

# The Danish System

UC Initial Teachers Education

## 5-6 University Colleges (UC) in DK

- University Colleges offer a wide range of higher education study programmes and courses at all levels, with an emphasis on first-cycle bachelor degrees in the field of Educational Sciences, Health Sciences, Social Sciences and Communication Sciences.

# UC – Initial teacher education

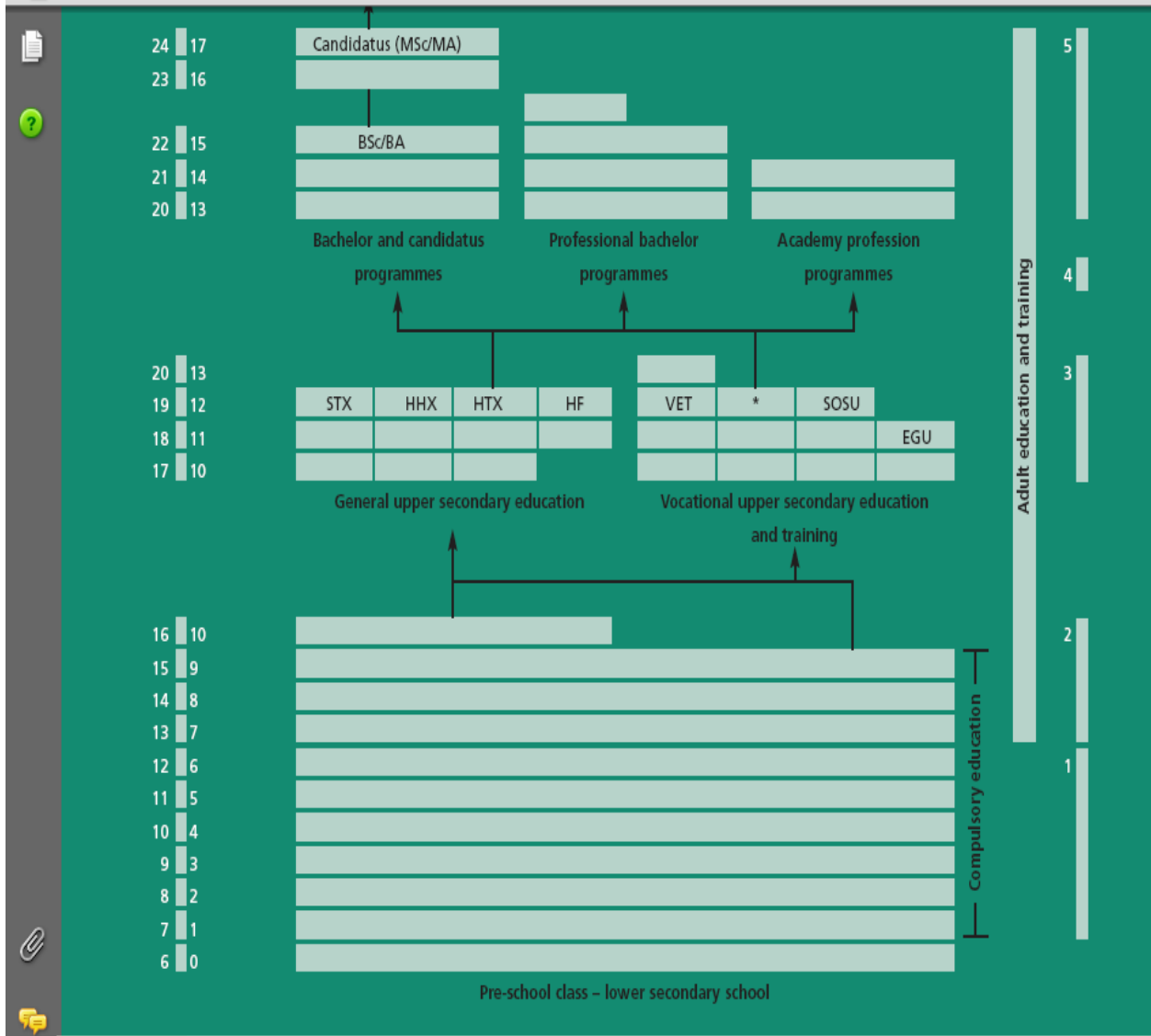
- The teacher education programme comprises academic and pedagogy subjects, with the main purpose to educate teachers to teach in the Danish Folkeskole

# UC – Initial teacher education

- The programme is of four years' duration and consists of:
- the first main subject, which must be Danish (age specified), maths (age specified), science/technology or physics/chemistry
- one or two additional main subjects, fx special education
- a major independent bachelor assignment in one of the main subjects
- pedagogy subjects, such as didactics, psychology and social education
- Christian studies/living knowledge/citizenship
- teaching practice in a Folkeskole or another kind of school

# 2007

- The revised teacher education from 2006/07 entailed an *optional main subject in special education* giving 36 ECTS points and *change of the mandatory educational subjects to also comprise inclusion in each main subject*. The target group is learners from kindergarten to the 10th grade.



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Approximately 84% of all pupils in basic schools attend public schools, 15% attend private schools, and less than 1% are taught outside schools (for instance at home) (2004). Education is compulsory for nine years starting the year the child turns 7.

Apart from the compulsory forms 1 to 9, the Folkeskole comprises a voluntary pre-school year and an optional 10<sup>th</sup> year. More than 99% of all children attend the pre-school year, and 58% attend the 10<sup>th</sup> year (2004).

The average class size is 19,6 (2005). School usually starts at 8 a.m. The younger pupils finish at around noon or 1 p.m., and the older pupils finish at around 2 or 3 p.m. The young pupils (6-10 years old) may spend their leisure time in a municipi-



# Special education and inclusion as main subject

- Special education as a main subject gives some students broader competences to teach learners with special educational needs and work towards inclusion.
- Others learn inclusive practice through interdisciplinary subjects and especially the relations between subjects and teaching practice.

# Support to students

- E.g. a blind person seeking admission to teacher education is entitled to receive specific aids, secretarial support and special exemptions at exams. All persons with SEN are entitled to this.
- Support is granted through the Danish Education Support Agency under the Ministry of Education. Special educational assistance (Danish acronym SPS) is intended to ensure students with physical or mental difficulties can receive education on equal terms with others.



# Teachers (lecturers) at the UC

- It is not mandatory for teachers (lecturers) at UC/ initial teachers education to have knowledge about special education
- The teachers are often subject orientated more than focused on inclusion
- But they must implement differentiation in all subjects

# The Danish System in practise

- Municipalities strive to develop inclusive schools, but at the same time exclusion is growing. New figures from 2010 show an increase in the number of learners in segregated settings - outside the mainstream classroom. From 2007 to 2009 there is an increase from 4% to 4, 7%. The number of learners receiving extensive special needs education has gone up with 33 from 2001 to 2007, thus 2%, with no specific reason (Egelund, 2010).