



# spotlight on VET NORWAY

## VET in Norway

All young people leaving compulsory school have a statutory right to three years of upper secondary education. They may choose from three general studies programmes and nine VET programmes. Upper secondary education, VET included, is provided by 19 regional county authorities.

Upper secondary VET is conducted both in schools and in public and private enterprises. Training establishments must be approved by the county authorities. The standard two plus two model normally includes two years in school, followed by two years of formalised apprenticeship training. The first year consists of general education and an introduction to the vocational area. During the second year, VET students choose specialisations and courses are more trade-specific. While in school, students participate in practical training in workshops and enterprises. During the latter two years, apprentices are engaged in one year of training and one year of productive work.

Upper secondary VET is normally completed by a practical-theoretical trade or journeyman's examination (*Fag- og svenneprøve*). Successful candidates are awarded a trade certificate (*Fagbrev*) for industrial and service trades or a journeyman's certificate (*Svennebrev*) for traditional crafts.

There are many possibilities for transition to higher education from upper secondary VET:

- (a) by completing the third year of supplementary studies qualifying for higher education, comprising the six key common core subjects (Norwegian, maths, English, natural sciences, social sciences and history);
- (b) after completion of a trade or journeyman's certificate:
  - (i) one-year course in the six key common core subjects;
  - (ii) direct admission to certain specially-designed programmes notably, but not exclusively, in engineering (*Y-veien*);
- (c) applicants aged 23 or above with at least five years' work experience and/or education, and who have successfully passed a course in the six key common core subjects;

- (d) based on individual assessment of relevant formal, informal and non-formal qualifications for applicants aged 25 or more, who do not meet the general entrance requirements.

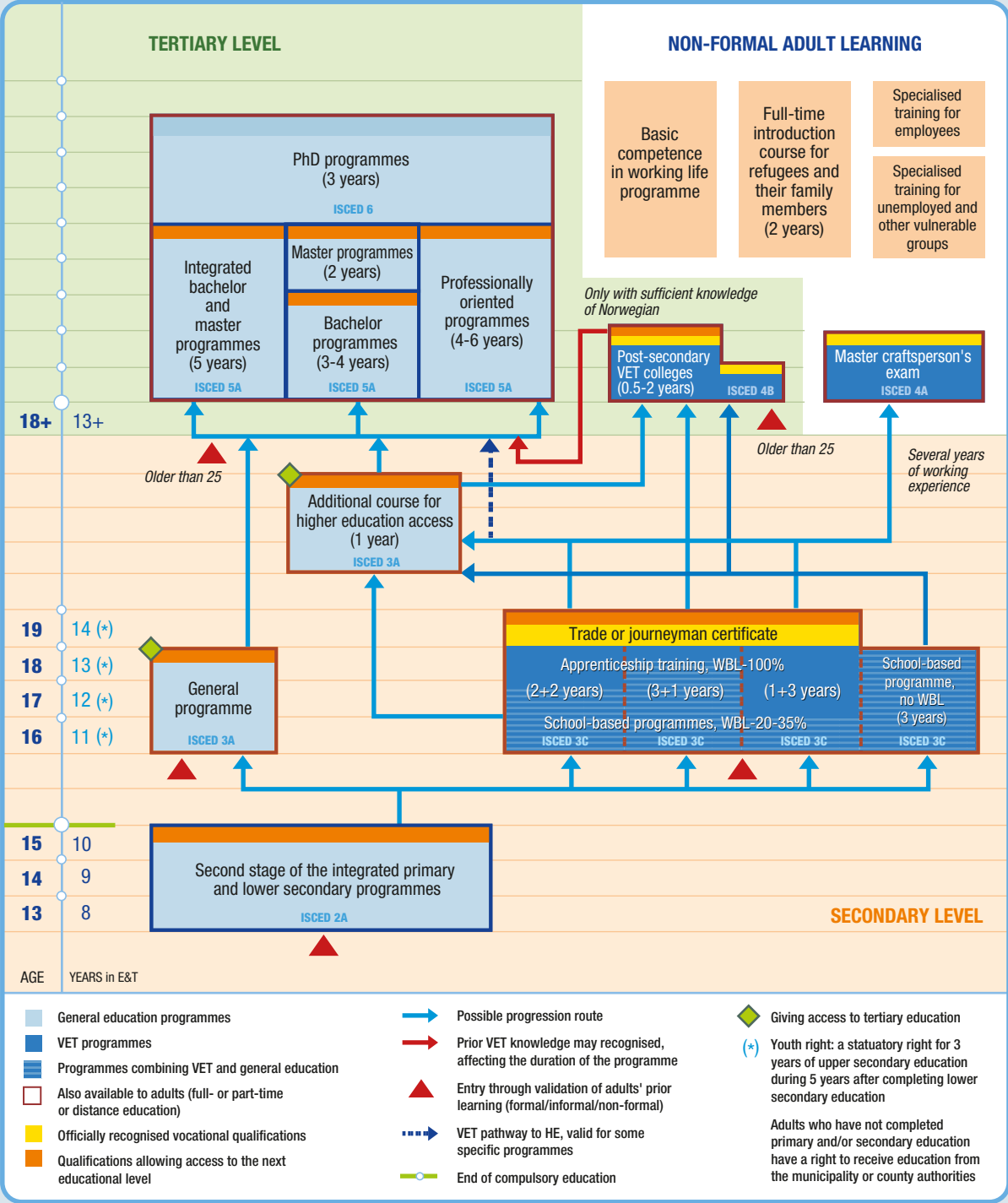
Adults over 25 have on application a statutory right to upper secondary education and training. Education should be adapted to the individual's needs and life situation. Adults also have a right to have their prior learning assessed towards national curricula. The process may result in exemption from parts of training. The experience-based trade certification scheme gives adults the right to sit a trade or journeyman's examination upon proof of long and relevant practice. The candidate must demonstrate comprehensive experience in the trade or craft, normally a minimum of five years.

Master craftsman education is VET for holders of a relevant trade or journeyman's certificate with several years' work experience. The training, which combines general business management, marketing and vocational theory, is a public certification arrangement under the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Many of these programmes are provided by vocational colleges at ISCED level 4. Such colleges also offer a range of short VET programmes for students with an upper-secondary qualification. Providers design their own courses and curricula. Each programme must be recognised by a national authority for quality assurance.

In higher education there is no formal or other distinction between vocational and non-vocational education.

The Ministry of Education and Research has overall responsibility for education and training at all levels. For upper secondary VET, curricula and the VET structure are laid down in regulations, and providers are required to comply with them. The county authorities are responsible for: the volume of school and VET provision; dispensing VET financing provided by the State budget (including apprenticeships); providing apprenticeship placement and supervision.

# VET in the Norwegian education and training system



## Distinctive features of VET

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

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

Norway has a unified educational structure, and VET is integrated as an equal part of upper secondary education. Most education at this level is provided by public schools. There are clear and consistent pathways and provision is mainly organised the same way. Since students have a right to attend upper secondary education, most choose to do so. Students are entitled to embark on one of the three programmes of their choice.

## Challenges

In 2006, Norway launched a comprehensive curriculum reform that covered primary and secondary education. National authorities ordered a major research-based evaluation of the reform, and the results, published in 2012, show that there are two major challenges:

- (a) encourage students to choose VET;
- (b) encourage students to complete VET with a formal qualification.

The findings state that the reform has not contributed significantly to increase either recruitment to VET or the participation rate. Although more than half the students who embark on upper secondary education choose a vocational programme, only a minority complete with a VET qualification. Also, applicants for VET have decreased in recent years. Many students drop out or choose to switch to a third year which prepares them for entrance to higher education.

Only about 60% of VET learners complete their upper secondary education successfully within five years. Research shows that there are remarkable gender differences in drop-outs; boys constitute a larger portion of drop-outs than girls. Drop-out is of great concern, and measures have been and are still being implemented. 'New possibilities' (Ny GIV) is a major national project that aims at increasing completion rates in upper secondary education.

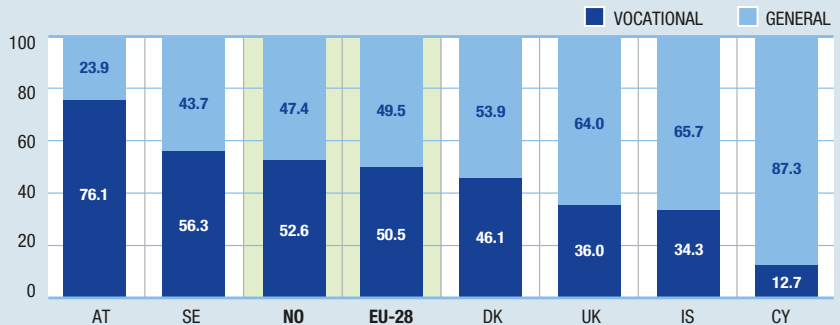
The most critical point in completing VET is the transition from school to apprenticeship training. Supply of apprenticeships does not meet demand from applicants. Enterprises do not consider all students as qualified. The system depends on enterprises' willingness to take on apprentices, and some researchers have referred to this as a structural defect in the system. The social contract on VET, signed by social partners and the authorities in 2012, aims to increase the number of apprenticeships.



## Education and training in figures

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

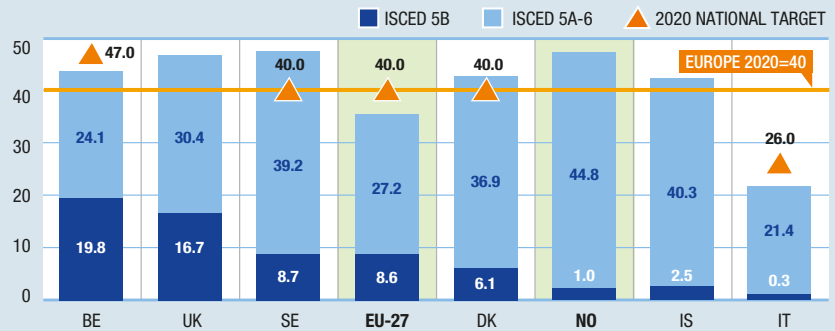
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2011



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 28.6.2013.

### Tertiary education by type

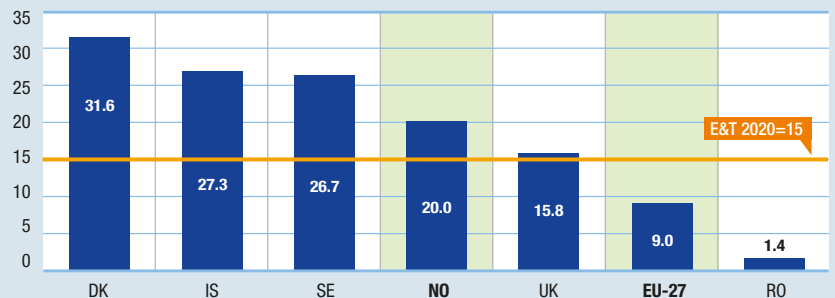
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2012



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 8.7.2013.

### Lifelong learning

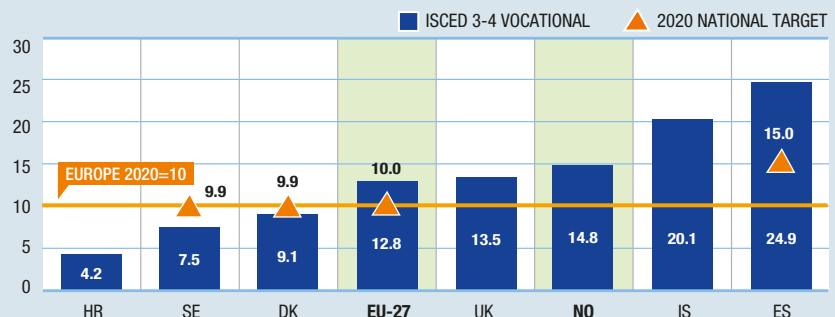
% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2012



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 3.7.2013.

### Early leavers from education and training

% of early leavers from education and training, 2012



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 8.7.2013.



## Further information

- The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2012). *The education mirror: analysis of primary and secondary education and training in Norway*.  
[http://www.udir.no/Upload/Rapporter/2012/US2012\\_ENG\\_nettsversjon.pdf?epslanguage=no](http://www.udir.no/Upload/Rapporter/2012/US2012_ENG_nettsversjon.pdf?epslanguage=no)
- Cedefop, ReferNet Norway (2012). *VET in Europe country report: Norway*.  
[http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2012/2012\\_CR\\_NO.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2012/2012_CR_NO.pdf)
- Eurydice (2013), Norway: overview. In: European Commission (ed.). *Eurydice*.  
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Norway:Overview>
- Information on and reports from the research-based evaluation of the knowledge promotion reform [in Norwegian]: <http://www.udir.no/Tilstand/Evaluering-av-Kunnskapsloftet/>

<a href="http://www.kd.dep.no">www.kd.dep.no</a>	Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research
<a href="http://www.ad.dep.no">www.ad.dep.no</a>	Norwegian Ministry of Labour
<a href="http://www.nhd.dep.no">www.nhd.dep.no</a>	Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry
<a href="http://www.udir.no">www.udir.no</a>	Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training
<a href="http://www.siu.no">www.siu.no</a>	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education
<a href="http://www.vox.no">www.vox.no</a>	Norwegian Centre for Lifelong Learning
<a href="http://www.nokut.no">www.nokut.no</a>	National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
<a href="http://www.ssb.no">www.ssb.no</a>	Statistics Norway



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

Europe 123, 570 01 Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE  
PO Box 22427, 551 02 Thessaloniki, GREECE  
Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020, E-mail: [info@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:info@cedefop.europa.eu)

Copyright © European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 2014  
All rights reserved.

visit our portal [www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)



Publications Office

9 789289 613972



9 789289 613972