

DENMARK

Summary

Country Report on the Vocational Education and Training system, REFERNET Cedefop

and

Summary report on Vocational Education and Training (VET) for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)



European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

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1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

1.1 Background to the IVET system

The ambitious aim for VET in Denmark is to make it an inclusive system. It should challenge the most talented pupils and provide them with increased opportunities for further education. And at the same time, programmes should provide realistic training opportunities for weaker learners.

One way of achieving this goal is by an introduction of partial qualifications corresponding to the needs of the labour market so that all young people can obtain an education which is suited to their abilities, and at the same time providing improved opportunities for access to higher education. There is free access to IVET for all students upon completing compulsory schooling. However, the number of students directly entering an IVET programme at 16 is falling, with a growing proportion either being admitted following a period in the labour market, or, as is becoming increasingly common, after completing a general or vocational upper secondary education. From the 75% of all students in 2005-6 that had completed the last year of compulsory education had commenced further education: either general or vocational upper secondary education (approximately 50%), or IVET (approximately 25%). IVET lasts between 2 and 4 years and qualifies students for either entering the labour market as skilled workers or for specific short cycle higher education programmes at vocational colleges. IVET programmes are organised as dual training, alternating between school-based and work-based training i.e. school-based education and training alternating with training within an enterprise.

Apprenticeship training

The apprenticeships are based on a contract, or training agreement, between the apprentice and the company and, in general, 2/3 of training takes place in the company. All training companies are approved by the relevant trade committee, i.e. the social partners, and thereby have to live up to certain requirements. In 2002, about 1/3 of all companies had apprentices. Colleges and companies work closely together to make sure that training takes place according to the law.

New Apprenticeship (*Ny Mesterlære*)

New apprenticeship was introduced as an alternative pathway into IVET and is part of the Government's strategy for reducing dropout within IVET. Pupils undertaking an IVET programme via the new apprenticeship pathway will typically spend the first year of their education receiving practical training within an enterprise. The initiative is aimed in particular at pupils who may struggle or lack the motivation to complete the more theoretical school-based education without first gaining a practical insight into the field.

Vocational education and training at tertiary level

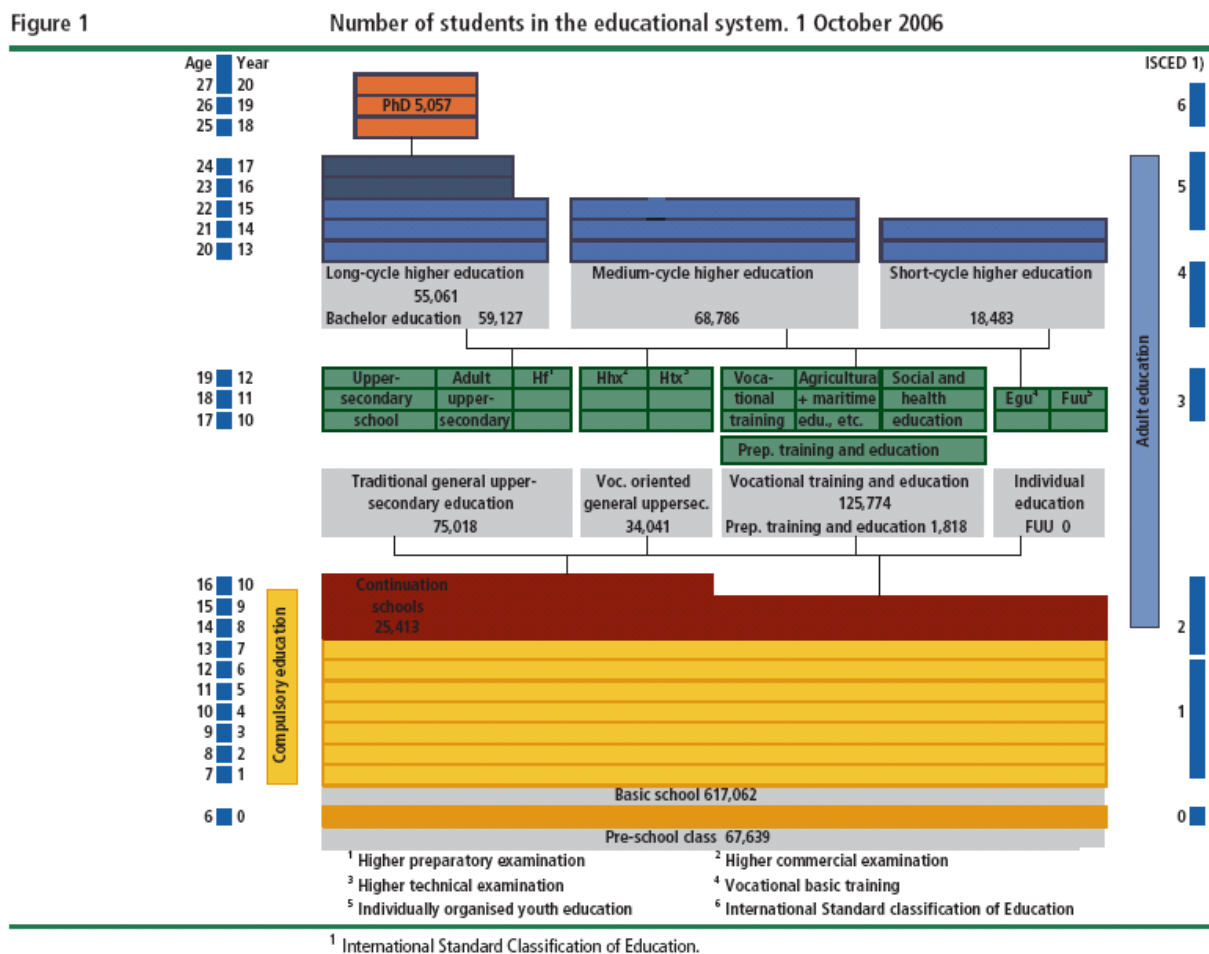
Vocational colleges offer a number of short-cycle higher education programmes (*kort videregående uddannelse* - KVVU) lasting 2 to 2 1/2 years. Programmes are school-based, however there are often work placements included and/or project work for a company.

Alternative pathways:

1) Basic vocational training (*erhvervsgrunduddannelse*, EGU) is aimed at unemployed young people aged 17-21. The purpose is to improve their vocational and personal qualifications and inspire them to enter the labour market or pursue further training possibilities.

2) Schools of production are aimed at young people aged under 25 who have not completed youth education or find it difficult to see a way forward in further education or in the labour market. The purpose is to help clarify the individual's future career path, and individual guidance is provided on a day-to-day basis.

1.2 Diagram of the education and training system



1.3 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET

The Danish Government published its strategy for Lifelong Learning in August 2007 as a contribution to the realisation of the common EU objectives of Lisbon. The Danish strategy for Lifelong Learning is framed within the liberal-conservative Government's globalisation strategy "Progress, Innovation and Cohesion – Strategy for Denmark in the Global Economy" (2006).

This strategy encompasses the entire education system and is to be gradually implemented between 2007 and 2012.



The goal is to enable Denmark to meet the challenges of globalisation and technological development and, by strengthening participation in continuing VET, to improve the ability of enterprises and individuals to adapt to changes in the labour market, and to ensure that the individual possesses relevant skills and knowledge throughout his or her working life. 'New apprenticeship' has been introduced as an alternative pathway, especially suited to pupils with a predominantly practical orientation.

Last policy reform from 2007, gathered all IVET programmes, i.e. commercial, technical, agricultural and social and health care education and training, under the same legislation. The reform introduced more structured basic programmes aimed at weaker students who have problems handling the highly individualised system; new basic programmes (the number has not yet been finalised); increased possibilities for partial qualifications (called: trin (steps)); and the electronic education plan system, Elevplan, was made compulsory. The law came into force from August 2007; however many of the changes were not implemented before July 2008.


1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET

The Government sets out the overall framework for general education and IVET which is administered by the Ministry of Education. The IVET system is centralised in terms of providing nationally recognised qualifications, and to some extent (pedagogically) decentralised as VET providers are autonomous in terms of adapting VET to local needs and demands. They are in charge of providing training and receive financial support from the government to do so. Vocational colleges are each governed by a board consisting of teacher, student and administrative staff representatives, and social partner representatives.

The social partners play an institutionalised role at all levels of VET, from the national Advisory Council on Initial Vocational Education and Training advising the Minister of Education on principal matters concerning VET to the local training committees advising the colleges on local adaptation of VET. The trade committees (*De faglige udvalg*) perform a central role in relation to the creation and renewal of VET courses and have a dominant position in the formulation of curricula.

VET Policies:

- The Regulation on the Vocational Education and Training Act (LBK no 1244 of 23/10/2007);
- The Regulation on the Labour Market Training Programmes Act (LBK no 190 of 18/03/2008);
- The Regulation on Vocational Education and Training (BEK no 1518 of 13/12/2007);
- The Regulation on the Basic Vocational Education and Training Act (LBK no 1321 of 27/11/2007);
- The Regulation on the Basic and Further Vocational Education and Training for Adults Act (LBK no 1051 of 29/08/2007);
- The Regulation on the Basic Subjects and Centrally Compiled Optional Subjects in Vocational Education and Training (BEK no 882 of 06/07/2007);
- The Regulation on the Institutions Providing Vocational Education and Training Act (LBK no 938 of 22/09/2008);

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- The Regulation on the Transparency and Openness in Education Act (LBK no 880 of 19/09/2005).
 - 1.5 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET

Two distinct teacher profiles can be identified within VET:

- General subject teacher: usually university graduates or graduates from general teacher college;
- Vocational subject teacher: usually have a VET background and substantial experience in the field.

There are no requirements for teachers to have a pedagogical qualification prior to their employment. Pedagogical training is provided as in-service training and is based on interaction between theory and practice. It is provided by the Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers (*Danmarks Erhvervspædagogiske Læreruddannelse - DEL*). The training course is developed by colleges and teacher organisations in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

Trainers in enterprises who are responsible for apprentices must be master craftsmen, i.e. they must have completed the journeyman's certificate and have work experience.

1.6 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs

Trade committees and the national Councils for Initial Vocational Education and Training (Rådet for Erhvervsfaglige Uddannelser – REU) and for Adult Vocational Education and Training (Rådet for Erhvervsfaglige Voksen og Efteruddannelse - REVE) are responsible for updating VET programmes and ensuring that they integrate the skill and competence needs of the labour market at the national level. At the regional/local level, vocational colleges, social partners and local business and industry are able to influence VET programmes so that they are adapted to the specific skills needs of local business, industry and regional development plans through the local training committees. Their main function is to provide assistance to the colleges regarding the planning of VET programme content, as well as strengthening contacts between colleges and the local labour market. Each college is attached to at least one local training committee to assist with its VET provision.

1.7 Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET

Guidance counsellors at schools are often teachers who have completed a supplementary course. In employment agencies, social workers or employees with a university background provide guidance and have often completed a supplementary course. The 2004 reform of guidance counselling introduced a new training scheme to improve the qualifications and competencies of counsellors. The training scheme was provided on a part-time basis and was equivalent to 6 months full-time studies. From 2007, according to the Act on Guidance practitioners are now required to complete a diploma programme in educational and vocational guidance or document equivalent competences through prior learning.



1.8 Funding for initial vocational education and training

IVET is based on alternance models where training takes place at college and within an enterprise in turns. The state finances training at colleges, and companies' finance on-the-job training, i.e. the trainees receive an apprentice salary while in the company. All employers, both public and private, pay an amount into a fund called the Employers' Reimbursement Scheme (Arbejdsgivernes Elevrefusion - AER) which is based on the number of employees in the individual company. The money is then allocated to the companies taking in trainees so that they do not bear the cost of training alone. The companies are reimbursed for costs during school-based training.

1.9 References

Refernet Denmark (2008): *Denmark. Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System*. EknowVET - Thematics Overviews. School of Education University of Aarhus and Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole. Thessaloniki : Cedefop.

2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.1 Population

In Denmark, there is no shared, unambiguous and formal definition of disability. As explained below, the definitions of disability employed in the fields of education and employment are presented in the form of guiding – but not exhaustive – lists of what constitute a disability.

This allows for an individualised, case-by-case judgement by relevant professionals when making decisions about eligibility for disability-related aid and support.

In the field of education:

The Danish Education Support Agency determines eligibility for the disability supplement (handicap-tillæg), which is compensation for the disabled students' lack of ability to carry out student employment while studying: "disability" involves functional limitations due to:

- A permanent physical disability:
- Mobility problems as a consequence of hard muscle- and nerve pains, for example muscular dystrophy, sclerosis, hard back pains, cerebral palsy.
- Blindness and severe visual impairment
- Deafness and severe hearing impairment
- A permanent psychological disability:
- Severe psychological and psychosomatic disorders, for example as a consequence of fear/anxiety, phobia, autism or personality disorder (source: SU)

In the field of Employment:

The Danish Education Support Agency determines eligibility for special educational assistance and includes:

- Any physical or psychological functional limitation – temporary or permanent – that keeps a student from completing a secondary or tertiary educational programme on an equal footing with other students (source: SU)



In relation to disability-related aid and support during employment, the definition of disability employed by the special division on jobs and disability (Specialfunktioner Job & Handicap), an agency under the Ministry of Employment, is of particular importance. The definition, which is presented as a guiding list, involves functional limitations due to

- Visual impairment or dyslexia
- Severe hearing impairment
- Severe functional limitation
- ADHD – Asperger
- Brain damage
- Psychological disorders
- Any other disability that may warrant special compensation or support.
(source: Specialfunktioner jobs & disability)

In the field of VET

In the legislation on special needs support in VET (Regulation 1030), it is laid down that “§ 1. Students with special needs following courses under the Vocational Training Act, The Vocational Upper Secondary Education Act and The Agricultural Training Act, are entitled to special needs support accommodating their specific circumstances, should they have a handicap or other equivalent disadvantages”. The regulation does not specify disability as such.

2.2 Organisation and Provision of Vet programmes

2.2.1 IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.

Vocational education (VET)

The Danish vocational education and training programmes are alternating or sandwich-type programmes, where practical training in a company alternates with teaching at a vocational college. The programmes consist of a basic and a main programme. The student must enter into a training agreement with a company approved by the social partners (a confederation of representatives of employers and employees) in order to complete the main programme. There are approximately 125 VET programmes (2007), each of which can lead to a number of vocational specialisations. The social partners have considerable influence on and thus, great responsibility for VET.

Within the ordinary VET programmes SEN learners have many possibilities for support. SEN students enrolled in ordinary VET programmes include many students with personality disorders (e.g. asperger, ADHD, Borderline), with physical limitations and also students with learning disabilities, e.g. dyslexia.



Production schools

Production schools are independent institutions with statutes approved by the local authority that provides the school's basic grant. The local labour market organisations (social partners) must be represented on the school board, and the board can include representatives of the municipality (ies) providing the basic grant. This option is given to young people under the age of 25 who have not completed a qualifying youth education and who, at the time, are not qualified to start such education, or who have dropped out of a youth education programme. Production school may only admit a participant with a state grant when the Youth Guidance Centre has assessed and identified that the young person belongs to the target group of the production schools. Under normal circumstances, the individual pupil is entitled to a maximum of one year at a production school. This includes present and earlier courses at the same or other production schools.

Basic vocational education and training – EGU

EGU is an individualised basic vocational education and training programme that is geared towards both employment and continued education. EGU is an alternating or sandwich-type training programme where practical training is combined with a subject-relevant school-based part in an overall 1½-3 year programme, in which the school-based part lasts between 20 to 40 weeks. The school-based elements are taken from a number of existing education and training programmes. Roughly 800 students attended an EGU programme in 2007. The EGU Act describes the target group as persons under the age of 30 living in the municipality who are neither in education (including a production school programme), nor have a job and who do not fulfil the criteria to complete another type of qualifying youth education. An EGU plan can thus be freely drawn up within a frame of up to three years, with between 20 and 40 weeks at school, where the learner can carry out both school and practical training in the course of a week. On the basis of the professional competence aimed at for the pupil, the EGU plan describes both the practical training and school-based parts included in the programme.

Individually planned youth educational programme (STU – særligt tilrettelagt undervisning)

In 2007 The Danish parliament passed a law about upper secondary education for young people with mental disabilities and/or other special needs. The purpose of the law is to ensure that disabled and other youth with special needs have the right to an individually planned youth educational programme. This programme also enables young people with severe disabilities to get a 3 year youth education. The programme, which is focused on enhancing the students' potential in relation to further education and employment, is best perceived as a stepping stone to an independent adult life, combining more traditional coursework with practical training.

The programme is individualised and planned in consideration of the person's qualifications, maturity and interests and aims to give young people with disabilities and special needs their rightful certainty in education. It takes three years to complete and there must be elements of common culture, development of special abilities and interests and encounters with the reality of work. It is the intention of the programme that a student should acquire the social and academic competence to pursue further education and employment. There are elements of teaching and practical activities, including work experience in companies and institutions. By the end of the program, a competence paper is made for each graduating student, detailing the achieved competencies in addition to an assessment of the student's fulfilment of the goals for the individual parts as well as for the programme as a whole.



2.2.2 Different types of educational/VET settings

- a) Mainstream educational/VET settings, where learners with SEN are included in mainstream VET courses,
- b) Special VET units attended by learners with SEN within mainstream educational/VET settings,
- c) Special educational/VET settings addressed to learners with SEN.
- d) Others

See 2.2.1

A: SPS (special pædagogisk støtte – special needs support) – i.e. the possibility for special support when enrolled in an ordinary VET programme;

B: STU – i.e. tailor-made individual programmes adapted to the needs of the individual student and provided by different educational institutions (VET schools, production schools, companies, etc.);

C: AspIT (special programme for students with Asperger syndrome, framed around Computer skills) is an example of a special setting addressing the needs of learners with SEN. Other programmes exist, often funded by SATS puljemidler (funding of innovative projects by the government for a three year period). Production schools also have some special settings for SEN learners who want to proceed into a VET programme.

D: continuation schools with expertise in dyslexia, typically boarding schools.

2.2.3 The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas etc.)

If students attend an ordinary VET programme they have the possibility of having individual adaptations in the programme and assessment methods, but the learning outcomes are the same for all students, as the programmes are nationally standardised and recognised.

If the students attend a STU programme, it is a tailor-made programme where the elements are adapted to the individual student. Access to the STU programme is through Municipal Youth Career Guidance Office. A counsellor from this office, together with the SEN learner, will make a training plan for the programme. The programme includes education and training at vocational colleges, folk high schools, non-residential folk high schools, learning centres, practical placements and internships in companies and institutions. It takes three years to complete and there must be elements of common culture, development of special abilities and interest and encounters with the reality of work. It is the intention of the programme that the student should acquire the social and academic competence to pursue further education and employment. There are elements of teaching and practical activities, including work experience in companies and institutions. There is no assessment of the entire STU programme, only the individual elements that may require assessment e.g. if the student attends a course at a vocational college.



2.3 VET programmes and employment

2.3.1 Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes

The Danish VET programmes are based on the active participation of the social partners at all levels of the system. At national level, the Council for Vocational Education and Training gives advice to the Minister of Education on all principal matters concerning VET. The approx. 55 national trade committees are responsible for keeping the curricula of the individual programmes up-to-date with the skills requirements of the labour market. The trade committees are responsible for drawing up the regulations on the individual programmes in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. They are also responsible for monitoring the labour market development and drawing up forecasts and prognoses concerning skills development.

At local level, the local training committees/advisory boards have an advisory function vis-à-vis the colleges concerning the needs of the local labour market. According to the Act on Vocational Education and Training in Denmark, Chapter 5, §41: The local training committees act as advisory bodies to the VET colleges on all matters relating to specific VET programmes, and facilitate the co-operation between the colleges and the local enterprises/industry. The main function of the local training committees is to assist the colleges in the planning of the specific content of the VET programmes and to strengthen the contact between the college and the local labour market. One or more local training committees are appointed for each school to cover the school's provision of VET. The majority must consist of representatives of the organisations having a seat on the relevant trade committee.

This is the legal framework and the aims for the work of the local training committees. A number of analyses have shown that the local training committees are very differently organised from college to college and that their influence on the VET programmes and their priorities differs from one committee to another

2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old and enrolled in VET programmes for the academic year 2010/2011 and relating to their transition to employment)

2.4.1 Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.

The overall picture of transitions pathways are as follows:

2011 - 49.1 % of pupils leaving basic schooling after 9th grade continue into the 10th grade. 47 % continue into either a programme at general upper secondary or vocational upper secondary level. 0.4 % continues into a STU programme whereas 3.5 % leave the education system.

The total number of students receiving SEN support at upper secondary level in 2009 was 6,796. Upper secondary education includes vocational upper secondary school (HHX), a higher technical examination (HTX), vocational education and training and agricultural education. Among the 6,796 were also students of social- and health care (SOSU), general upper secondary school students (STX) and nursery assistant students (PAU). Further figures are available at:

<http://www.uvm.dk/Service/Statistik/Tvaergaendestatistik/Stoetteordninger-ital~/media/UVM/Filer/Stat/PDF11/Stoette/110929%20SPS2009.ashx>.



Students with a physical or mental health disability can apply for special educational assistance (SPS). The disability must be examined and documented. The SPS aims to ensure that students with a disability can participate in an educational programme on equal terms with non-disabled students. Students can receive SPS at secondary educational level and at tertiary education. The SPS awarded depends on the individual needs and the type of educational programme. Examples of special educational assistance are:

- assistive technology
- sign language interpreters
- specially prepared learning materials
- secretary and practical assistance.

Some SEN learners cope without support.

2.4.2 Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.

There is no separate data on SEN learners enrolled in mainstream VET programmes. However, the following figures give an indication of how many students applied for special needs support in 2011: The number in VET was 6,977 in 2011 and the number in general upper secondary education including social and health care programmes (which are VET) was 5, 322, i.e. 12,299 students in upper secondary education were applying for support. The figures do not tell us how many students got the support.

There are only a few special VET programmes targeted at students with special needs. AspIT is one such programme and in 2010 AspIT had approx. 120 students enrolled.

2.4.3 Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level

There is no available data on learners with SEN enrolled in a VET programme. The only available figures are on the transition patterns for all young people leaving basic schooling. The trend is that VET programmes in general are becoming less popular than the general upper secondary programmes. In 2011, 14,725 wanted to continue into a VET programme; 47,846 wanted to continue into a general upper secondary education programme; 889 continued into a STU and 4,223 continued at a production school, a folk high school or similar educational institutions. In percentage terms: 21 % of a youth cohort continues into a VET programme, 70.7 % in a general upper secondary education, 1.3 % continues into STU and 6 % continue into other education programmes.

2.4.4 Brief definition and explanation of "drop out". Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level.

Officially, drop out is used as a statistical concept in Denmark, i.e. when a young person stops a youth education programme without completing it, this is regarded as drop out, regardless of what happens afterwards. So there is tendency to regard drop out as an isolated individual incident. However, drop out covers many different phenomena:



Change of programme i.e. the young person stops one VET programme but continues in another; a break or a pit stop i.e. a young person stops in a VET programme but continues 6 months later; employment i.e. a young person stops due to the fact that he or she has been employed; or finally a young person drops out into unemployment. Drop out focuses on the individual and individual behaviour therefore many researchers work with the concept of “push out” i.e. that the education system is unable to meet the needs of certain groups of young people and consequently they are “pushed out”.

Almost all young people begin a form of upper secondary education - either a general education programme or a vocational education and training programme. However, too many drop out of the education programme. The proportion of all young people who complete upper secondary education was around 80 per cent in 2006 (Profilresultater for kommunerne (UNI-C, 2008)). The dropout rate is particularly high for vocational education and training programmes. There is a need, therefore, for a larger number of young people, especially young people of a different ethnic background, to complete a qualifying upper secondary education providing access to further education or to the labour market. It is important that more young people are guided and motivated to engage in education.

2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level

Such figures do not exist. It could be problematic to produce figures for learners who have completed a VET programme and who enter the labour market as they are continuously stigmatised through being labelled as “learners with SEN”.

2.5 Legislation and policy

2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation

VET is regulated by a number of acts, orders and guidelines which stipulate the framework of VET provision in Denmark:

- Act, LOV no. 510 of 19/05/2010 (the Vocational Education and Training Act - (Erhvervsuddannelsesloven)) is the most important law and revises the previous Act from 2007. This Act covers the entire IVET system, providing overall objectives as well as more specific frameworks concerning access, the form and content of programmes, the appointment of advisory committees, the role of enterprises offering apprenticeship placements, students’ legal rights, etc.
 - Act for Institutions for Vocational Education and Training - LBK no. 171 of 02/03/2011 - governs the vocational colleges. It concerns frameworks for the authorisation of vocational colleges, their governing boards, state subsidies, budgetary and accounting practices, monitoring and notification duties, intra-institutional co-operation and consultancy etc.
 - The Statutory Order regarding Vocational Education and Training - BEK no. 901 of 09/07/2010 - implements the two above Acts and translates the legislative frameworks into a more concrete set of rules.
 - Statutory orders - exist for each of the twelve foundation courses to IVET and for a number of more specific areas.
 - National guidelines - apply to the 23 general subjects, which can form part of an IVET programme, as well as concerning apprenticeship contracts.



In addition to these laws, statutory orders and guidelines, there are several more specific laws, e.g. concerning the awarding of a bonus to students upon completion of an IVET programme. There are also a number of general laws which apply to the educational system as a whole and which thereby also apply to IVET, such as those concerning guidance or occupational health.

Each of the 109 main programmes (following the foundation courses) is governed by an agreement compiled and issued by the national trade committees, comprised of representatives of the social partners, stipulating duration, content, competence levels etc.¹

In terms of SEN, the various acts stipulate how the colleges are to meet students with special needs. In the Act for Institutions for VET (see below, at 30) it stipulates what the colleges are to do in order to retain students in VET. This paragraph is targeted all students, but students with SEN are generally at greater risk of dropping out. The colleges are to offer guidance in its broadest sense i.e. social, personal and mental problems included.

One regulation has existed since 1994 and concerns special needs support during VET: regulation 1030. This regulation lays down the purpose, content, planning and financing of VET, as well as covering tests, exams and various other issues. The regulation is enclosed as all clauses relate to SEN.

As to the institutional framework see 2.5.3.

2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment

To some extent the issue of learners with SEN has been mainstreamed into the overall education strategy for youth education. Since the mid 1990s, the Government has had the ambitious target that 95% of all young people should complete an upper secondary education programme.

The aim is that at least 85 % of all young people should complete an upper secondary education by 2010, and at least 95 % by 2015. In this strategy, the VET programmes are expected to be able to contain SEN learners within the ordinary programmes. The target for VET is:

- That vocational education and training programmes shall challenge the most talented pupils and provide them with increased opportunities for further education. At the same time vocational education and training programmes shall provide realistic training opportunities for weaker learners.
- Reforms in upper secondary education include the following initiatives in particular:
- Municipalities shall be responsible for helping to ensure that young people complete a general or vocational upper secondary education through, among other things, better guidance and improved educational provision for weak learners.

¹ Danish Ministry of Education:
<http://www.uvm.dk/Uddannelse/Erhvervsuddannelser/Love%20og%20regler.aspx>



Vocational education and training shall be strengthened through, among other things, continuing training of teachers and better school environments. Efforts to increase the number of practical training places in vocational education and training shall be increased

In both private and public enterprises through, among other things, a national campaign in cooperation with business and organisations.

- More flexible pathways and education programmes will be introduced in vocational education to meet the needs of all pupils, both the strong and the weak. In this regard the assessment of prior learning is an important and integral tool of vocational education and training.
- Vocational education and training will be divided into steps corresponding to the needs of the labour market so that all young people can obtain an education which is suited to their abilities, and at the same time receive better opportunities for access to higher education.

In 2011, the admission requirements to VET were strengthened and young people now have to fulfil a number of requirements i.e. they are to have the social and the personal competences and the practical skills levels necessary for completing a VET programme. As a consequence, the UU guidance centres are to evaluate the individual students and declare whether he or she is proficient in relation to the objectives of the chosen programme (ready to start an education programme – uddannelsesparat). If a young person is assessed as non-proficient, the municipalities have the responsibility of offering a course which provides the young person with the necessary skills. Interestingly enough, the right to education was supplemented with a “duty to education”.

This is the overall strategy within youth education; however Denmark has also signed all the declarations concerning young people with special needs, such as the Lisbon agreement, Salamanca declaration, etc.

2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework

The IVET system is centralised in terms of providing nationally recognised qualifications (decision-making level), and to some extent (pedagogically) decentralised as VET providers are autonomous in terms of adapting VET to local needs and demands (implementation level). The figure below presents the Danish model of stakeholder involvement.

Public authorities

The Parliament sets out the overall framework for IVET which is administered by the Ministry of Children and Education. The Ministry has the overall parliamentary, financial and legal responsibility for IVET, laying down the overall objectives for IVET programmes and providing the legislative framework within which the stakeholders i.e. the social partners, the colleges, and the enterprises are able to adapt curricula and methodologies to labour market needs and students. The Ministry is responsible for ensuring that the IVET programmes have the breadth required for a youth education programme and for the allocation of resources. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Ministry has regulated IVET provision through a system of targeted framework governance based on providing taximeter grants per student.



Social partners

The social partners play an institutionalised role at all levels of IVET, from the National Advisory Council on Initial Vocational Education and Training (Rådet for de grundlæggende Erhvervsrettede Uddannelser) advising the Minister of Children and Education on principal matters concerning IVET, to playing an advisory role at the local level through local training committees, comprised of representatives from the social partners who advise the colleges on local adaptation of IVET. Their most important role is to ensure that the provision of VET is in line with the needs of the labour market.

Advisory council


The Advisory Council consists of 31 representatives from the social partners. In its advisory capacity, the Council monitors developments within society and highlights trends relevant to IVET. Against this backdrop, the Council makes recommendations to the Minister regarding the establishment of new IVET programmes and the adaptation, amalgamation or discontinuation of others.

National trade committees

The national trade committees (De faglige udvalg) constitute the backbone of the IVET system. There are approximately 50 trade committees that are responsible for the 109 main courses. The committees normally have 10-14 members and are formed by the labour market organisations (with parity of membership between employer and employee organisations).

Among their core responsibilities, the national trade committees:

- Perform a central role in relation to the creation and renewal of IVET courses by closely
- Monitoring developments within their particular trade and have a dominant position in
- The formulation of learning objectives and final examination standards, based around the
- Key competences deemed required within the labour market;
- Conduct relevant analyses, development projects etc and maintain close contact with
- Relevant stakeholders;
- Decide the regulatory framework for individual courses within the boundaries set by the
- Legislative framework - they decide which trade is to provide the core of the training, the
- Duration of the programme, and the ratio between college-based teaching and practical
- Work in an enterprise;
- Approve enterprises as qualified training establishments and rule on conflicts which may
- Develop between apprentices and the enterprise providing practical training

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- Function as gatekeepers to the trade as they are responsible for issuing journeyman's certificates, both in terms of the content, assessment and actual holding of examinations.

The trade committees and their secretariats are financed by the participating organisations.²

Local training committees

The local training committees, meanwhile, are affiliated with each vocational college³ and ensure close contact between vocational colleges and the local community, improving responsiveness to particular local labour market needs. They consist of representatives from local employers and employees, appointed by the national trade committees, as well as representatives of staff, management and students appointed by the college. The training committees work closely alongside the college in determining the specific curriculum at the college, including which optional subjects are available. They assist and advise the national trade committees in approving local enterprises as qualified training establishments and in mediating conflicts between apprentice and enterprise. Finally, the training committees help to ensure a sufficient number of suitable local training placements.

VET providers

The colleges assume everyday responsibility for teaching and examination. As stated, they work closely with the local training committees in determining course content. As self-governing institutions, vocational colleges are led by a governing board with the overall responsibility for the administrative and financial running of the college and the educational activities in accordance with the framework administered by the Ministry for Children and Education. The board consists of teachers, students and administrative staff representatives, and social partner representatives. The board makes the decisions regarding which programmes are offered at the college and their capacity, imposes local regulations and guidelines, guarantees the responsible administration of the college's financial resources including approval of budgets and accounts, and hires and fires the operational management (director, principal, dean or similar).

The operational management, meanwhile, is responsible for implementing the overall objectives and strategies as set out by the governing board. (Rolls, S., 2012)

2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market

See 2.5.1 & 2.5.3. As already mentioned, VET for SEN is mainstreamed.

On a general level, the municipality is the main gateway to the public help and support system available to families with a disabled child. The support is provided by the social security service on the basis of an assessment of the particular situation and context of the family. The benefits granted will differ from municipality to municipality, because the municipalities independently determine/impose their own service standards within the legal framework.

² Danish Ministry of Education:

<http://eng.uvm.dk/Uddannelse/Upper%20Secondary%20Education/Vocational%20Education%20and%20Training.aspx>

³ There is typically more than one local training committee associated with each college, with the various committees covering different fields of IVET



The municipalities also help and guide disabled students and their parents on how to navigate between the different available options for aid and support for disabled children and students.

2.6 VET teachers, trainers and other professionals

A) The qualifications required

B) Initial training

C) In-service training possibilities

Two distinct teacher profiles can be identified within VET:

- General subject teacher: usually university graduates or graduates with a professional
- Bachelor's degree in teaching; and
- Vocational subject teacher: usually with an IVET background and substantial experience within the field (normally at least five years of professional experience is required).

There are no requirements for teachers to have a pedagogical qualification prior to their employment. Pedagogical training is provided as part-time in-service training and is based on interaction between theory and practice. It is provided by the National Centre for Vocational Pedagogy (Nationalt Center for Erhvervspædagogik - NCE), a centre of excellence collecting, producing and disseminating knowledge within the field of vocational pedagogy. NCE provides the tertiary level diploma degree programme in vocational pedagogy (Diplomuddannelsen i Erhvervspædagogik) (60 ECTS points), as well as offering a number of further education courses for VET teachers and other programmes centred on e.g. teaching adults or mentoring teachers during the diploma programme.

This programme was introduced for all teachers employed within IVET and AMU after 15th January 2010 and replaces the previous teacher training course (Pædagogikum). The objective is to improve teaching skills to a level equivalent to teachers within compulsory education with a professional bachelor's degree. The broader objective is related to the government's goal of a 95% completion rate resulting in a number of new challenges facing VET teachers due to an increasingly heterogeneous student body. The new programme is the equivalent of one year of full-time study (60 ECTS). It is, however, generally conducted as a part-time course in order to root training in practical teaching experience.

New teachers must enrol in the programme within one year of gaining employment at a VET college or AMU centre. The programme must be completed within a period of six years. The programme was developed by the National Centre for Vocational Pedagogy with the cooperation of an advisory group comprised of representatives of teacher associations and college management organisations as well as the Ministry of Children and Education. There are three compulsory modules and two optional modules as well as a final examination project. (Rolls, S., 2012)



Funds for development of the area of special teaching

It is possible to apply for funding for development activities within the areas of special teaching for children, youth education and other disability related educational activities. These activities can, for example, be in the form of evaluations, research initiatives and teaching experiments. Funding can also be awarded for expenses incurred in relation to courses and conferences, communication through preparation reports and publication of the results of pedagogical development work. There are also subsidies for information meetings and courses for disabled students or training sessions for teachers, leaders and other professionals employed within these areas.

2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes

Guidance and Counselling Services for SEN learners in VET-programmes

The VET colleges have three types of staff dealing with SEN services:

- Student counsellors (Diploma level, 60 ECTS points)
- Reading/writing specialist teachers (reading tutors, 60 ECTS points)
- Mentors

A significant amount of SEN support is also delivered by VET trainers and teaching assistants. The people most involved in procuring grants and arranging support services will be the student counsellors

The youth educational advice centres (Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning), in 45 locations throughout the country, provide advice for youth (under 25 years of age) on educational programmes and employment. The youth educational advice centres provide educational and occupational guidance for youth from the 6th to 10th grade, youth under the age of 19 who need advice, as well as young people between the ages of 19 to 25, who apply for advice services. The advice centres are especially focused on youth with a special need for advice.

2.7 Funding

A) Financial support and/or incentives for learners with SEN and families

B) Financial support and/or incentives for companies to employ young people with SEN

C) A young person with disabilities or learning difficulties, who is attending an educational programme, may receive two different kinds of government benefits, in addition to regular grants and loans.

Special educational assistance (SPS)

All students with a disability have the opportunity to apply for special educational assistance (SPS); however, the extent of the student disability must be assessed and documented. The SPS-responsible administrator at the educational institution, potentially in teamwork with the special pedagogical subject consultant, then applies for support on behalf of the student. The SPS aims to ensure that students with a physical or psychological disability can participate in an educational programme on equal terms with nondisabled students. Students can also receive guidance and counselling on the types of education programmes that would be realistic to undertake and which forms of SPS would be relevant in relation to the particular programmes. It is also possible for students with disabilities or learning difficulties to apply for special accommodation in making the curriculum



accessible for students with visual impairments and/or reading difficulties.

Students can receive this type of aid at the following types of educational institutions:

Vocational upper secondary school - in Denmark known as HHX (higher commercial examination with business-oriented subjects),

HTX (higher technical examination with technological and scientific subjects),

EUD (VET), agricultural education (landbrugets grunduddannelse) as well as certain parts of the basic vocational education and training known as EGU

The disability supplement (handicaptillæg) is designed for disabled students who are unable to carry out a student job while studying. The supplement compensates for the lack of possibilities to have an extra income in addition to the state education grant, which is why it is referred to as a supplement. The supplement is awarded in addition to the regular state education grant (SU).

In order to receive the supplement a student has to:

- Receive the state education grant (SU)
- Be enrolled in secondary or tertiary education, where he/she is entitled to SU
- Prove that he/she has a permanent disability

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is an umbrella term for a wide range of vocational activities and economic support, which serve to ensure that people with functional limitations are integrated into the labour market. The purpose is to improve people's possibility to become self-supporting by entering the labour market. The economic support may cover expenses related to the rehabilitation activity, e.g. expenses for books, courses, materials, personal assistance or transport. The municipalities share the rehabilitation costs with the state.

b) The Icebreaker programme

The Icebreaker programme includes financial support for new graduates who experience disability related difficulties when entering the job market. One central purpose of the programme is to ensure that new graduates with a disability can gain work experience soon upon graduation, which in turn makes it easier to get a job. The programme enables a disabled person to be employed in a company on regular conditions of employment for a fixed time period. The company receives financial support for up to 6 months and in some cases up to 12 months. To participate in the programme, the disabled person must have accomplished a minimum of 18 months of education, have an unmet need for work-experience and enter the programme within 2 years of graduation. Another central component of the icebreaker programme is the Priority access scheme (Fortrinsadgang). People with disabilities may experience barriers created by the lack of knowledge and the prejudice about disabled persons. The priority access programme aims to overcome these barriers by providing priority access for disabled persons to job openings in the public sector, provided they satisfy the formal educational requirements. If the employer judges that the disabled applicant is just as qualified as the other applicants, the disabled person must be offered the vacant position.



Mentorship programme

Through the mentoring programme it is possible to establish a mentorship at educational institutions or at workplaces. A mentorship at a workplace means that an employee introduces, guides or trains the disabled person in the workplace.

The employer then receives financial support from the municipalities to pay for the employees who take on the responsibility of mentors. The employer may also receive support to improve the conditions for the mentoring programme, for example to provide relevant education to the employees who manage the mentoring.

Assistive technology for disabled employees

Where special working tools, assistive technologies or other accommodations of the workplace make it possible for the disabled worker to perform a job, it is possible for the employer to receive support in paying for these accommodations. The employer can receive financial support to cover specially designed tools, special working chairs, widening of doors and installations of ramps and lifts. The condition for receiving the support is that the support is pivotal to the disabled person maintaining their employment. The assistive technology is funded by the municipalities and the state.

Personal assistance

Disabled persons can receive personal assistance for a wide range of practical tasks included in their job description or in their continuing educational programme. The personal assistant is often employed in the same company or educational institution as the disabled person.

The employer receives financial support to cover the expenses of the personal assistant. The assistant can provide support for a maximum of 20 hours per week, unless the disabled person has multiple, different disabilities. The programme is administrated and funded by the state through the different jobcentres.

Flex job/flexible employment

Flex jobs are for people with physical limitations that keep them from maintaining regular employment under normal conditions. The flex job scheme makes it possible for employers to establish a position with a wage subsidy – a so called flex job. The flex job takes the employee's reduced ability to work and their special needs into consideration and allows for flexibility in terms of the employee's ability to take breaks during the day, work slower than the rest of the employees, or work at reduced hours. Flex job is an arrangement that is most often applied when all other attempts to achieve employment under normal conditions have proven unsuccessful. Funding for flex jobs comes from the municipalities.

Protected employment

Protected employment is for people with a reduced ability to work, who can't get a flex job or a reduced duty job. A person can be hired in protected employment, e.g. at a protected workshop. The employment is especially focused on people who can manage tasks focused on production, installation and packaging. The municipalities share the costs relating to protected employment with the state.

Reduced duty jobs with payment subsidy

The reduced duty jobs are for recipients of incapacity benefits, who are unable to find or maintain employment at reduced time on the ordinary labour market. The municipalities share the costs relating to reduced duty jobs with the state.