

**NORWAY**

**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**



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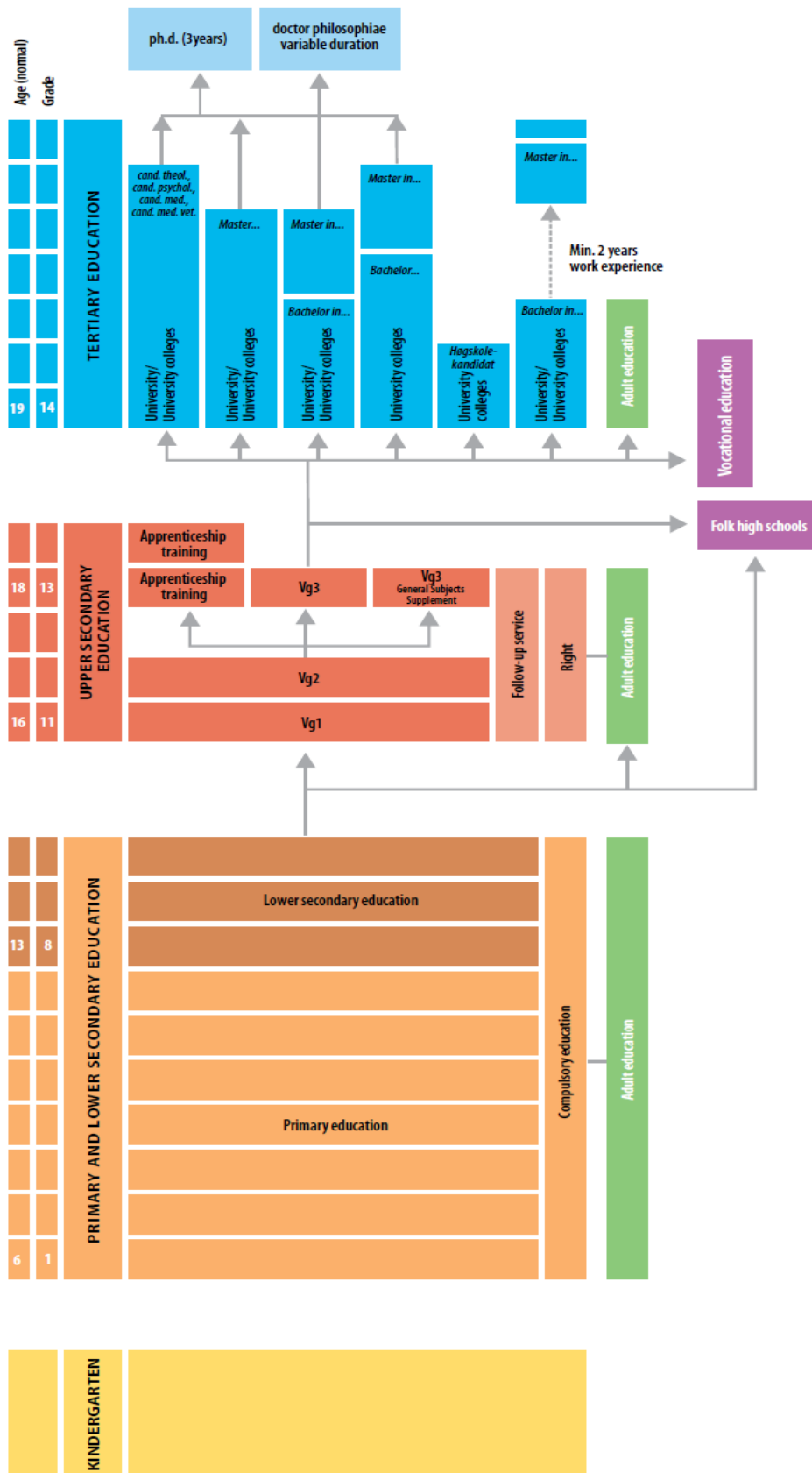


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# 1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

## 1.1 Diagram of the education and training system





## 1.2 Definitions

Vocational education and training (Yrkesfaglig opplæring) The Norwegian definition of vocational education is stricter than in many other countries as it relates solely to education and training at upper secondary level through the 2+2 model which includes apprenticeship training in year 13 and 14.

Initial vocational education and training (Yrkesfaglig opplæring) Vocational education and training at upper secondary level, including apprenticeship, provided by public and private institutions.

School based programmes (Skolebasert opplæring) At upper secondary level each pupil in VET will follow two years of school-based education and training before commencing an apprenticeship.

Postsecondary non-tertiary education; Vocational college education (Fagskoleutdanning) The term is used for vocational education and training of six months' to two years' duration, most commonly based on a vocational qualification from the upper secondary level.

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

Equality and freedom of choice are general political principles which lie at the heart of Norwegian education and vocational training policy: education is a public responsibility and all education and training in the public domain is supplied free of charge, costs are covered by public budgets. The adaptation of the education and training to meet the individual's needs is a key principle in Norwegian education and is a professional responsibility at local level.

"Quality Reform in Higher Education", from 2001 and implemented from the autumn 2003, the main elements comprised increasing institutional autonomy, closer follow up of individual students, introduction of a uniform degree and grading structure and a strengthening of international cooperation.

"The Competence Reform" (1999-2004) (Kompetansereformen) was a result of the national wage negotiations between the state and the social partners. The main objective of the reform has been to help meet the needs of individuals, society and the workplace in terms of skills and knowledge.

The 2006 "Knowledge Promotion Reform" (Kunnskapsløftet) focuses on the strengthening of basic skills, a shift to outcome-based learning, new distribution of teaching and training hours per subject, new structure of available choices within education programmes and more freedom at the local level with respect to work methods, teaching materials and the organisation of classroom instruction.

### **Some of the areas where there have been debates are:**

- The drop-out rate in Norway
- The need for a system for quality assessment of VET
- The need for a system of quality development in VET
- Closer collaboration between school and training establishment
- The learning environment in the training establishments
- Making the common core subjects more vocational
- The need for more/improved teachers' and trainers' qualifications

- Supplementary studies qualifying for higher education (*allmennfaglig påbygging*)
- VET pathway to HE (*Y-veien*)
- The Certificate of Practice (*Praksisbrev*) (Formal Competence at a Lower Level)
- The need for more research, analysis and statistics in VET

#### 1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET

Reorganisation of the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) in 1999, including a merger of two former departments into a new Department of Education and Training (*Opplæringsavdelingen*) with overall responsibility for both general education and VET at primary, lower and upper secondary levels, including adult education. Establishment of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (*Utdanningsdirektoratet*) in June 2004, with responsibility for the development of subject curricula and development, supervision and quality control of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary general and vocational education and training.

**Policies:** IVET, including apprenticeship is an integral part of the education system and is regulated by the same acts as general education.

**Education Act related to Primary and Secondary Education and Training** (*Opplæringslova* 1998, latest amendments 2008) This Act covers primary, lower and upper secondary general education and VET, including apprenticeship, for young people and adults, delivered by public and private institutions. Its objectives and scope, organisation and division of responsibilities, financing and content of education and training are regulated by the act.

#### 1.5 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET

There are three main groups of VET training staff:

- Formally qualified VET teachers who provide formal school-based IVET and CVET (both theory and practical training);
- Trainers (*instruktører*) are vocationally skilled staff without a teacher certificate involved in the training of apprentices in formally recognised training enterprises. Training supervisors (*faglig ledere*) are responsible for seeing to it that the training meets the demands set by the Education Act;
- VET training personnel involved in non-formal and informal workplace training often have a formal vocational qualification. However, some of these training facilitators have not formalised their vocational skills, but perform solely on the basis of skills developed through work practice.

#### 1.6 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs

At national level, the planning and decision-making for the training content of specific trades are based on inputs from the private and public sector, coordinated through the National Council for Vocational Training (*Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring – SRY*), where the social partners appoint two-thirds of the members.

At county level, representatives of employers' and employees' organisations hold the majority of seats in the Vocational Training Committee (*Yrkesopplæringsnemnda*) and the trade-specific Examination Boards (*prøvenemnder*). Important tasks include giving advice on career guidance, quality, regional development, and the provision in the county to meet local labour market needs.



The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is currently conducting a series of evaluations of the reform and a "pulse measurement system" has been initiated so as to map out whether the curricula are meeting the labour market's demands for competences.

Annual statistics provided by Statistics Norway (SSB) on education together with research initiated by the national school authorities are important to take steps to improve the guidance services rendered and reduce the drop-out rates. Based on research reports on a project on partnership for career guidance, regional partnerships for career guidance now are part of national policy.

### **1.7 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs**

When the need for a new qualification is identified, a tripartite group is set down to write a description of competence (*kompetanseplattform*). This will make the basis for developing the subject curricula.

The Ministry gives instructions and guidelines for the curricula and their development, but the operational responsibility for the curriculum development process is with the Directorate for Education and Training. The Directorate appoints teams for curricula development consisting of professionals and VET teachers.

### **1.8. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET**

New regulations under the Education Act (*Opplæringsloven*) were put into effect starting 1st of January 2009 emphasising the individual right of every student to get career guidance as well as guidance in matters of social or personal character. Guidance counsellors in primary and secondary education provide guidance to pupils in school whereas counsellors in the County Follow-up Service provide guidance to youth from 16 – 24 who are out of school and/or do not have an occupation.

### **1.9 Funding for initial vocational education and training**

IVET is delivered cost-free to students in public training institutions. Some private education institutions are authorised by the Ministry of Education and Research (Kunnskapsdepartementet) to deliver training according to national subject curricula. Public upper secondary IVET is financed by the counties. The counties get a block grant from the national level. The counties finance both education at school and education in the apprenticeship enterprise. Each apprentice enterprise receives the same amount for every apprentice. (Among exceptions are enterprises taking on apprentices with special needs. These receive a higher amount.)

### **1.10 References**

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet) and Cedefop Refernet Norway (2009): VET in Europe. Country Report Thessaloniki: Cedefop.



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

### 2.1 Population

Disability is defined in Norway as resulting from disabling barriers that restrict individuals with impairments from participating equally in society. [...] This official political definition of disability has not, however, fully taken hold within existing provision for students or job-seekers with impairments. [...] Norwegian Acts on lower and higher education rarely mention the word “disability,” unless describing very specific provisions.

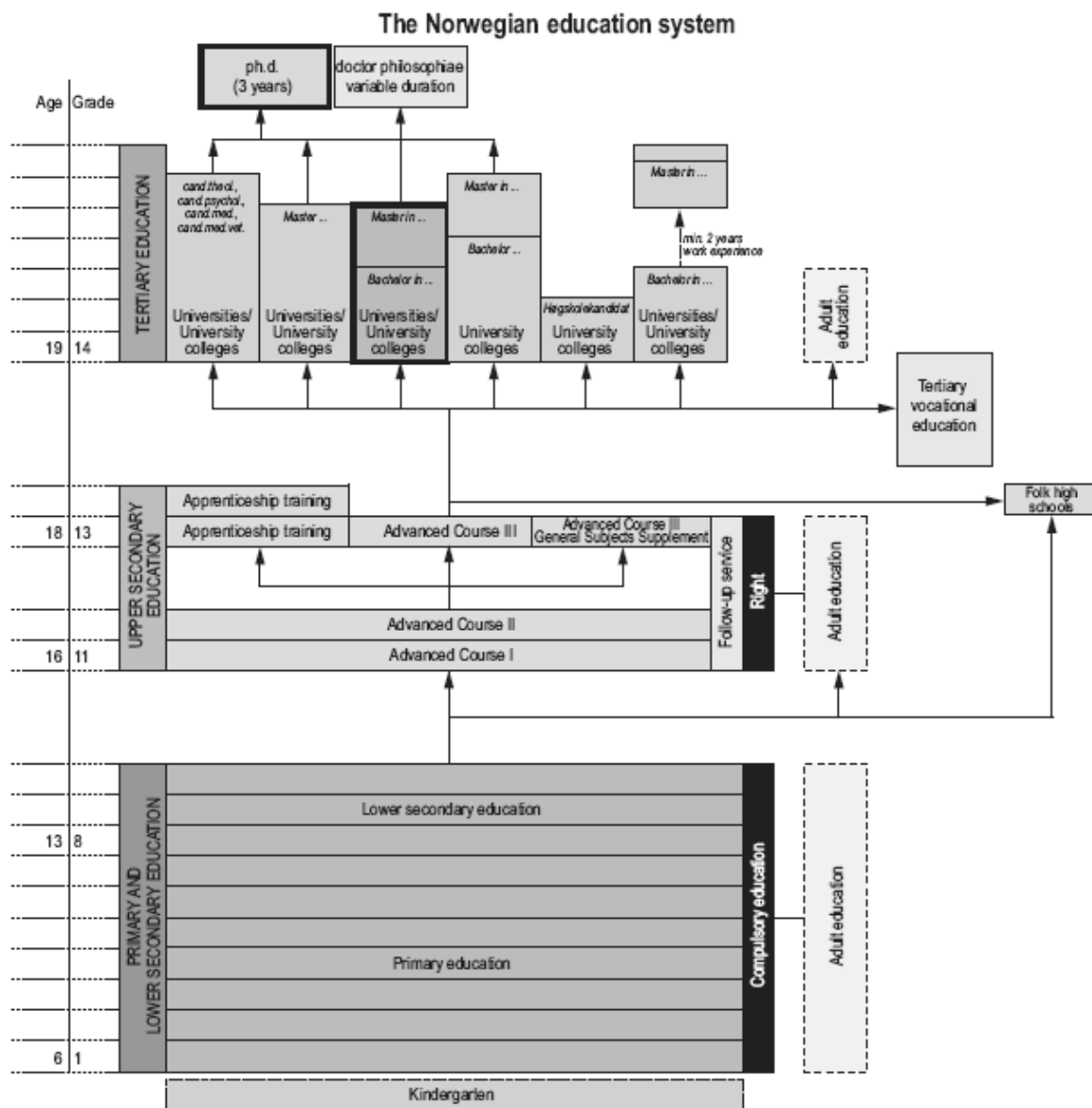
Students with special needs might include those with impairments, such as wheelchair users and the blind or hearing impaired, but also includes pupils with learning difficulties, behavioural issues or a minority language background.

Definitions of disability in the educational sector and the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) are different. The variety of definitions of disability in Norway evidences that the official social model of disability coexists with a range of administrative definitions that are medically based or implemented as compensatory measures to ensure that young persons with learning difficulties or impairments can benefit from education and have access to work. These definitions vary between administrative sectors. This means that a student who receives additional educational resources in school will not necessarily meet the requirements for receiving assistive technologies from NAV. Nor does it mean that a student receiving basic or auxiliary benefits from the National Insurance Scheme through a NAV office will receive additional educational resources in school.



## 2.2 Organisation and Provision of VET programmes

### 2.2.1 IVET system options for special educational needs learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.



Education and training normally takes three years and is divided into three levels: Vg1, Vg2 and Vg3 (in a few cases four years, with a Vg4). Pupils who have a right to special needs education have the right to an extra two years of upper secondary education or training if it is necessary for him/her to achieve his/her educational objectives. This right also applies to pupils who have the right to education in sign language or the right to education in Braille.

Vocational education and training mainly leads to a craft or journeyman's certificate, usually after two years in school and one year of in-service training in an enterprise. Vocational education in Norway follows what is termed a 2+2 model. It mainly leads to a craft or journeyman's certificate, usually after two years in school and two years of in-service training in an enterprise. In-service training at a training establishment is usually combined with one year's productive work, so that the apprenticeship takes two years in total. If it is impossible to provide training places, the county authorities are obliged to offer



Vg3 in school, in which case there is no productive work. The final craft or journeyman's examination is the same as it would have been after training in a training establishment.

#### Attaining lower competence

For students who have learning difficulties or experience other obstacles to achieving a qualification for higher education or vocational certification, there exists an alternative - completing upper secondary school with a lower competence level. According to the Education Act, "upper secondary education shall lead to qualifications for higher education, vocational qualifications or a lower level of competence" (section 3-3). This involves a learner aiming to complete upper secondary education with reduced curriculum objectives, completing a training place instead of an apprenticeship place, becoming an apprenticeship candidate instead of an apprentice and ultimately taking a competence examination instead of a craft or journeyman examination. They will have the opportunity later on to complete their upper secondary education and achieve either a vocational or higher education qualification. When the learner aims to achieve a higher education or vocational qualification, but fails to pass all subjects, they often only receive a transcript of grades, with failing grades included.

#### 2.2.2 Different types of educational/VET settings

The school system is based on what is called *adapted education*. The individual pupil is to be taught and trained in the same groups as his or her fellow pupils – with the learning aids, assistive technology, assistants or extra teaching resources necessary to obtain the benefits of education within the framework of ordinary tuition and the school budget. In cases where this is not deemed adequate, *special education* might be provided. Special education can be taught both in ordinary classes – taking the form of extra teaching resources or an assistant – and organised individually or in special groups.

#### 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.)

Upper secondary education and training is organised into 12 different education programmes.

##### *Programmes for General Studies:*

- Programme for Specialisation in General Studies
- Programme for Sports and Physical Education
- Programme for Music, Dance and Drama

##### *Vocational Education Programmes:*

- Programme for Building and Construction
- Programme for Design, Arts and Crafts
- Programme for Electricity and Electronics
- Programme for Healthcare, Childhood and Youth Development
- Programme for Media and Communication
- Programme for Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry
- Programme for Restaurant and Food Processing
- Programme for Service and Communication
- Programme for Technical and Industrial Production



Primary and secondary schools are required to adapt the examinations so as to suit the abilities and aptitudes of everyone. Where there is need of a specially adapted exam, the Educational- Psychological Service makes an assessment of the individual pupil. The Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for preparing examinations, national tests and diagnostic tests for primary and secondary education. Examinations provide a final assessment of the competence of each individual pupil. National tests provide information on the pupils' basic skills and a basis for improvement and development in the school.

There are no national regulations on examination practices in higher education, nor do students in higher education have a right to individually adapted exams. Candidates who need extra adaptation, for medical or other reasons, must apply to the school for this in advance of the exams. A statement is required from (for example) a doctor or PP- service, explaining the need for the adaptation

## **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*

NAV offers a range of labour market programmes for the vocationally disabled in general, which also includes young persons with impairments who may be in transition from school to work. These measures are normally provided while the person is part of a vocational rehabilitation programme. This is an active labour programme for the vocationally disabled, where the aim is "suitable work/employment." Relevant measures can include schooling/studies or vocational training/testing in the labour market. Measures such as wage subsidies, trainee placement, supported employment etc are used for vocational training and testing in the labour market. They might be provided as programmes in themselves or as a combination of measures (i.e., supported employment with wage subsidies).

These are the programmes:

Trainee placement: Trainee placement offers adjusted work experience with follow-up. This measure provides the individual with an opportunity to try out the labour market and contributes to strengthening the individual's opportunity to gain access to work or education.

Supported employment: Supported employment is offered to occupationally disabled people who have such severe difficulties in finding or keeping a job in a regular enterprise that they are regarded as having special needs and require close and varied follow-up from support services. Supported employment consists of a person accompanying the user to the place of work and helping with training, practical vocational training and physical adaptations of the work tasks.

Temporary employment measures: Temporary employment measures shall provide work experience for persons at risk of being permanently excluded from the labour market or those having problems getting established in the labour market

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

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

### **Number of students in upper secondary and higher education. 2008 and 2010**



Type of education	Number of students
Upper secondary schools, students (ISCED 3)	187 245 / 192 883
Apprentices	36 747 / 34 247
Apprentice-candidates	919 / 1311
Vocational colleges (ISCED 4)	7 948 / 13 634
State University Colleges (ISCED 5a and 5b)	88 574 / 90 013
Other university colleges (ISCED 5b)	14 153 / 14 578
Universities and scientific university colleges (ISCED 5a and 5b)	111 763 / 122 276

Source: Statistics Norway

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.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Vocationally disabled in action-plan and waiting phases	21 799	20 593	29 403	32 118	29 603	25 000
Wage subsidies	1 526	1 689	1 569	1 899	1 828	2 052
Sponsored traineeship and training/education	34 893	39 856	37 605	41 311	39 016	35 000
Temporary employment programs	1 059	744	402	233	165	109
Supported employment experimental schemes and other programmes	1 797	2 510	2 992	3 680	4 704	5 405
Assessment and vocational rehabilitation (partly in VRE*)	372	366	2 488	1 906	1 568	1 158
Sheltered employment VRE	3 775	3 981	3 636	3 436	3 609	3 630
Sheltered employment	1 552	1 592	1 547	1 502	1 452	1 431
Sum of persons in programmes	5 670	6 315	6 761	7 220	7 522	7 821
Sum of persons in programmes	50 644	57 053	57 000	61 187	59 864	57 000



Total	72 443	77 646	86 403	93 304	89 467	83 205
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We have very little indication of the number of pupils and students with impairments and learning difficulties in upper secondary education. We do not have data on completion of courses or persistence in education for this group.

Two thirds of all students with special educational needs receive part time special education in the form of small student groups or 1:1 lessons outside their classes. About one third of all special education in Norway is conducted in special classes for students with special educational needs.

*2.4.3 Data on the number and percentage of learners with special educational needs 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*

17.6% of all youth with impairments aged between 16-30 in Norway were undergoing education in 2008, compared with 21.3% of the total population for this age group (i.e., including those with impairments).

*2.4.4 Brief definition and explanation of “drop out”. Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with special educational needs 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.*

As a result of the general lack of data on students with impairments in basic and higher education in Norway, we know little on the relation between disability and drop-out rates.

Norway has a comparatively high drop-out rate from upper secondary education (20,7%). However, a large portion of pupils dropping out of school do later return to finish their upper secondary education. Longitudinal data on young persons in Norway from 2001 to 2006 shows that more than 50% of 16-19 year olds stopping their education in 2001 had finished their upper secondary education by 2005.

**Educational attainment in 2005 of individuals classified as drop-outs at the ages of 16-19 in 2001. Percent.**

<b>Educational attainment in 2005</b>	<b>Drop-outs at the age of 16-19 in 2001</b>
Less than ISCED 3 (still a drop-out)	45,3
ISCED 3	53,8
More than ISCED 3	0,9
Total	100,0

*Source: (OECD 2008, p. 71)*

Of all the pupils who began upper secondary education and training for the first time in 2005, 70 percent achieved competence at the upper secondary level within five years of starting (in 2010). 5 percent were still in upper secondary education and training in 2010, and 7 percent completed the third year without passing. 18 percent had dropped out.



There are big differences between general studies and vocational education programmes. The pupils who began in vocational studies completed upper secondary education and training less frequently than the pupils who began in general studies. For general studies, 83 percent completed within five years and for vocational studies 57 percent completed within five years.

*Source: Statistics Norway*

#### *2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with special educational needs 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*

We have little data on transition issues among special educational needs students in general, and especially on the transitions from upper secondary education to tertiary education and from tertiary education to work.

Transitions from upper secondary schools to tertiary education or from tertiary education to employment have been a concern, but there have been few concrete policy proposals.

## **2.5 Legislation and policy**

### *2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation*

The current legislation on education and work (for admission of students with impairments or learning difficulties to upper secondary and higher education) contains few provisions on transitional issues. Students in primary and secondary education, however, have a statutory right to counselling on educational and vocational choices.

The new Discrimination and Accessibility Act came into effect January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009. Under this law, employers are obliged to provide an individually adapted work environment and work tasks.

#### Education Act:

Students who, after an expert assessment (by the Educational-Psychological Service), have been classified as having “sensory or motor impairments, strong learning difficulties, emotional or social problems, severe multiple disabilities or other disabilities” have the right to admission to specially prioritised programmes on the first level (Vg 1) of upper secondary education (section 6-18 to 6-21).

Section 9-2 gives students the legal right to counselling on education, vocational opportunities, vocational choices and social issues.

Vocational training encompasses two years of training in school, followed by two years in an enterprise. According to the Education Act, however, the Ministry of Education can make regulatory exceptions from this rule for apprentices and trainees. Pursuant to the Education Act, a Regulation states that the county vocational training committees can make exceptions to the standard apprentice contracts for pupils with “impaired work capability”

The Norwegian labour market is characterised by close and extensive co-operation between the social partners and the Government. It is possible to get a certificate of completed apprenticeship if you work full time in a relevant job for five years (cf. Education Act, §3-5).

The County Governor is the chief representative of King and Government in the county, and works for the implementation of Storting (Parliament) and central government decisions. It is the county governor’s duty to check that municipalities, county administrations and other educational authorities abide by the Education Act, § 14-1. The



office of the county governor reviews decisions made by municipal and county administrations subject to the Education Acts and local government Act. The county governor processes appeals relating to specific decisions according to the Education Act § 15-2. Appeal requests should be sent to the authority responsible for making the decision. If the authority does not support the appeal, the appeal can then be forwarded to the office of the county governor for a final evaluation. The participation of people with disabilities is an important principle of the disability strategy. This means that those affected by a decision, or those who use services, may influence the decision-making procedures and the organisation of services. This is a democratic right. Norway also has an act that states that all municipalities and counties should have a council for persons with disabilities.

### *2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with special educational needs and the transition from VET to employment*

The main aim for persons with disabilities in Norway is full participation and equality in all spheres of society,

Every major school reform since the early 1990s has stressed equity and inclusion as the superior principles of Norwegian educational policy. [...]In cases where this is not deemed adequate, *special education* might be allocated. The educational reform initiated in 1994 – simply called reform 94 – secured for adolescents between 16 and 19 years of age a statutory right to five years of upper secondary education leading to a concluding certificate: a university admission certificate, a vocational/craft certificate or other formalised vocational skills.

The follow-up service for 16- to 19-year-olds, and the Youth guarantee for 20- to 24-year-olds both seek to ensure that no young people fall through the gaps. Special measures for the long-term unemployed, for minority ethnic young people and for young people with special needs seek to strengthen their participation in education and competitiveness in the labour market. There is a political aspiration that no young person under the age of 25 should find themselves outside of education, training and employment and that they should all be engaged in some form of purposeful activity through both learning and employment.

Norwegian labour market policies are mainly geared towards vocationally disabled persons in general, and no strategy has been developed for young persons with impairments or learning difficulties in transitional situations.

### *2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework*

Norwegian governments base their policies in relation to persons with impairments on mainstreaming, meaning that each administrative sector has responsibility for creating and enforcing policies toward persons with impairments in its own area (labour, education, transportation, municipalities, etc.). Generally, policies that involve more than one authority depend on negotiations and cooperative agreements between the Ministries, counties and municipalities involved.

The Norwegian State Council on Disability is an advisory body serving public agencies and institutions, in particular the ministries and other state administrative organs. The purpose of the council is to provide central authorities with independent comment and counsel so that public policies reflect accurate knowledge about the disabled and their interests. An important goal is to achieve an inclusive society in which everyone can be sure of good living conditions and access to society's various arenas of activity.

Norway has an act that states that all municipalities and counties should have a council for persons with disabilities.



There exists no singular policy strategy for the transition from school to work for students with impairments and learning difficulties. Norway has an extensive network of support services, but these are spread among a range of authorities (and agencies within these authorities). This poses coordination challenges – especially in transitional phases. Increased coordination of service providers is a focus for the government, and three tools have been devised to foster this cooperation. Municipal coordinating units for health services are established in many municipalities, but it is not known how well they cooperate with other service providers. Individuals with the need for support from more than one service are entitled to an Individual Plan.

Although they are not directly involved with persons with special educational needs, at national level, the National Council for VET (Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring), a body for cooperation on vocational education and training, appointed by the Ministry, gives advice and takes initiatives within VET. One Vocational Training Council (Faglig råd) exists for each VET programme. At regional level, there are county vocational training boards (Yrkesopplæringsnemder) - one in each county. These boards have specific advisory tasks as stated in the Education Act. The organisation of pupils/apprentices is represented in both in the National Council for VET and in the County Vocational Training Boards.

#### *2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with special educational needs, relating to the job market*

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is an executive subordinate agency for the Ministry of Education and Research. The Directorate's main tasks are to promote quality development, quality assessment, analysis and documentation in primary and secondary education and training and to perform administrative tasks connected with primary and secondary education and training in addition to bearing the overall national responsibility for supervision of primary and secondary education and training.

The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority (Arbeidstilsynet) is responsible for investigating whether the conditions in public and private enterprises are in accordance with the provisions in The Working Environment Act. The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority is therefore responsible for making sure that the enterprises live up to the demands for an adapted working environment for employees with impairments. This is meant to be an integrated part of the Authority's supervision, guidance and information activities.

The social partners actively participate in the development of VET policies at all administrative levels. The National Council for Vocational Education and Training advises the Ministry of Education on the general framework of the national vocational education and training system. The Advisory Councils for Vocational Education and Training are linked to most vocational education programmes provided in upper secondary education; they advise national authorities on the content of VET programmes and future skill needs. The local county vocational training committees (yrkesopplæringsnemnd) advise on quality, provision, careers guidance and regional development in VET.

## **2.6. VET teachers, trainers and other professionals**

### *2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers etc.)*

There are two different ways to become a qualified teacher in Norway. One way is to go through a three-year general teacher bachelor's degree programme and thereby become qualified for teaching in primary and lower secondary schools. Another is to complete a bachelor's or master's degree in a given subject at a higher education institution and complement this with a one-year practical-educational study.





Both initial and in-service training of teachers are focused on adapted education, and special education is a subject of choice. In-service training of teachers is a cooperative effort between the State, school owners and the teachers themselves. The current strategy for in-service training of teachers, however, does not emphasise special education.

In-service training for teachers in Norway is the responsibility of school owners (Education Act section 10-8) and normally financed in a partnership between the state, municipalities/counties and the teachers themselves. It can be collective training at school, training outside the school at higher educational institutions or in centres.

#### *2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with special educational needs who are enrolled in VET programmes*

All upper secondary schools are obliged to provide both social-pedagogical counselling and career guidance for their students. Today more schools are dividing their counselling services to specialise to a larger extent in either psychological issues or competence in educational and vocational opportunities. Part of the career guidance might also include visits to enterprises or higher education institutions.

## **7. Funding**

There are no funding arrangements in the State Educational Loan Fund or elsewhere to cover extra expenses that students with impairments might have in higher education, but there are provisions to counterbalance the incentive to complete studies in the prescribed time frame.

There also exist *special* provisions aimed at qualifying students with “special needs” for further studies or work. These are: special admission practices, special educational programmes, adapted learning and teaching aids, the opportunity to use extra time to finish studies (up to five years), adaptation of exams and subsidised apprenticeships. VET-companies that accept apprentices with special educational needs can receive extra financial aid from the county if granted by the Directorate for Education and Vocational Training.

Training establishments providing training for apprentices receive government grants. Additional grants will be given to enterprises that increase the number of apprenticeships and to enterprises that take on apprentices for the first time. Furthermore, enterprises that take on disabled apprentices get additional grants.

Students with impairments or learning difficulties are not explicitly mentioned in the budget. There exist some special subsidies for increasing accessibility to education, but this is mainly a municipality, county or higher educational institution responsibility.