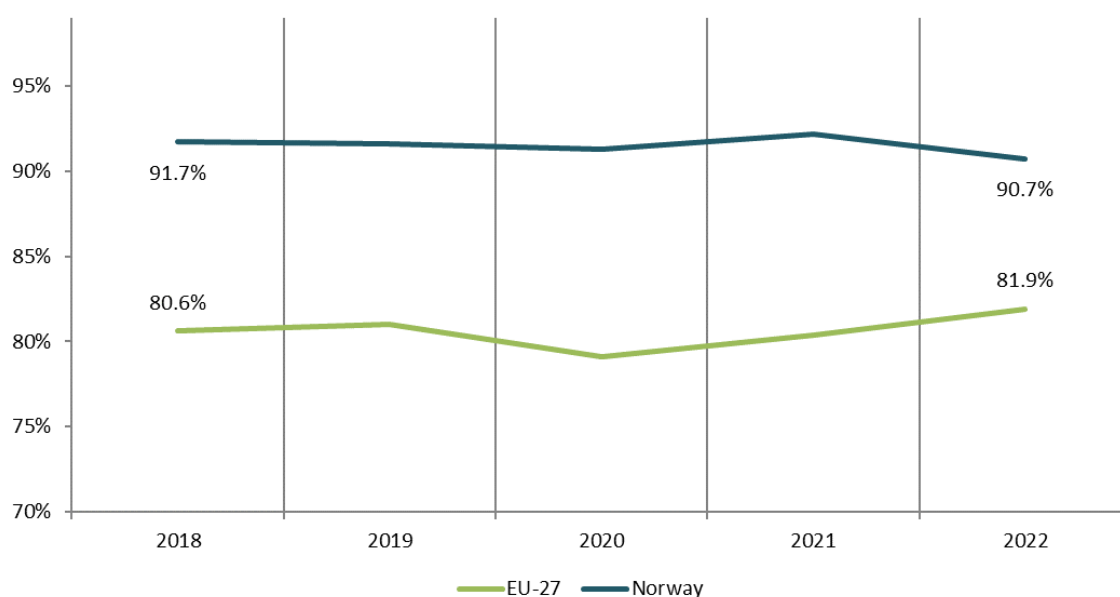
NB: data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 5-8, age 15-24.  
 ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.  
 ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.  
 ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.  
 Source: Eurostat, lfsa\_urgaed [extracted 12.6.2023].

## Employment of VET graduates

The figure below shows the employment rate of VET graduates aged 20-34 in the period 2018 to 2022 for Norway and for EU-27 (16). The employment rate for this group in Norway was 90.7% in 2022, and 81.9% for EU-27. There are very small variations in the five-year period for both data series.

It is relevant to interpret the 10-percentage point difference between Norway and EU-27 in light of the difference in the overall unemployment rate in the active population, as shown in the section above. The extension of work-based learning and apprenticeship tradition in the Norwegian VET system is another relevant explanation factor. It is likely that this increases the relevance of the education and training and establishes an important relation between the learner and potential employer that increases the probability for employment.

### Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.  
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.  
Source: Eurostat, edat\_ifse\_24 [extracted 12.6.2023].

For more information about the external drivers influencing VET developments in Norway, please see the case study from [Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project](#).

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- [2] Statistics Norway, SSB (2023). [Fakta om befolkningen - hvor mange bor det i Norge? - SSB](#) [Facts about the population - how many live in Norway?]
  - [3] Statistics Norway, SSB (2023). [Fakta om befolkningen - hvor mange bor det i Norge? - SSB](#) [Facts about the population - how many live in Norway?]
  - [4] Statistics Norway, SSB (2022). [Innvandring vil sørge for befolkningsvekst fra 2050 - SSB](#) [Immigration will ensure population growth from 2050]
  - [5] Statistics Norway, SSB (2023). [Fakta om befolkningen - hvor mange bor det i Norge? - SSB](#) [Facts about the population - how many live in Norway?]
  - [6] Statistics Norway, SSB (2023). [Fakta om innvandring - SSB](#) [Facts about immigration to Norway]
  - [7] Statistics Norway, SSB (2023). [Fakta om innvandring - SSB](#) [Facts about immigration to Norway]
  - [8] Statistics Norway, SSB (2023). [Fakta om innvandring - SSB](#) [Facts about immigration to Norway]
  - [9] Statistics Norway, SSB (2023). Data bank, table: [07459: Alders- og kjønnsfordeling i kommuner, fylker og hele landets befolkning \(K\) 1986 - 2023](#). [Age and gender distribution in municipalities, counties and the entire country's population]
  - [10] Statistics Norway, SSB (2022). [Nasjonale befolkningsframskrivninger](#). [National population

projections]

- [11] Union of Education Norway (2023). [Faktaark 9/2023: Nøkkeltall for videregående opplæring 2022](#). [Fact sheet 9/2023: Key figures for upper secondary education 2022]
- [12] Statistics Norway, SSB (2023). [Elever i distriktene velger oftere yrkesfag](#). [Pupils in the districts more often choose vocational subjects]
- [13] Statistics Norway (2023). [Fakta om norsk økonomi](#). [Facts about Norwegian economy]
- [14] Statistics Norway (2023). Data bank, table: [07091: Virksomheter etter næring \(SN2007\) og antall ansatte \(K\) 2009-2023](#). [Businesses by industry and number of employees].
- [28] [The Master's degree board](#).

## CHAPTER 4.

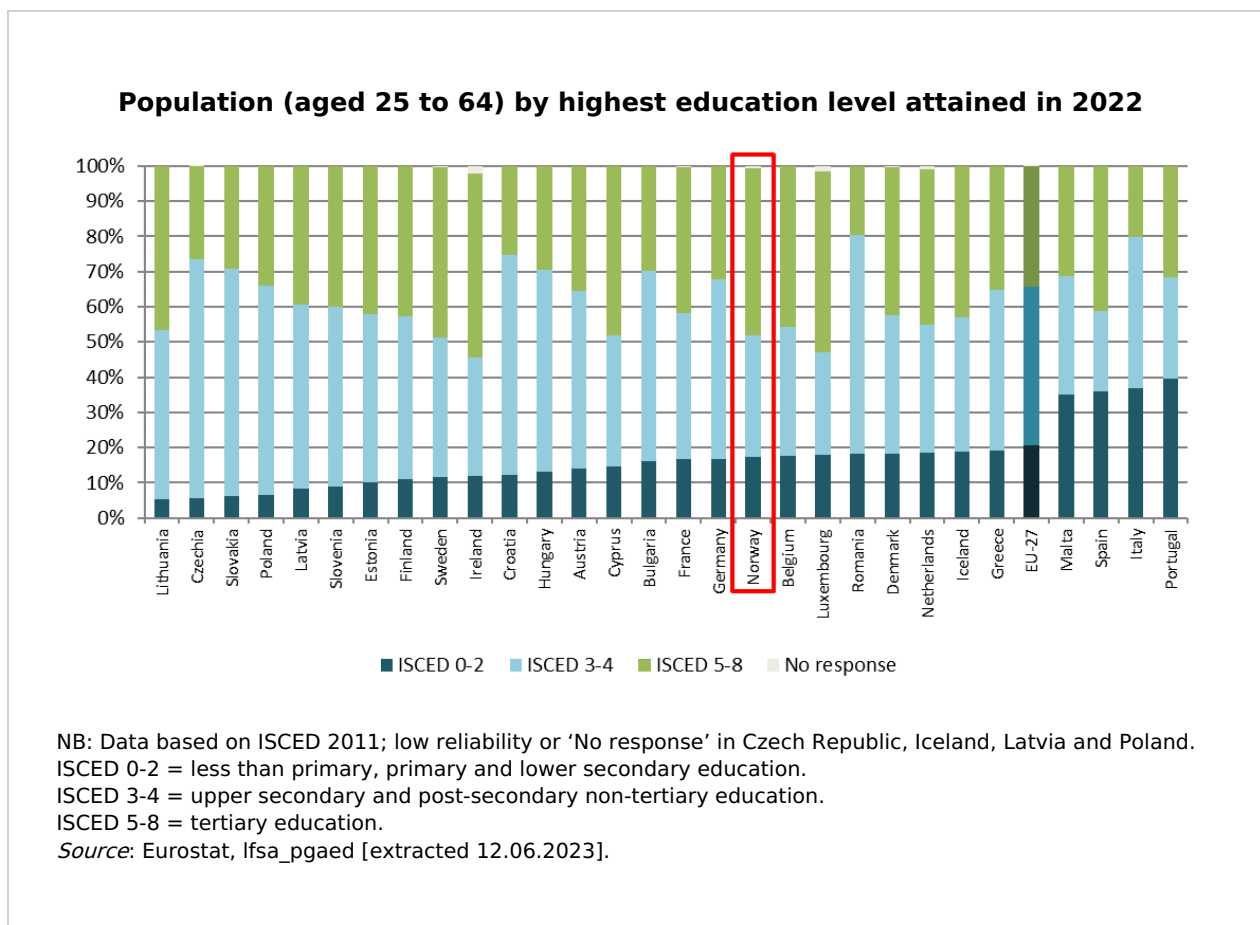
# Education attainment

## 4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

In 2022, the share of the population aged from 25 up to 64 with higher education in Norway was 47.4%, as the figure below shows. Compared to 2020, this is a 2.3 percentage points (p.p.) increase (17) . It is more than 13 p.p. above the EU-27 average on 34.2, as shown in the figure below. At the same time, 34.5% of the population aged 25 to 64 had attained medium level education (ISCED 3-4) in Norway in 2022, slightly more than 10 p.p. lower than the EU-27 average. This means that a larger share of the Norwegian population moves beyond the medium level education than in the EU-27 as a whole.

It also means that Norway has a 4 p.p. lower share of people with this education level compared to 2020. ISCED level 3-4 is where we find the VET graduates, so this development is not an unconditional positive development.

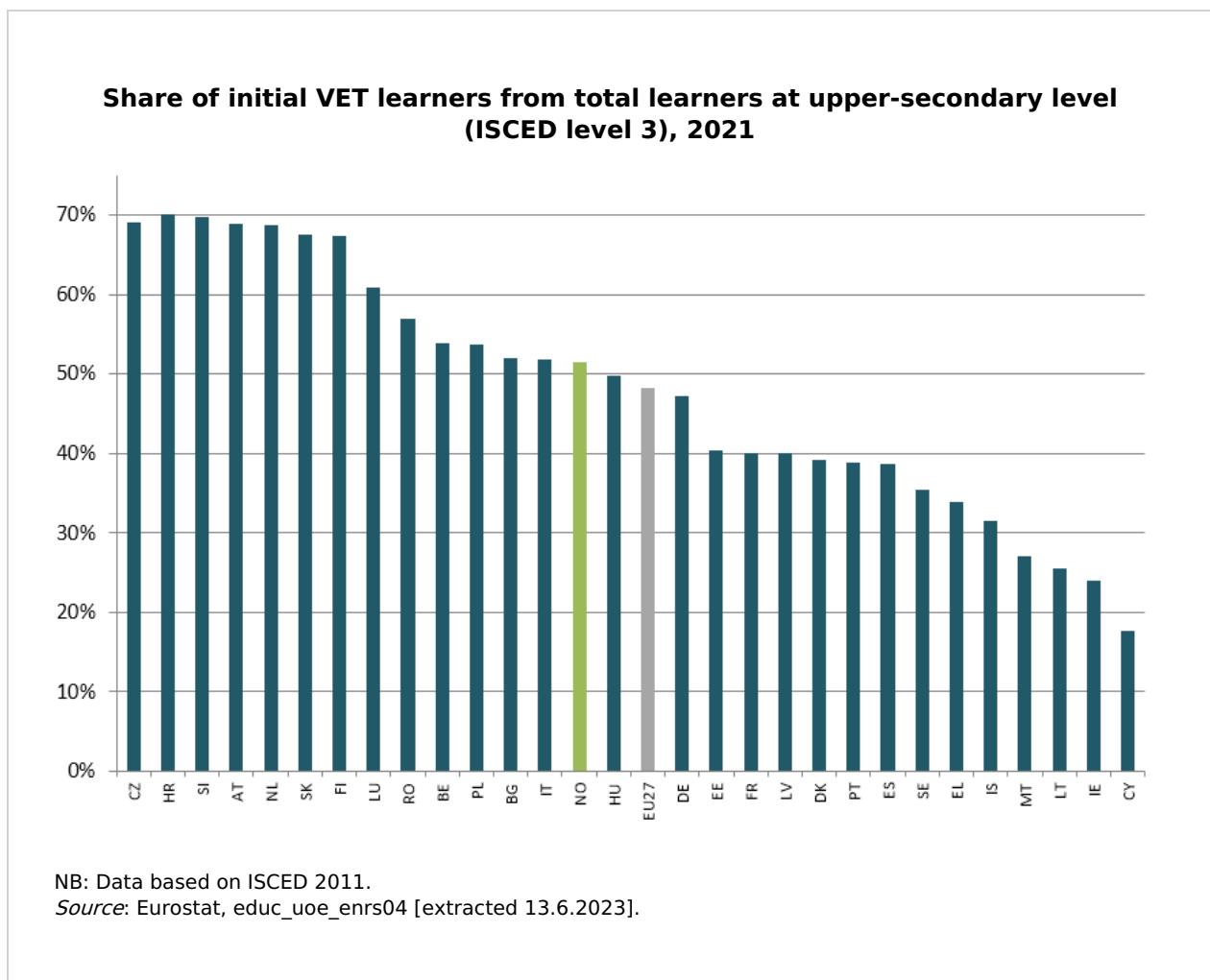
Only 17.4% of the Norwegian population had a low qualification at ISCED level 0-2 in 2022. This is a slight increase from 16.6% in 2020. It is still below the EU-27 average which was 20.5% in 2022.



For more information about VET in higher education in Norway, please see the case study from [Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project](#).

### 4.3 VET learners by level

In 2021 a total of 51.5% of all learners at upper secondary was a VET learner, as illustrated in the figure below. This is slightly above the EU-27 average. As prognosis shows that we will lack as many as 100 000 skilled workers by 2030, it is important that youth chose VET. A persistent problem, however, is the fact that many VET students chose to opt for a one-year bridging course in core subjects to achieve university and college admissions certification instead of completing their VET apprenticeship. As many as 23% of all VET students in 2021 opted for a bridge course (18) .



### 4.4 Female share

In upper secondary education as a total, the female share was 51% in 2022. In VET, the female share was 41%. Within the different VET programmes, there is also a very clear gender divide, reflecting a very gender divided labour market. In programmes like hairdressing, floral, interior and retail design, as many as 92% of the learners were female, whereas in electrical engineering and computer technology, only 7% were female. The largest VET programme in terms of learners



is healthcare, childhood and youth development. In this programme, a total of 84% of the learners were female in 2022 (19).

## 4.5 Early leavers from education and training

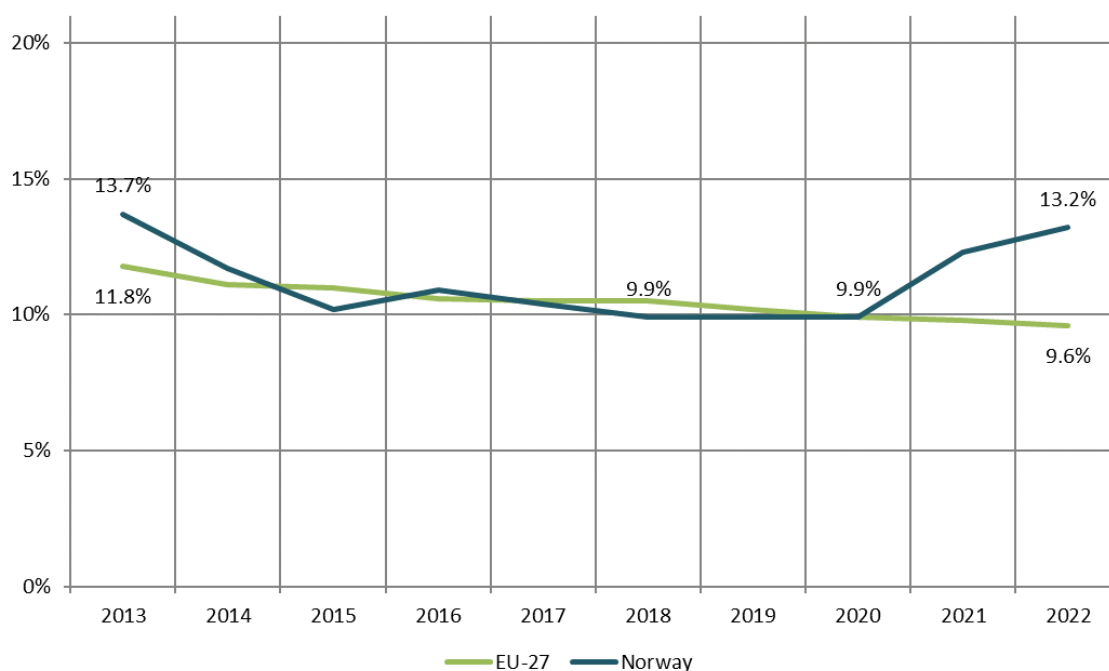
The figure below shows the development in share of early leavers from education and training from 2013 to 2022. In Norway, the level has been in line with the EU-27 average most of the period, with the exception of 2013, 2021 and 2022. These three years, the level of early leavers has been as much as 3.6 p.p. higher than the EU-27 average.

There are a multitude of explanations for why some learners become early leavers. One explanatory factor that might explain why Norway has a higher rate of early school leavers than the EU average, is a reform from 1994. Through this reform, all learners gained a *right* to upper secondary education, regardless of their results for lower secondary. This has created a strong anticipation that everyone should attend upper secondary education. As a result, a group of learners start upper secondary education every year without a strong motivation (20).

A second, and possibly related explanation, is the reproduction of inequality. This means that the school system generally rewards middle class behaviour, knowledge and skills. The result is that children from the working class are less likely to get positive feedback and succeed (21).

In the most recent white paper on upper secondary education, the government stated that 9 out of 10 learners should complete upper secondary education by 2030 (22). Several measures have been implemented and several more will follow as the Norwegian government aims to maintain the effort (23).

### Early leavers from education and training in 2013-22



NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training.

Source: Eurostat, edat\_ifse\_14 [extracted 12.6.2023].

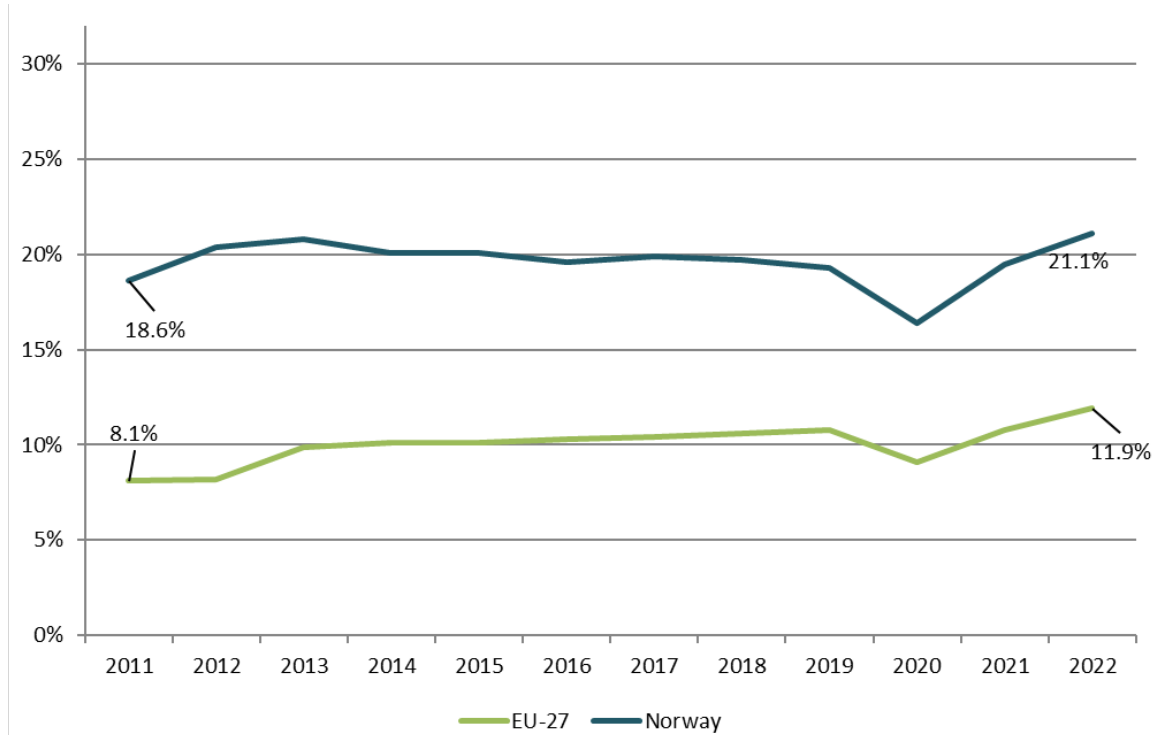
For more information, visit [Cedefop project page on tackling early leaving](#) and our interactive toolkits: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#).

## 4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Participation in lifelong learning is defined by Eurostat as participation in formal and informal education and training after completing initial education (24). The figure below shows the level of such participation in lifelong learning for people aged 25-64. The participation is measured by self-reported participation in such activities in a four-week period before the survey was conducted. The numbers must therefore be read as indicators of the level of participation in lifelong learning in the different countries. Because the same survey has been conducted in all EU countries, it is relevant for comparison between countries.

As seen in the figure, the level of participation in lifelong learning in Norway was 21.1% in 2022, up 3.5 p.p. since 2018. This is well above the EU target of 15% of the population. The EU-27 average is about 10 p.p. below the Norwegian level of participation. Perhaps, the most interesting about the share of participants is the relatively stable level over the years.

### Participation in lifelong learning in 2009-2022



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training; break in series 2021.  
Source: Eurostat, trng\_ifse\_01 [extracted 12.6.2023]

## 4.7 VET learners by age

Most learners (85.0%) at upper secondary level, both VET and general education, are young people in the age group 15-18. 7.8% of the learners are in the age group 19-24 and 7% in the age group 25-35 and above.

The share of adults (aged 25 and above) in upper secondary education (general and VET) has increased by 1.1 p.p. since 2020 (25) .

## CHAPTER 5.

# VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- first education level, divided into two levels:
  - primary education (from 6 years to 13 years);
  - lower secondary education (EQF 2, ISCED 2);
- upper secondary education (EQF 3 and 4 and ISCED 3). VET is available from upper secondary level;
- post- secondary, non- tertiary VET education (EQF 5, ISCED 454);
- tertiary, higher vocational education (EQF 5, ISCED 554);
- tertiary, higher education (EQF 6, 7 and 8, ISCED 6, 7 and 8).

Education is compulsory for 6-16-year-olds. It comprises primary education (years 1-7), where learners receive no grades, and lower secondary education (years 8-10) where learners receive grades that also count for admission to upper secondary level. It is under the municipality's responsibility and free of charge.

Upper secondary education is offered as general education and VET. The regional county authorities are responsible for general education and VET provision. All young people completing compulsory education have a statutory right to 3 years of upper secondary education, and most use it. Public upper secondary schools are free of charge.

It is possible to attend formal, non-formal, initial and continuing VET. Depending on the programme, learners may attend school-based or work-based learning or a combination of both. It is also possible to take an exam as an external candidate.

To complete a VET programme at upper secondary level, learners need to pass a final craft or journeyman exam, which is both theoretical and practical. There is an exception: a 3-year option which leads to a qualification at EQF level 4.

Initial and continuing VET are part of the formal education system. Initial VET needs to be completed to progress to CVET. Initial VET starts at upper secondary school and most pathways leads to an EQF level 4 qualification. CVET is at EQF level 5.

Apprenticeship is at upper secondary level and leads to EQF level 4 qualification.

Post-secondary non-tertiary higher vocational education builds on upper secondary education: an upper secondary certificate or an equivalent qualification is a requirement to enrol. The learning outcomes are at a higher level than upper secondary, but not at the same level of complexity as tertiary education. The programmes last from a few weeks to 1, 5 years and can most often be combined with work. There are public and private providers. A majority of the programmes are publicly funded and free of charge for the students.

Some of the two-year programmes at VET colleges qualify for a Master craftsman certificate. This is, however, a certificate regulated by the master's certificate act of 1987 (26) under the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, and is not an educational degree (27) . The certificate is managed by a board consisting of representatives from the social partners (28) . They are appointed by the aforementioned ministry based on nominations by the National Council for VET.

Tertiary higher vocational education also builds on upper secondary education. The entry requirements are the same as for post-secondary higher vocational education, but the learning outcomes are at a higher complexity level. The education is a minimum of two years full time study. Some programmes are offered as part time studies that can be combined with work. There are public and private providers. A majority of the programmes are publicly funded and free of charge for the student.

At tertiary academic higher education, there are 21 state institutions, of which 10 are universities. There are 15 private higher education institutions. In addition, there are some institutions accredited for specific education programmes (29)

All ordinary educations at state institutions are free of charge for the students (30) A small fee is paid to the student welfare organisation at the education institution. The purpose of the fee is to cover expenses relating to the students' welfare needs at their place of learning.

## CHAPTER 6.

# Apprenticeship

At upper secondary level, VET is conducted both in school and in public and private enterprises. The main two-plus-two model includes 2 years in school, where students also participate in practical training in workshops and enterprises, followed by 2 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 that are more trade-specific, but core subjects are also included. Some crafts follow varying models such as 3 years in school or 1 year in school followed by 3 years of formalised apprenticeship.

Upper secondary VET is completed with 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 ten programme areas offer 197 different certificates.

There are many possible routes to higher education via upper secondary VET. With a trade or journeyman certificate, the options to higher academic education are:

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

Options without a trade or journeyman certificate are:

- five years' experience gained in work and/or education and passing courses in core subjects (for those aged 23 or older);
- recognition of relevant formal, informal, and non-formal learning for people aged 25 or older, who do not meet general entrance requirements;
- completing the bridge course in core subjects after completing the first two years of a VET programme;
- successfully completed two years higher vocational education (EQF5).

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the [European database on apprenticeship schemes](#) by Cedefop (31) .

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[31] Cedefop. [European database on apprenticeship schemes](#).

## CHAPTER 7.

# VET governance

Central to the Norwegian education and training system is the Education Act of 17 July 1998 No 61 (*Opplæringsloven*), most recently amended with effect from 1.1.2023 (32) . It covers primary, lower and upper secondary general education and VET, including apprenticeship training, for young people and adults, delivered by both public and private institutions. It states that the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) has overall responsibility for national policy development and administration of all levels of education and training. The counties (*fylkeskommuner*) and municipalities (*kommuner*) are responsible for developing comprehensive plans and for organising and financing within their jurisdiction.

The Education Act gives the social partners representation (most often majority) in all important advisory bodies for upper secondary VET at national and county levels:

- the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (*Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring* (SRY)) gives advice on an overarching level;
- ten vocational training councils (*Faglige råd*) give advice on training in specific groups of trades, one for each VET programme area;
- the county vocational training board (*Yrkesopplæringsnemnda*) in each county advises on quality, career guidance, regional development and the provision in the county to meet local labour market needs;
- the trade-specific examination boards (*Prøvenemnder*) are situated in each county;
- national appeals boards (*Klagenemnder*) cater for candidates who fail the trade or journeyperson's final test at county level.

For higher vocational education (nationally referred as tertiary; *høyere yrkesfaglig utdanning*), the social partners are consulted through the National Council for Higher Vocational Education (*Nasjonalt fagskoleråd*) established by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2010. This council has less of a formal function than the vocational training councils have at upper secondary level, as the education and training providers at this level design their own programmes. The Directorate for Higher Education and Skills hosts the secretariat. In addition, advisory bodies with social partner representatives consult on tertiary vocational education. There are six advisory bodies established, these feed the National Council for Higher Vocational Education with information from the institutions and students.

Higher vocational colleges (*fagskoler*) represent a significant alternative to higher education. The colleges are important for developing competence and specialisation in VET. The objective of the National Council for Higher Vocational Education is to improve cooperation between the colleges, the rest of the education structure, working life, and society in general. The council acts as a coordinating body for the sector and is the advisory body to the Ministry of Education and Research. It comprises representatives from the education sector, employee and employer organisations and learners.

## CHAPTER 8.

# VET financing mechanisms

The regional county authorities are responsible for general education and VET provision, distributing VET financing provided by the State budget and ensuring apprenticeship placements and supervision (33) . Enterprises with training contracts, according to the Education Act, receive a grant (*Basistilskudd I*), approximately EUR 69 per month for 2 years (24 months) per apprentice. There are some grant variations depending on the type of apprenticeship contract (main model (2+2) or 2, 3 or 4 years of training in enterprise). In addition, the enterprise receives yearly funding of approximately EUR 6 000 per contract.

The grant given to training enterprises accepting adult apprentices (*basistilskudd II*) is about EUR 6 000 per year per apprentice.

Extra funding is also provided for enterprises signing contracts with apprentices in rare and protected crafts.

A EUR 2 million grant to encourage new enterprises to take on apprentices was introduced in 2014. From 2015, the county municipality could define regional criteria for the grant and from 2016 the grant may also be used to reduce unemployment amongst NEETs or ensure high-quality school-based training as an alternative for those without an apprenticeships contract.

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[33] Cedefop (2021). [Spotlight on VET - 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe](#). Luxembourg: Publications Office.



## CHAPTER 9.

# Teachers and trainers

## 9.1 VET teacher types

There are three main groups of VET training staff at upper secondary level:

- VET teachers who provide formal school-based education and training;
- training supervisors (*faglige ledere*);
- trainers (*instruktører*) who provide training in enterprises.

### VET teachers

The formal qualification requirements for VET teachers in schools are specified in national regulations. In principle, there is no difference between VET teachers and other teachers. Both groups must have two sets of formal qualifications: qualifications in the relevant subject and in education (pedagogy and didactics). VET teachers typically have a trade- or journeyman certificate and have been working in their trade for a while before becoming a teacher. They then must attain the pedagogical training. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training administer grants for VET teachers that lack the pedagogical training. This makes it possible for the school to give the teacher time off for studying (up to 37.5% of working hours) and hire a substitute teacher for the period.

VET teacher education programmes follow two alternative routes.

The first is vocational practical-pedagogical education (consecutive model). This is a 1-year programme (or 2 years part-time) for learners who already hold a vocational/professional degree or other qualification (see below). The main fields of study are pedagogical theory, vocational didactics and supervised teaching and training practice. The admission requirements are:

- a professionally oriented bachelor's or master's degree
- a minimum of 2 years of professional experience,

or:

- qualification as a skilled craftsman/worker;
- general university and college admission certification;
- 4 years of relevant occupational experience;
- 2 years of further studies (technical, professional, managerial).

The second is vocational teacher education. This is a comprehensive 3-year bachelor programme with the possibility to add a two year master programme. The bachelor programme covers both vocational training and pedagogy. It is also available as a part-time course of study and through work-based provision. The admission requirements are:

- general university and college admission certification;
- mark requirements in mathematics and Norwegian;
- trade or journeyman's certificate;
- minimum 2 years of relevant work experience.

All teacher education programmes for the lower and upper secondary levels (grades 8-13), including those for VET teachers, were revised in the Norwegian national qualification framework of December 2011, following up both the European qualification framework for higher education

in the Bologna Process (QF-EHEA) and the European qualification framework for lifelong learning (EQF). The new regulation on the relevant framework curricula came into force in March 2013 and was last amended in August 2016.

Several continuing education courses are available every year for vocational teachers who teach programme subjects. Training supervisors and trainers in enterprises can also gain admission to continuing education courses for vocational teachers, if places are available. The available courses are published in February every year by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, together with information about grants.

A new initiative has been introduced to improve collaboration between schools and enterprises by offering a secondment programme for VET teachers, trainers and qualified training supervisors. The teachers become familiar with the enterprises and the trainers and qualified training supervisors get an insight in how training of future apprentices is organised in schools.

### **Training supervisor and trainers**

A training enterprise with an apprentice must appoint a qualified training supervisor and one or more trainers. The way training is conducted varies between enterprises, but other employees in the enterprise are often involved in the training. The training enterprise must be able to document how the training is planned, organised, and assessed to ensure that apprentices can develop the necessary skills and competences. These skills are not assessed by testing and grading, but rather through continuous evaluation by the enterprise and at two meetings a year between the trainer (*instruktør*) and the apprentice.

Training supervisors (*faglige ledere*) in enterprises or other workplaces with apprentices must ensure that the training meets the requirements stipulated in the Education Act and defined by the county governments. The specific requirements may differ slightly between counties, but one of the following qualifications are usually required:

- a trade or journeyman's certificate in the relevant trade or craft;
- relevant higher education in the trade or craft; or
- sufficient experience in the trade or craft, usually 5-6 years.

Trainers (*instruktører*) in training enterprises are vocationally skilled, often with a formal vocational qualification. They are not required to hold a teaching certificate. Some trainers do not hold formal qualifications in their vocational skills, but have instead developed them through work experience. Formal regulations simply state that the management of the training enterprise must ensure that trainers have 'the necessary qualifications' (34) .

### **Initiatives for VET competence development**

Norway will need more vocational education teachers in the years to come to help provide skilled tradespeople for the national workforce. The Government gives priority to increased recruitment and qualification of VET teachers in the national competence development initiative from 2015. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for several VET competence development initiatives. Since 2015, there has been a mapping of skills development among VET teachers, for the best possible adapted schemes to this target group. Course material for trainers (*instruktør*), qualified training supervisor (*faglig leder*) and examination board member is made easily accessible online, together with tips and guidance to apprentices preparing for the qualifying exam.

## **9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers**

It is not compulsory for teachers and trainers to undertake CPD.

There are, however, many possibilities for those who are interested, and funding is available. The funding covers temporary employment and scholarships and is meant as an incentive for continuing education.

The courses are selected by the individuals and approved by the school leader. The courses take place during the school year.

For more information visit Cedefop project page on [Teachers' and Trainers' professional development](#) and our interactive toolkits for VET practitioners: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#). You may also read [Cedefop/ReferNet country reports on Teachers and Trainers in a Changing World](#) and [Cedefop comparative analysis](#).

## CHAPTER 10.

# Shaping VET qualifications

## 10.1 Anticipating skill needs

Demands for new skills and changes in the labour market call for continuous adjustment and revision of upper secondary VET programmes, their content and their modes of delivery. The government, employers, trade unions, learners, parents and others may initiate a need for adjustments or changes. A national [Committee on Skill Needs](#) was established in 2021. The committee is appointed by the Ministry of education and research, and consists of representatives from the social partners, education institutions, and researchers. The members of the committee are appointed for a two-year period.

### **At upper secondary VET level**

All ten upper secondary VET programme areas are closely monitored. Changes are made continuously, based on input and applications from social partners, county municipalities or the vocational training councils (*Faglige råd*) (35) that give advice on training in specific groups of trades.

The Directorate for Education and Training (Directorate) hosts the secretariats of both the National Council for Vocational Education (*Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring* - SRY) that gives advice on an overarching level, and the vocational training councils. These councils must report on the situation to the national authorities once in the 4-year nomination period. The report also covers the potential need for changes in their respective VET programmes. The Directorate, in cooperation with vocational training councils, vocational committees (*faglig utvalg*), county municipalities and social partners, reviewed VET programmes available in 2016. The result is a new structure for vocational subjects in upper secondary schools from 2020, which is the biggest change in vocational education since 2006. The new structure will strengthen the quality and relevance of education.

One element that may limit the social partners' impact on upper secondary VET provision is the emphasis placed on the individual choices of learners. According to legislation (36), learners are entitled to admission to one out of three preferred upper secondary programmes. In the school year 2021/22, 86% of first-year learners were admitted to their first choice of upper secondary education (37). County authorities must provide programmes and subjects that correspond to these preferences. To balance VET provision with labour market needs, social partners give advice concerning a wide range of topics related to upper secondary VET: training programme structure, curriculum development, regional structure, volume of VET provision, examinations framework for trade and journeyman certificates, and quality control at national, county and local level.

### **In higher vocational education, post-secondary and tertiary level**

In higher vocational education study programmes are designed by the providers. Each higher vocational education programme must be recognised by Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), or by the institution itself if certified by NOKUT to do this. Labour market relevance is a prerequisite for accreditation as higher VET. All education programmes at higher vocational education is placed at EQF level 5. In the Norwegian qualification framework, however, level 5 is differentiated between 5.1 and 5.2, corresponding respectively to ISCED 4 and ISCED 5. The higher vocational colleges cannot establish or provide programmes at levels above EQF 5. All higher VET institutions must have a board with representatives from relevant labour market representatives. A national council for higher VET

(*Fagskolerådet*) have established underlying programme councils consisting of representatives from the education institutions as well as representatives from relevant branches.

### **In higher education**

In other higher education, all accredited institutions can establish programmes at bachelor level (EQF 6), within the scope of their accreditation. Universities are free to establish programmes at all levels, including master and PhD programmes. All higher education institutions have external board members, and consultation with relevant labour market players on the design of programmes is common. In some fields there are national framework curricula to ensure some degree of similarity in training for all graduates (including teacher education, nursing, engineering, auditing). For other fields of training, the respective industries have national boards which offer advice to higher education providers. All higher education institutions are required to have a strategy and a consultative council for cooperation with working life (*Råd for samarbeid med arbeidslivet*).

## **10.2 Designing qualifications**

In April 2016, the Government adopted a new white paper (38) which led to a renewal of the 2006 curriculum reform (*Kunnskapsløftet*). The renewal of the school subjects in primary, lower and upper secondary education, including VET, aimed to provide learners with a more in-depth education and a better understanding of subjects, more relevant content and links between subjects, and a clearer progression of the learning process. The new curriculum was implemented progressively from the academic year 2020/21.

### **The national curriculum**

The National curriculum for knowledge promotion (*Kunnskapsløftet 2006*) covers compulsory primary and lower secondary education and upper secondary education and training as a whole.

The curriculum consists of:

- the core curriculum: values and principles in education;
- subject curriculum;
- a framework regulating the distribution of teaching hours per subject.

The core curriculum deepens appreciation of basic values such as moral outlook, creative abilities, preparation for working life and society, general education, cooperation, and ecological understanding. This part of the curriculum underlies all education in Norway, from primary to adult, and provides the binding foundation and values for primary and upper secondary education and training.

The quality framework consists of the principles that clarify the school owners' (municipalities and county authorities) responsibilities. Key competences are integrated into the quality framework, such as learning strategies, social competences, cultural competences, motivation to learn, and learner participation.

The subject curricula consist of outcome-based learning targets, the main subject areas and basic skills. The main subject areas describe what the learner and apprentice should be able to do. The basic skills are: the ability to express oneself orally and in writing, the ability to read, fluency in numeracy, and the ability to use digital tools. The subject curricula also describe which final assessment will be given on completion.

The distribution of teaching hours per subject is set at national level. It offers an overview of how the total teaching hours should be distributed per subject per year for the 10-year compulsory education as well as for the upper secondary level, VET included.

The national curriculum encompasses 10-year compulsory education and upper secondary

education and training as a whole. The competence objectives state what the learner/apprentice should be able to master at each level after grades 2, 4, 7 and 10, as well as after every stage of upper secondary education and training. Basic skills are decisive for acquiring subject-related knowledge and for communicating and cooperating with others in a wide range of situations. Their aims are integrated with, and adapted to, each subject according to level. The subject curricula also describe the principles for assessment. However, decisions regarding teaching methods are left to the education and training institutions. Curricular activities at local levels are essential in order to implement the national curriculum, particularly the outcome-based competence aims in the subject curricula. School owners must have a system in place for following up the quality of local curricular activities. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training develops web-based guidelines to support local curricular activities as well as other measures to raise competence among school owners and school managements.

#### **Developing VET curricula (EQF level 4)**

The Directorate for Education and Training has responsibility for continuous curriculum development. It makes extensive use of expert groups from both schools and enterprises providing upper secondary education. When the need for a new qualification is identified, a tripartite group is set up to design vocational profiles; these form the basis for developing the subject curricula. The Directorate appoints teams for curricula development consisting of professionals (most often proposed by the employer and employee organisations) and VET teachers.

Within 3 months, the team submits a draft version of the curriculum to the Directorate. The draft is distributed to the sector for a 3-month consultation process and relevant feedback is incorporated. With support from external representatives from the sector, curriculum quality is assured by the Directorate. Depending on the subject, curricula are finally set by the Ministry or the Directorate.

The Directorate also has a follow-up system for curricula (*System for oppfølging av læreplan (SOL)*). The purpose of the system is to obtain a more holistic and systematic overview of the situation for the curricula. SOL entails reviewing, compiling and analysing different sources that inform the situation for the curricula and how they function. These sources include studies, enquiries, evaluation reports and statistics. The intention is that SOL should contribute to making curricula administration more systematic, knowledge-based and predictable. The knowledge gained gives the Directorate a basis for initiating necessary and adequate measures for strengthening implementation of the curricula. These measures can support and inform VET providers when adjusting the curricula.

Norway was in the process of renewing all subjects at all levels of education. The renewed subjects and a new core curriculum were implemented in 2020.

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[35] There is one council for each VET programme. Each council consist of representatives from the respective trades or industries.

## CHAPTER 11.

# Quality assurance

Tripartite cooperation is a crucial quality assurance mechanism for upper secondary VET. The Education Act requires the county authority (*fylkeskommunen*) to consult the county vocational training board (*Yrkesopplæringsnemda*) on quality issues related to school-based and work-based VET. A main task for the board is thus to give advice, especially related to accreditation of apprenticeship training enterprises. The board should also present proposals for quality development, including improving partnerships between schools and enterprises, and skills and competence development for teachers and trainers.

As quality assurance is embedded in the legal framework, the State is responsible for inspecting all activities stipulated in the Education Act. The State also has the authority to issue legally binding orders to rectify unsatisfactory conditions. The Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) has delegated this responsibility as the inspectorate at national level to the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (*Utdanningsdirektoratet*). The Directorate is responsible for developing and supporting inspections, to facilitate a unified inspection throughout the country, and to provide guidance on legislation. The county governors (*Statsforvalter*) serve as the operational inspection authority for basic training, and have responsibility for activities at county level. They also serve as the appeal body for individual decisions regarding learners in primary and lower secondary school. However, the Ministry still has the authority to exercise supervision, and can instruct the Directorate for Education and Training and the county governors on how inspections should be performed.

Quality standards for VET providers are set out in the Education Act and relevant regulations. The legislation sets standards for examinations, trade and journey person's certification, approval of apprenticeship training enterprises, and teacher competence. The Education Act also regulates the county governors' responsibility to provide guidance to school owners. This applies to guidance not only on academic matters but also on other matters related to the Education Act. It includes guidance on administrative rules, and is intended to provide the best possible cooperation between the State and school owners.

In addition to the county governors' more general inspections, joint national inspections may also be implemented. These inspections are incident-based, and derive from regional risk assessments made in cooperation with the county governors. Situations may arise that invoke immediate attention by the authorities, and give county governors the authority to perform inspections at their own initiative.

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (*Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen* (NOKUT)) is responsible for recognition, accreditation and quality assurance in post-secondary vocational education and higher education. The frameworks for these activities are laid down in the respective laws and regulations on quality assurance in higher education and post-secondary vocational education, as well as in supplementary regulations, rules and procedures laid down by NOKUT.

## CHAPTER 12.

# Validation of prior learning

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is possible at all levels of education and training in Norway and can be used to acquire modules and/or full qualifications. There are laws and regulations in place relating to each level of education and training, providing a general framework for validation of prior learning. The Norwegian system of validation is based on shared principles across all sectors. One of these principles is that the validation process should be voluntary and of benefit to the individual.

Differences in funding and governance mechanisms found in primary, upper secondary, higher vocational education and higher education affect the preconditions for setting up validation procedures. The sectors of education have developed schemes for validation of non-formal and informal learning according to their specific needs and preconditions. Higher education institutions exercise the greatest freedom in the design and delivery of validation, because responsibilities are devolved to each institution. This also concerns post-secondary VET. The national government and its underlying administrations provide guidelines for all educational sectors.

During the autumn 2013, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, in cooperation with stakeholders from the sectors, developed national guidelines (last amended on 16 March 2021) relating to adults who claim the right to have their formal, non-formal and informal learning validated compared to lower or upper secondary level. The guidelines focus mainly on how to interpret the regulations relating to validation and how to implement the different points described in the regulations. The purpose of the national guidelines for validation is to ensure that sound validation procedures are carried out, leading to similar practices in all Norwegian counties and municipalities. By providing a national basis for local practice, the guidelines could spur confidence and legitimacy of the validation practices.

- It is possible to acquire a full qualification on the basis of validation in the programme for general studies in upper secondary education (university-preparatory).
- In upper secondary VET, it is necessary to take the relevant final (trade) examination to achieve a trade or journeyman's certificate as a skilled worker.
- In higher education, individuals can gain exemptions for parts of study programmes. On the diploma as well as on the diploma supplement, the relevant courses and credits will be identified as having been obtained through validation. In post-secondary VET, the possibility to give exemption from courses and modules on the basis of validation was introduced through regulations of 1 August 2013.

In terms of awarding credits or partial qualifications after validation in primary and upper secondary education and training, the Education Act allows candidates to achieve a partial certificate qualification, called 'certificate of competence' (*kompetansebevis*) at any level through validation. Candidates then have the right to access further education and training, in order to achieve a full trade or journeyman certificate. The certificate of competence is awarded to recognise that an individual has achieved certain objectives (learning outcomes) within an upper secondary curriculum. The certificates can serve as stand-alone evidence of competences and can be used, for example, to support a job application or participation in further education courses.

These partial certificates of competence are recognised in the labour market, as a documentation of parts of the requirements in the trade. It is also possible to access education through validation: the individual must be able to show (through documentation or other means) the required skills and competences to enter a certain level of education and training.



For more information about validation arrangements, please visit Cedefop's [European database on validation of non-formal and informal learning](#).

## CHAPTER 13.

# Incentives for learners

### Salary during apprenticeship training

The apprenticeship scheme is a critical component of the upper secondary VET 2+2 model. The regulated salary during the apprenticeship training period is a financial incentive to promote learner participation in VET. The salary for apprentices is a given percentage of the initial salary of a worker with a craft certificate in the relevant vocation. The salary increases throughout the apprenticeship.

For apprentices following the main model (2+2), the salary is calculated as follows, for the 2 years of apprenticeship:

- first half of the years in an approved training company: 30 % of the initial salary;
- second half: 40 % of the initial salary;
- third half: 50 % of the initial salary;
- fourth half: 80 % of the initial salary.

### Grants and loans for learners

The main purposes of the Act relating to learner grants (*Lov om utdanningsstøtte*) of 1985, most recently amended in 2020, are to:

- improve equity in access to education and training regardless of geography, gender, age and social background;
- improve learning environments and enable learners to study more effectively;
- ensure a qualified workforce for society at large.

Learner loans carry no interest charges during the period of study and up to 40% may be converted to grant after completing education. All registered learners participating in formally recognised study programmes, at both public and private institutions of higher education, may receive grants and subsidised loans from the Norwegian State education loan fund (*Statens lånekasse for utdanning*) for subsistence expenses. Support is also provided to Norwegian learners abroad, who may receive additional support for travel, admission, and tuition fees.

Learners in upper secondary school-based VET (learners and apprentices alike) may qualify for grants and subsidised loans from the Norwegian State education loan fund subject to a needs-based assessment. They may receive relocation grants if they have to move away from home to attend school or enterprise-based training, and are also entitled to support from the fund.

The following grants are also available to adult learners:

- additional subsistence grant to cover expenses if they live away from home;
- grants for purchasing compulsory equipment, according to study programme.

Support to learners at upper secondary level is mainly provided in the form of grants.

Grants and loans regulations for adults were made more flexible in 2020/21. The time frame for loans and grants was expanded, additionally the requirement of being minimum a 50% full-time student was removed. This means that adults studying for example 20% may apply for support.

## CHAPTER 14.

# Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

The apprenticeship scheme is a critical component of the upper secondary VET 2+2 model. After 2 years of school-based education, most VET programmes involve a 2-year apprenticeship in a training enterprise. This period is equivalent to 1 year of practice-based training and 1 year of productive work for the training enterprise. During the first year as an apprentice with practice-based training, the enterprise focus on teaching; there is no expectation of profit-making. The second year with productive work is expected to be profit-making for the company. After 2 years in school, the apprentice signs a legally binding apprenticeship contract with the training enterprise and a representative from the county authorities. By law, apprentices are employees of the enterprise, with the rights and obligations that follow. They are entitled to a salary that increases with the apprentice's productivity during the 2-year apprenticeship period. Salary increases normally start at 30% and increase to 80% of a skilled worker's salary.

All training enterprises received a state grant of approximately EUR 16 000 per apprentice for a 12-month training period. The grant covers the training period only, not the productive component. The grant is distributed evenly throughout the apprenticeship period in the company. The grant is supposed to cover costs related to training the apprentice. Additional grants are given to enterprises either for offering apprenticeships in rare and protected crafts (*små og verneverdige fag*) or for accepting apprentices or training candidates with special needs.

## CHAPTER 15.

# Guidance and counselling

Norwegian legislation (39) guarantees the right of every learner to receive guidance on educational and vocational matters as well as for social or personal character.

Guidance and guidance services are provided by different institutions according to level of education and relationship to the labour market. The main guidance services are organised within the school system. Learners in primary and secondary education have the right to necessary guidance on education, vocational opportunities, vocational choices and social matters. The provision is organised by the individual schools. All learners are entitled to guidance according to their needs.

A whole-school approach to guidance has been adopted, meaning that individual teachers, and all other personnel in schools, have a responsibility to provide guidance to learners. One subject in the curriculum for lower secondary schools, the study choice programme subject (*Utdanningsvalg*), is specifically aimed at providing learners with the competences they need to make informed educational and vocational choices. A similar subject is offered in VET programmes in upper secondary schools. With a different responsibility for guidance, guidance counsellors in lower and upper secondary education provide guidance to learners in school. Guidance counsellors in the Follow-up Service (*Oppfølgingstjenesten*) provide guidance to those aged between 16 and 24 who are neither in education nor in employment.

All counties have allocated funding from the State budget to establish partnerships for career guidance; most have established such partnerships or other forms of regional cooperation. Local and regional school authorities, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the business sector, and social partners are often partners in these initiatives. Several counties have established career centres to provide guidance for everyone, primarily adults aged 19 and above. The career centres also play a role in helping improve the competence of guidance counsellors in schools, in local NAV offices and other institutions offering career guidance. The Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills is in charge of managing and monitoring partnerships in career guidance.

Career guidance is available as a master's degree. Career guidance strengthens the individual's ability and competence to make informed education and vocational choices.

Although all learners in upper secondary education have the right to guidance under the Education Act, apprentices do not have this right. An official Norwegian report (40) recommends a right to guidance also for apprentices. An online guidance platform to increase the quality of guidance in both lower and upper secondary schools is available. Universities and some university colleges have established career centres to provide guidance to learners. Adults who need guidance may use the local offices of the NAV or visit regional career centres established by partnerships in career guidance. A small number of private agencies also provide career guidance on a commercial basis.

Please see also:

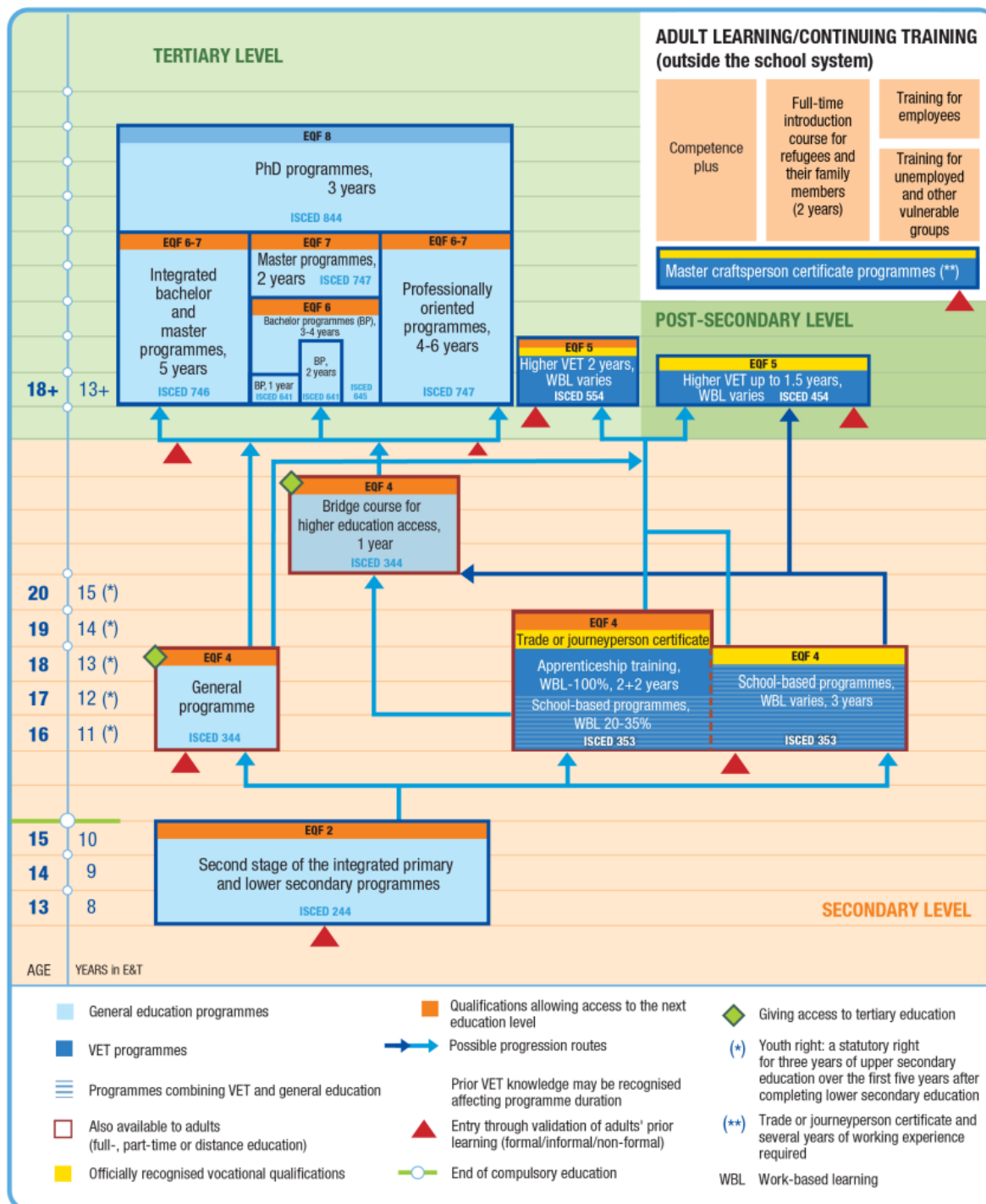
- [guidance and outreach Norway national report](#);
- [Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices](#);
- [National guidance Systems](#).

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[39] [Lov om grunnskolen og den vidaregåande opplæringa \(opplæringslova\)](#). [Act on primary school and secondary education (the education act)] came into force 1.8. 1999 when it

replaced *Lov om grunnskolen (Grunnskolelova)* from 1969.

# Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills. (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Norway: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database].

[www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/norway-u3](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/norway-u3)

# VET Programme Types

EQF 4
School-based programmes, WBL varies, 3 years
ISCED 353

## The 3-year upper secondary school-based pathway leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 353 (Yrkeskompetanse)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	11	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓

**ECVET or other credits** Credits are not available at upper secondary level.

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)** School-based learning consisting of 981 hours of teaching in the first year, of which 477 hours in the programme subject.  
Second year: 982 hours of teaching, 477 hours in the programme subject.  
Third year: 981 hours, 926 hours in the programme subject.

**Main providers** Upper secondary schools, mainly public.

**Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies** Work-based learning varies and is locally adapted by VET providers.

<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school;</li> <li>• locally adapted in-company training.</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	This scheme is available both for young people and for adults.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	<p>Completed lower secondary education is required.</p> <p>The level of the grades to enter may vary, depending on the demand (the number of applicants) and the grades of the applicants.</p>
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>The learners need to pass a compulsory final exam, which is based on learning outcomes and usually includes a practical part.</p> <p>At upper secondary level, learners have the right to a new final exam if the first attempt fails. The school is obliged to offer the opportunity to take the exam next time this is scheduled at the school. If a learner fails to do so, the exam has to be completed as an external candidate for a public examination.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	Professional competence qualification (EQF 4)
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin care worker</li> <li>• Interior design</li> <li>• Agronomist</li> </ul>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour market;</li> <li>• Journeyman certificate exam after five years work experience in a relevant trade;</li> <li>• Bridge course qualifying for higher education.</li> </ul>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Information not available.</p> <p>In Norway, graduates are tracked 3 years after completing a vocational education. In total, 83.3% of all the 2017-18 graduates are employed, 10.1% are in education and 6.7% are neither in education nor employment (<a href="http://www.udir.no">www.udir.no</a>)</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	Achieving qualifications through validation of prior learning is not possible. The final examination has to be conducted.
<b>General education subjects</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>The common core subjects (<i>fellesfag</i>) (Norwegian, English, mathematics, physical education, natural sciences and social sciences) are the same for all VET programmes.</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>Key competences are integrated in the competence aims for the subject.</p>



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**Application of learning outcomes approach**



The programme is based on learning outcomes.

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**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

In 2022/23, there were 48 295 learners in the third year of upper secondary education. Nearly 5% of them attended this programme. The others progressed to apprenticeship or to a bridge year to access higher education.

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EQF 4

Apprenticeship training,

WBL -100%

2+2 years

School-based programmes,


WBL 20-35%

ISCED level 353

**The main model for vocational education and training, 2+2 pathway (apprenticeship model) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED level 353 (2+2 modellen).**

<b>EQF level</b>	4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	353
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	11	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	14
<b>Usual entry age</b>	16	<b>Usual completion age</b>	19
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	4		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✓	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✓	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓
	Upper secondary school is free of charge.		
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	Credits are not available at this level of education.		
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	The model entails 2 years of education in school followed by 2 years of formal apprenticeship training in company.		
<b>Main providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VET schools in the first 2 years;</li> <li>• Training companies in the second 2 years.</li> </ul>		
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	20-35% in the first 2 years, 100% in the second 2 years		

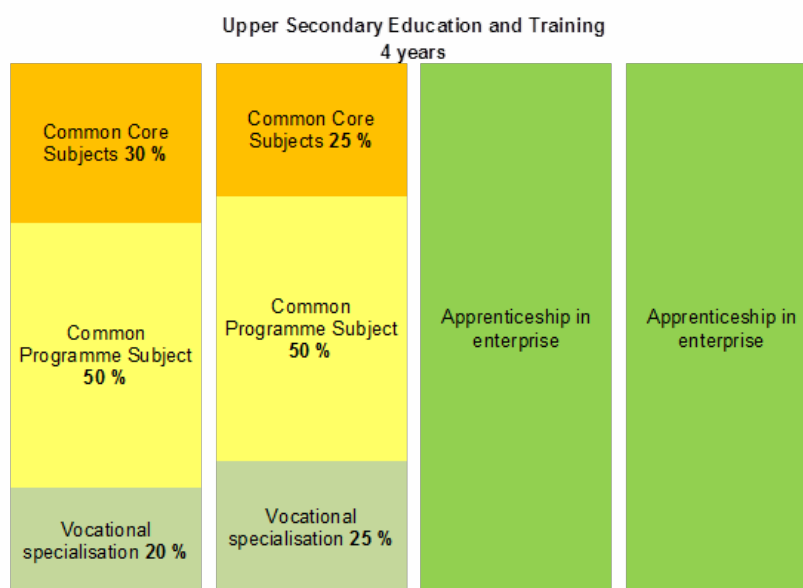
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school and / or in company training during the first 2 years;</li> <li>• apprenticeship in company in the second 2 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>Mainly young people, 16- to 18-year-olds (85%).</p> <p>In 2023 the age group 19-24 represents 7.9%, 25- and above 7% (41) ).</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	<p>Completed lower secondary education is required.</p>
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>Upper secondary VET is completed with a practical-theoretical trade or journeyperson's examination (<i>Fag- eller svenneprøve</i>). In the test, candidates demonstrate their vocational skills, and explain and justify the methods chosen to solve the test assignments.</p> <p>A county-appointed, trade-specific examination board prepares and assesses the examination. The minimum requirement for being a board member is a formal vocational education. The county authorities award the certificate.</p> <p>Following the main model, the apprentice takes the final exam 4 years after starting upper secondary education.</p> <p>In the 2017 cohort 53.8 % completed the education after 2 years of apprenticeship, 77.3% after 3 years, 84.3% after 4 years and 85.8 % after 5 years of apprenticeship ( (42) ).</p> <p>Learner competences are assessed continuously throughout the 4 years of education and training, in school by the teacher and in apprenticeship by the training supervisor. They must also take exams in individual subjects developed at local and county level. Learners may also be randomly selected to take nationally organised examinations in common core subjects. Most learners have passed exams in vocational subjects after 2 and 4 years of training. After 2 years in school, learners take an interdisciplinary local practical exam which covers all the vocational subjects.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>Upper secondary VET practical-theoretical trade or journeyperson's examination leads to an EQF level 4 qualification: a trade certificate (<i>Fagbrev</i>) for industrial and service trades or a journeyperson's certificate (<i>Svennebrev</i>) for traditional crafts.</p> <p>The two certificates have equal status based on similar sets of theoretical knowledge and practical skills.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial machinery mechanic;</li> <li>• Electrician;</li> <li>• Health worker.</li> </ul>

<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>There are many progression opportunities to post-secondary and tertiary education from upper secondary VET.</p> <p>With a trade or journeyman certificate, the options are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• labour market;</li> <li>• higher vocational education (ISCED 4), up to 18 months specialisation/further education;</li> <li>• higher vocational education (ISCED 5), 24-months, gives a university and college admission certificate;</li> <li>• via a 1-year bridging course in core subjects to gain university and college admission certificate (<i>påbyggingsår</i>);</li> <li>• direct admission to certain specially designed bachelor programmes (<i>Y-veien</i>).</li> </ul>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Information for this programme is not available.</p> <p>Graduates are tracked up to 3 years after completing a vocational education. 81.6% of all 2018-19 graduates are employed 1 year after completing the final exam, and 82.2 % after 3 years ( 43 ).</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Validation of prior learning is an option to access the programme.</p> <p>The Directorate of Education and Training has developed national guidelines for the assessment of prior learning in lower and upper secondary school for adults.</p>

**General education subjects**



**The 2+2 pathway apprenticeship model with structure of subjects**



Source: ReferNet Norway.

The common core subjects (*fellesfag*) (Norwegian, English, mathematics, physical education, natural sciences, and social sciences) are the same for all VET programmes.

**Key competences**



The key competences are integrated in the competence aims for the subject.

**Application of learning outcomes approach**



The programme is based on learning outcomes.

**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

No information available on the share of learners.

At upper secondary level, 72% of the vocational programmes are structured according to the two main models (2+2 apprenticeships and 3+0 school based).

80.6% of all the learners applying for an apprenticeship signed a contract in 2022, this is an increase of almost 5 percent since 2020.

[41] Statistics Norway: <https://www.ssb.no/vgu>

[42] [www.udir.no](http://www.udir.no), extracted 3.1.2023.

[43] [www.udir.no](http://www.udir.no), extracted 3.11.2023.

Master craftsperson

certificate

1.5-2 years (part-time)

## Master craftsperson certificate (Mesterbrevordningen)




<b>EQF level</b>	Not applicable	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	1.5 - 2 (part-time)		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✗ The craftsperson certificate is a trade certification regulated by a separate law under the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Fisheries. It is not part of the formal education and training system, but some of the VET college education programmes qualify for applying for a craftsperson certificate. It is also possible to achieve this certificate based on work experience and specific non-formal courses.
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✓ A trade or journeyman certificate is required, as well as several years of relevant work experience.
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✗	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓

**ECVET or other credits** Not applicable

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)** Common subjects are delivered part-time over the course of 2 years (the training is typically combined with full-time work as an employee or owner of an SME). ICT is integrated throughout the course. Both common subjects and craft theory are offered as evening and part-time courses. Distance education courses are also available.

<b>Main providers</b>	Four institutions are approved as providers of the non-formal education programmes that also qualify for master craftsperson certificate: <i>Folkeuniversitetet (FU)</i> , <i>Norges grønne fagskole - Veia</i> , <i>Blimester</i> and <i>Norges mesterakademi</i> .
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	The certificate requires many years of work experience in the relevant field. The required training beyond this (formal or non-formal) does not include WBL
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Main target groups</b>	Master craftsperson certificate is for holders of a trade or journeyman certificate who also have several years of relevant work experience and wish to set up their own business or hold a managerial position in a craft enterprise.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Trade or journeyman certificate and several years of relevant work experience. Entry through validation of adults' prior learning (formal/informal/non-formal).
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>For both formal and non-formal education programmes: courses in common subjects conclude with a written examination. In craft theory, a written examination is held for each master craftsperson subject.</p> <p>The master craftsperson certificate is administered by the publicly appointed Master Craftsman Certificate Committee (<i>Mesterbrevnemnda</i>, MCC), which determines training standards and practice requirements and awards the certificate.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>Successful candidates obtain the title Master craftsperson (<i>Mesterbrev</i>) and can use the title Master craftsperson (<i>Mester</i>). Holding the certificate and using the title requires a yearly fee to the Master Craftsperson Certificate Committee.</p> <p>The master craftsperson certificate is awarded in 73 different crafts covering all traditional trades in which journeyman examinations are held and journeyman certificates issued, as well as some (newer) trades with craft examinations and certificates.</p> <p>In 2022, 570 people qualified for this certificate. Of these, 213 received it based on formal education in a higher VET college.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Example of qualifications (out of more than 70):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• masonry;</li> <li>• vehicle spraying</li> <li>• woodcarving.</li> </ul>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The formal education programmes qualifying for a master craftsperson certificate also gives an admission certificate for higher education.</li> </ul>



<b>Destination of graduates</b>	People attaining the certificate are usually already active in the labour market.
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	 Validation of prior learning in order to achieve the master craftsman certificate ( <i>Mesterbrevnemnda</i> ) is possible.
<b>General education subjects</b>	Master craftsman certificate requires training in general administrative subjects such as business organisation and management, marketing, financial control, and vocational theory.
<b>Key competences</b>	
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	Not applicable

EQF 5

Post-secondary VET

Up to 1.5 years

ISCED 454

## Higher vocation education at post-secondary level leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 454 (høyere yrkesfaglig utdanning)

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	454
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	Up to 1.5 years (44)		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✓
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	Depending on the education programme. The county councils decide which programmes shall be publicly funded and free of charge. Education programmes without public funding can be offered for a tuition fee. State education loan funding is possible.		<b>Is it available for adults?</b> ✓

**ECVET or other credits** From 5 - 90 study credits. 60 study credits correspond to one-year full study. Not recognised as ECTS.

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)** Education at this level is available as either:





- full-time;
- part-time studies.

Both study forms can be offered as:

- campus education;
- online education;
- combination of online and campus education.

Training is available at school and within an enterprise.

**Main providers** Higher vocational colleges (*fagskoler*), private and public.

<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	The share of work-based learning depends on the study and varies.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	Work-based learning may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school;</li> <li>• in-company practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	Programmes are available both for young people and for working adults.  The education especially targets working adults and study is often adapted to fit a combination of work and study.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Access is based on upper secondary vocational qualification or an upper secondary general education, depending on the branch of study. Admission based on work experience is also possible.  Most programmes are designed as part-time courses facilitating a combination of education and work.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	The education is based on learning outcomes and the students have to pass a final examination.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	VET students at this level may receive the following qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional degree (60-90 credits);</li> <li>• certificate without a degree (5-59 credits).</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care worker specialisation;</li> <li>• Leadership, economics, and administration;</li> <li>• Fashion designer and pattern maker.</li> </ul>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour market</li> <li>• Further higher vocational education</li> <li>• Bridge course giving a higher education admission certificate</li> </ul>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	 <p>Recognition of prior learning (RPL): Access based on individual assessment of formal, informal and non-formal qualifications is open to applicants aged 23 or above. For creative programmes (art), RPL is possible from age 19. Applications for admission on the basis of RPL are processed locally at each institution.</p>
<b>General education subjects</b>	
<b>Key competences</b>	
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	

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**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

Information for this type of programme is not available.

In general, there are 30 000 students in higher vocational education level (both ISCED 4 and 5 together) compared to over 300 000 students at universities and university colleges.

The number of students in higher vocational education has doubled since 2016.

Data from 2022 ((45) ).

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- [45] Røst, Therese (et.al.), (2023). [Tilstandsrapport for høgare yrkesfaglig utdanning 2023](#). [Report on the condition in higher vocational education 2023]

EQF 5
Higher VET
2 years
ISCED 554

## Higher vocation education leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (høyere yrkesfaglig utdanning)

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	554
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	2 years (up to 3 years possible in special cases)		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✓
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	Depending on the education programme. The county councils decide which programmes shall be publicly funded and free of charge. Education programmes without public funding can be offered for a tuition fee. State education loan funding is possible.		✓

**ECVET or other credits** 120 study credits (up to 180 credits possible in special cases). 60 study credits correspond to one-year full study. Not recognised as ECTS.



**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)** Education at this level is available as either:



- full-time;
- part-time studies;

Both study forms can be offered as

- campus education
- online education;
- combination of online and campus education.

Training at school or at an enterprise if relevant for the programme.

<b>Main providers</b>	Higher vocational colleges ( <i>fagskoler</i> ), private and public
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	The share of work-based learning depends on the study and varies.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	Work-based learning may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school;</li> <li>• in-company practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	Programmes are available both for young people and for working adults.  The education especially targets working adults and study is often adapted to fit a combination of work and study.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Access is based on upper secondary vocational qualification or an upper secondary general education, depending on the branch of study. Admission based on work experience is also possible.  Most programmes are designed as part-time courses, facilitating a combination of education and work.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	The education is based on learning outcomes and the students have to pass a final examination.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	VET students at this level receive the qualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• higher professional degree (120-180 credits)</li> </ul> Several of the two-year programmes qualify for the master craftsperson certificate. ((46) )
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanical engineer</li> <li>• Electro-technician</li> <li>• Chief engineer (ship machinery)</li> </ul>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour market</li> <li>• General admission certificate to higher education</li> <li>• Admission to specific higher education programmes with recognition of prior learning</li> </ul>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	 <p>Recognition of prior learning (RPL): Access based on individual assessment of formal, informal and non-formal qualifications is open to applicants aged 23 or above. For creative programmes (art), RPL is possible from age 19. Applications for admission on the basis of RPL are processed locally at each institution.</p>
<b>General education subjects</b>	

<b>Key competences</b>	
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	<p>Information for this type of programme is not available.</p> <p>In general, there are 30 000 students in higher vocational education level (both ISCED 4 and 5 together) compared to over 300 000 students at universities and university colleges.</p> <p>The number of students in higher vocational education has doubled since 2016.</p> <p>Data from 2022 ((47) ).</p>

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