

6.1 General context

-

previous page

[< 6. Education and Training](#)

- [Up](#)
- [6.2 Administration and governance >](#)

On this page

1.

[Main trends in young people's participation in education and training](#)

2.

[Organisation of the education and training system](#)

3.

[Main concepts](#)

Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

Statistics Denmark documents [participation in folk high schools](#) as well as the adult education statistics (AES). According to Statistics Denmark, the number of long courses at Danish Folk High Schools has been increasing with 22 % between 2012/13 and 2017/18. In 2018/19, [4 918 full-time equivalent students \(årselev\) younger than 30 years were enrolled on a long course](#). The total number of full-time equivalent students (årselev) enrolled on long courses was 5301 persons.

ELET (Early leaving from education and training): Statistics Denmark do not collect data on ELET. According to [a report from the European Commission](#), the proportion of ELET of the whole population aged 18–24 years in 2013 was about 7 % on the whole population aged 18-24.

Application for general and vocational upper secondary education programmes

In 2019, 72% of the young people applying for an upper secondary education programme applied for a general upper secondary education programme, 20.1% applied for a vocational education and training (VET) programme, and 7.9% applied for other education programmes.

In 2020, [72% of the young people applying for an upper secondary education programme applied for a general upper secondary education programme](#), 20% applied for a VET programme, and 8% applied for other education

programmes.

Since 2016, the proportion of young people applying for a VET education programme has increased from 18.4% to 20%. However, in a longer perspective, the proportion has decreased from 32% in 2000.

For more information, see [section 6.3](#).

The admission of students to upper secondary education programmes has been an issue for several years. Too many young people apply for general upper secondary education programmes, whereas the number of young people applying for vocational upper secondary education programmes has been too low. In 2000, 32% of the young people completing lower secondary education applied for admission to a VET programme. In 2016, the percentage was 18.4%. As of August 2020, the number has increased slightly to 20%.

Furthermore, according to a tripartite agreement from 2020 at least [45% of students beginning a VET education programme drop out](#), which is the largest drop-out rate among students enrolled on upper secondary education programmes.

In 2014, in the political agreement on [better and more attractive VET education programmes](#), the political parties behind the agreement sharpened the requirements for applying for admission to VET education programmes:

A young person completing lower secondary education after the 9th or the 10th grade must either:

- Have passed the leaving examination of the primary and lower secondary school (for students completing lower secondary education after 2017/2018),
- Have an average grade of 2 (on the Danish 7-point grading scale) in written and oral Danish, have an average grade of 2 (on the Danish 7-point grading scale) in written mathematics after the 9th grade and written and oral mathematics after the 10th grade,
- Or have entered into a training agreement with an enterprise.

Furthermore, the student must be assessed as being ready for upper secondary education. If the student does not meet the admission requirements, the student can take an admission test and an interview at the VET college.

Lastly, new targets were set:

1. In 2020, at least 25% should enrol in a VET education programme after completing lower secondary education. In 2025, this should be at least 30%.
2. In 2020, the completion rate should be at least 52%, increasing to at least 67% in 2025.

In 2016, admission requirements for general upper secondary education programmes were sharpened with [the agreement to strengthen general upper secondary education programmes](#) in order to regulate the allocation of young people in general and vocational education programmes.

In November 2019, the signatory parties to the agreement on improved general upper secondary education programmes made a new agreement on the admission of applicants to general upper secondary education programmes. In 2019, new admission rules were effective, but the first admission process in spring/summer 2019 showed some shortcomings; for instance, regarding the complexity of the admission rules.

According to the [new admission rules](#), students in exam-free 10th grade can use their 9th grade leaver

examination in the admission process.

In order to enrol on the two-year general upper secondary education programme ([HF](#)) in immediate continuation of the 9th or the 10th grade, young people must:

- Apply in due time in immediate continuation of the 9th or 10th grade,
- Be assessed as ready for upper secondary education, with an average grade of at least 4 in all term results,
- Have had foreign language teaching in two foreign languages from the 5th to the 9th grade (with some exceptions). For young people applying in immediate continuation of the 9th grade, the following additional requirements apply. The young person must:
- Have taken the leaver examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)) after the 9th grade,
- Have passed the leaver examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)),
- Have received the average grade of 4 in the leaver examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)).

For young people applying in immediate continuation of the 10th grade, the following additional requirements apply. The young person must:

- Have taken the leaver examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)) in a second foreign language after the 9th grade (if the subject is selected to examination) or after the 10th grade,
- In the 10th form, the young person must have had teaching in Danish, English, and mathematics and have taken written and oral examinations in all three subjects,
- Have taken the leaver examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)) in physics/chemistry, biology, and geography after the 9th grade or the final examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)) in physics/chemistry after the 10th grade.

If a young person is assessed as not being ready for upper secondary education, the young person can be admitted to the HF programme if the young person is awarded with the grade 6 in the mandatory examinations and meet the other criteria.

With the reform of general upper secondary educations in 2016, new admissions requirements were established. According to the political agreement, the following requirements must be met in order to be eligible for general upper secondary education programmes:

- Young persons must apply in due time in immediate continuation of the 9th or 10th grade,
- Be assessed as ready for upper secondary education with an average grade of 5 in all term marks,
- Have had foreign language teaching in two foreign languages from the 5th to the 9th grade (with some exceptions),
- Have taken the leaver examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)) after the 9th grade,
- Have passed the leaver examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)),
- Have received the average grade of 5 in the leaver examination of the primary and lower secondary education ([folkeskole](#)).

In the agreement, there are some exceptions and supplementary criteria for students who do not meet the above criteria; for instance, it is possible to enrol after an interview with the headmaster of the general upper secondary education institution.

The profile model

The Ministry for Children and Education has developed a [profile model](#), which is a projection of how the ministry expects a youth cohort will be educated in the following 25 years. The model is based on the following presumptions:

1. The education system will stay the same as when the youth cohort studied in the 8th or 9th grade.
2. The youth cohort whose educational behaviour is projected will act in the same way as the young people in the education system when the youth cohort is in the 8th or 9th grade.

The model is able to show numbers for a specific region, gender, year, and origin of the student.

The profile model is used to compare education systems over time and to project the share of a youth cohort to complete at least one upper secondary education or a higher education 5, 10, 15, and 20 years after the 9th grade. Since the model is a projection, they are subject to uncertainty.

Social inclusion through education and training

From 2008 until 2017, the number of young people receiving special educational assistance (support scheme) has been increasing, from 3000 young people in 2008 to about 20,000 in 2017. A report from [EVA from 2019](#) concludes that young people receiving special educational assistance during their upper secondary education enrol in higher education programmes just as often as their fellow students who did not receive assistance. Furthermore, pupils receiving assistance due to dyslexia have lower drop-out rates than their fellow students and undergo a more positive academic development than their counterparts.

Validation of non-formal and informal competences

In 2019, the Danish Evaluation Institute has published a report on the [use and quality of the prior learning assessment system](#) (PLA) in Adult and Continuing Training ([VEU](#)) in the period 2010–2018. PLA has today been implemented at a larger percentage of education institutions than in 2010, and there is very strong support across education areas for the concept of recognising adults' prior learning. Slightly fewer institutions, but still very high percentages, assess that the possibilities for recognising prior learning in practice are also good.

Cross-border learning mobility

According to the report '[Education at a Glance 2019](#)', 12% of Danish students take a study period abroad. The report is published by the OECD.

Credit mobility

Outgoing students (at least one week) (all numbers prior to 2010 are from a report published by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, [Statistics in international mobility](#))

2000/2001	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
4279	5917	6661	8045	9350	10533	11166	13964	14504	14178	13406

Incoming students (credit mobility)

2000/2001	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
3725	8068	10044	8842	9524	9005	7683	8188	8399	8583	8302

Degree mobility

The statistics on outward degree mobility only include students that are entitled to the state educational grant and loan scheme ([SU](#)). Danish PhD students abroad and students who study abroad without the state educational grant are not included. Furthermore, non-Danish citizens (e.g. EU/EEA citizens) receiving the state educational grant abroad are included in the numbers.

Danish students abroad (excl. PhD students)

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
4042	4333	4617	4620	4683	4809	5024	5283	5359	5311

Incoming students (excl. PhD students)

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
18076	19620	21415	22958	24355	25508	24666	24190	23307	22434

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Science

Recipients of the scholarship to study abroad:

Academic

2010/11 2011/12 2012/13 2013/14 2014/15 2015/16 2016/17 2017/18
year

Recipients 357 417 432 459 469 457 458 465

Note: recipients include the number of started educations with the scholarship in an academic year. During an academic year, some students receive scholarships for more than one education. The scholarships are all included in the numbers. Furthermore, some recipients receive the scholarship for the same education in more than one academic year. They are only included in the number in the first academic year.

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Science

Due to the rise in the number of international degree students in Denmark receiving state education grant (SU), the former Danish government (November 2016 to June 2019) decided to [reduce the intake of international students](#) to Danish university educations and bachelor of engineering educations by 1000–1200 persons. The reduction in admission of applicants begins in 2019. In 2020, it is still [a political priority to reduce the number of international students receiving state education grant](#) (SU).

Organisation of the education and training system

In Denmark, there is 10 years of compulsory education, but not compulsory schooling. According to the Act on Primary and Lower Secondary Education § 34 (Lov om folkeskole, [LBK nr. 1396 af 28/09/2020](#)), compulsory education begins 1 August in the year the child turns six, and ends 31 July in the 9th grade (15-16 years of age). It is possible to prolong the compulsory education with a 10th grade, but that remains optional.

In Denmark, primary education consists of integrated primary and lower secondary education. The education institutions at which primary and lower secondary education takes place is called primary and lower secondary schools ([folkeskole](#), in Danish).

Following primary and lower secondary education, students are free to choose the educational path they wish. In brief, the choice is between academically oriented general upper secondary education programmes and vocational upper secondary education programmes. Following the general upper secondary education programmes and vocational upper secondary education programmes, there is a great variety in the students' educational opportunities. In general, general upper secondary education qualifies students for further studies at the level of higher education, while vocational upper secondary education qualifies students for the labour market.

General upper secondary education programmes

The common objective of general upper secondary education is to prepare young people for higher education.

The four national programmes are:

The [STX](#) (3 years) and [HF](#) (2 years) programmes, which consist of a broad range of subjects in the fields of humanities, natural science, and social science.

The [HHX](#) (3 years) programme, which focuses on business and socio-economic disciplines in combination with foreign languages and other general subjects.

The [HTX](#) (3 years) programme, where the focus is on technological and scientific subjects in combination with general subjects.

Two-year [STX](#) programme (studenterkursus): It is possible to enrol in a two-year STX programme, which is equivalent to the three-year STX, but more compact. Admission requirements: Completion of the 9th grade more than a year ago and an individual assessment by the education institution.

International general upper secondary: A range of upper secondary education institutions offer the international general upper secondary education International Baccalaureate (IB). An IB is a two-year programme where English is the teaching language. Furthermore, the Ministry of Children and Education may approve English, German, or French as the teaching language. Currently, a three-year French-speaking upper secondary education programme and a three-year German-speaking upper secondary education programme are available.

Vocational upper secondary education programmes

VET ([EUD](#)): These programmes vary in duration depending on the programme in question. More specifically, the duration varies from 1½ to 5½ years, the most typical being 3½ to 4 years. The programmes are offered at vocational/technical colleges.

EUX: [EUX](#) combines a VET education and a general upper secondary education. EUX qualifies students for a job as well as giving them direct access to higher education in a wide range of programmes

[EUV](#): People above 25 years have access to VET programmes designed especially for adults on the basis of recognition of prior learning and relevant work experience, which leads to the same vocational qualifications.

[FGU](#): A preparatory basic training and education programme for persons below the age of 25 who have completed lower secondary schooling but who do not have the skills or grades to continue into upper secondary and vocational education and training.

The purpose for the participants is to improve professionally, personally, and socially with the aim to proceed into the labour market or upper secondary and vocational education and training.

The length of the education is flexible depending on the young person's education and training needs, but is a maximum of two years.

Three entries/tracks:

- General basic education: Education in basic subjects such as Danish language, mathematics, English, nature and science, etc. Aimed at young people who want to qualify for further vocational education or another upper secondary education.
- Basic production education. Workshop-based education with a high level of practical learning. Aimed at young people who want to proceed to vocational education and training or the labour market on a more

qualified base.

- Basic vocational education: Internship-based education.

STU: A three-year youth education programme for young people with mental and physical impairments or special needs.

Higher education

Higher education in Denmark is offered at three levels: short-cycle higher education, medium-cycle higher education, and long-cycle higher education. The responsibility for higher education is divided between three ministries:

- The Ministry of Higher Education and Science
- The Danish Ministry of Culture (medium- and long-cycle education within the area of arts)
- The Ministry of Defence.

Danish higher education comprises a university sector, college sector, and an academy sector. There are four types of institutions offering higher education programmes:

- Business academies (offering short-cycle programmes)
- University colleges (offering medium-cycle programmes)
- Universities (offering long-cycle programmes)
- University-level institutions for educations in the arts

In 2018, the Danish parliament decided that [universities should offer 1-year academic postgraduate programmes \(60 ECTS\)](#). In April 2019, the Danish parliament passed an act, [Lovforslag nr. L 201 2018/19](#), with the purpose of creating more flexibility in the university-level educations. It is the opinion of the minister of higher education and science that young people need more flexibility in their programmes to support a combination of disciplines and to alternate between the education system and the labour market. The parties behind the political settlement agreed on a [reform package to increase flexibility](#) with the following elements:

- Better opportunities for starting work after completing a bachelor programme and then return to university later for a master's programme
- Supplementary possibility of obtaining a one-year academic advanced-level programme
- Greater possibility of studying part-time.

The new education programmes are expected to be available for students in spring 2021.

A number of [higher artistic educational institutions](#) are regulated by the Danish Ministry of Culture and offer first-, second-, and third-cycle degree programmes in the visual arts, music, cinematography, theatre, and performing arts. The bachelor's, master's, and PhD programmes at these institutions are awarded 180, 120, and 180 ECTS credits, respectively. A higher education degree within theatre or cinematography is typically awarded after four years of study (240 ECTS). Music academies offer a specialist degree of two to four years following the master's degree.

National legislation covers the aims and framework of education, funding, and in some cases curricula, examinations, and staffing.

Adult education

Denmark has a long-standing tradition of lifelong learning and improving the competences of the workforce beyond compulsory stages of education. Adult general education and vocational education range from non-formal education to qualifying general and continuing vocational training. The programmes are structured in such a way that the level of qualification can be compared to the levels in the mainstream education system. The responsibility for adult education and training is divided between three ministries:

- The Ministry of Children and Education: responsible for formal adult education and continuing training equivalent to the Danish folkeskole, general and vocational upper secondary education, and adult vocational training. See Eurydice for more information.
- The Ministry of Higher Education and Science: responsible for formal higher education for adults (advanced adult education, [VVU](#)), diploma programmes, and master's programmes.
- The Ministry of Culture: responsible for non-formal adult education and training.

Main concepts

Danish general adult non-formal education ([folkeoplysning](#)) is one of the largest popular movements in Denmark. 'Folkeoplysning' means people's enlightenment and encompasses a wide range of activities – be it choir or theatre, evening classes or folk high schools, sports, scouts, political youth educations, creative activities, women's organisations, environmental organisations, or intercultural understanding. The common feature is the sense of community and a strong set of values. According to the Act on Non-Formal Education and Democratic Voluntary Activity, the objective of voluntary activities in democratic associations is to advance democratic understanding and active citizenship, and with a point of departure in:

- The activity and the community of commitment, to strengthen the non-formal education and democratic voluntary activity.
- The teaching, to increase the participants' general and subject-related insight and skills.

The aim is to strengthen the members' ability and desire to take responsibility for their own lives and to play an active and engaged part in society.

In Denmark, non-formal learning activities are frequently based on private initiatives by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Non-formal adult education comprises:

- Independent non-formal educational activities, such as evening schools and voluntary activity in associations
- University extension courses
- Day folk high schools
- Private independent boarding schools (folk high schools, home economics schools, arts and crafts schools, and continuation schools)

No particular school or professional qualifications are required for participating in liberal adult education.