



Structures of Education,  
Initial Training  
and Adult Education  
Systems in Europe

# NORWAY

1999

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If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.gr>)

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## INTRODUCTION

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Europe is characterized by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) jointly published *Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union* for the first time in 1990. This book was updated in 1995 and then again in 1999/2000. Given the number of countries it now covers<sup>1</sup> and the amount of data available, this most recent update has been placed for consultation on the EURYDICE Network website (<http://www.eurydice.org>), instead of being distributed in printed paper form. In this way, it may be accessed by a maximum number of readers and updated on a more regular basis.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels, as well as brief accounts of their higher education and systems for initial and in-service teacher training, and of the status of teachers. EURYDICE and CEDEFOP have also used this latest update to add a chapter on adult education, which is an important topic in relation to the development of lifelong learning in Europe.

As in the previous edition, the information is structured with respect to a common table of contents to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasized.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational), the initial vocational training of young people and higher education. Here also, the way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational training is the subject of a chapter in its own right, as it is generally provided outside the ordinary education system, whether as part of schemes for apprenticeship, the special training of young people or vocational integration. This is followed by a chapter on higher education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment.

As indicated above, this latest updating also provides for the first time a general description of the way formal systems of general education and vocational training for adults are organized. The legislative framework and financing of this kind of education are also covered.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios,

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<sup>1</sup> The European countries taking part in the Community Programme in Education, Socrates.

attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialization.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system with explanatory notes. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardized so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

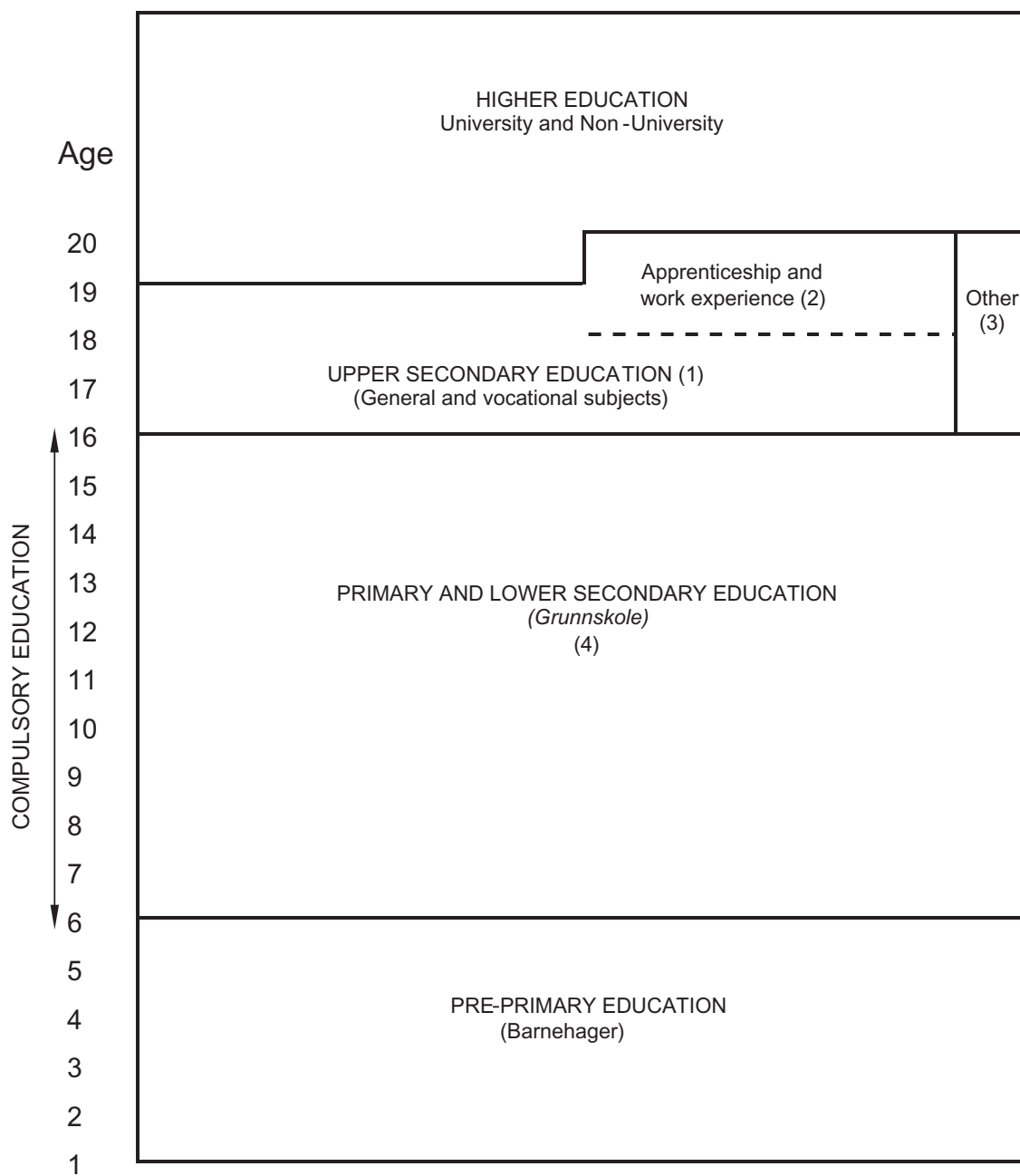
The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational training and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the documentary information network of CEDEFOP (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation – ETF (as regards the ten countries of central and eastern Europe). We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project, both in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels and at CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

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# NORWAY



- Notes:
- (1) Upper secondary schools provide 3 years of general and vocational education after the 10th year of lower secondary education, with the final year examination qualifying for higher education.
  - (2) The norm for apprenticeship training is 2 years of vocational training in upper secondary school followed by 1 or 2 years of practical training in industry.
  - (3) Courses not included in the Act Concerning Upper Secondary Education.
  - (4) School entry age was lowered from 7 to 6 years as from 1997

# 1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

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## 1.1 Background

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Norway has 4.4 million inhabitants in an area (mainland only) of 324,000 square kilometres. The country is divided into 19 counties and 435 municipalities, of which 47 are towns. Oslo, the capital, has 500,000 inhabitants.

Culturally, the population has always been fairly homogeneous. The Norwegian language has, however, two forms (*nynorsk* and *bokmål*) which have co-existed as the country's two official languages for about a hundred years. The proper balance to be accorded to the two versions requires special efforts with regard to educational and cultural policies.

In addition, there is also a small *Sami* population with its own language and distinctive culture. This population is centred mainly in the northernmost county of Finnmark. There are an estimated 20,000 *Sami* speakers. As a general rule, *Sami* pupils in compulsory schools are entitled to education in their own language.

Approximately 90% of the population belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway.

At national level, political power is invested in the *Storting* (the Parliament). The 165 members of the *Storting* are elected for four-year terms. The Labour Party has supplied the Prime Minister and formed the government for most of the time since World War II, but in 1997 a coalition of the Christian Democratic Party, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party replaced the Labour government. Since 1981, almost half the ministerial posts have been held by women.

In 1998, the working population was employed as follows: agriculture, forestry and fishing 4.6%; oil and gas extraction, manufacturing, mining and quarrying, electricity, gas and water supply 16.7%; construction 6.5%; wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels 18.3%; transport and communication 7.6%; finance, insurance, real estate and business activities 10.2%; public administration, defence, education, health and social services 36.0% (source: Statistics Norway).

The unemployment rate was 3.2% in 1998.

## 1.2 Basis of the education system: principles and legislation

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The overall objective of Norwegian education policy is to provide equal opportunities for all, irrespective of sex, geographic location, and economic, social or cultural background. The aim is to offer all children an education adapted to their individual abilities.

Special emphasis is being placed on preparing the young for the information society and the new technologies. The provision of foreign language teaching and learning is being strengthened. At a time when increasing attention is being paid to the conservation of the environment, environmental education is also gaining in importance.

In order to provide possibilities for life-long learning it is considered important that a broad spectrum of further training and other study possibilities should be accessible to adults. High priority is also given to research and to the recruitment of research workers. Strengthening the sector of higher education is particularly relevant in this respect.

## 1.3 Distribution of responsibilities for the organisation and administration of the education and training system

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The *Storting* defines the overall aims of public compulsory, secondary and higher education; it lays down their structure and organisation, the responsibility for running them and their sources of funding.

The government exercises its authority in matters of education through the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. The Ministry covers all levels of education from primary and

secondary to higher education, including adult education. Pre-primary education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.

The administration of primary and secondary education in Norway is decentralised with the counties and municipalities having considerable authority and financial freedom of action. As well as providing child care services, the municipalities are responsible for the administration of primary and lower secondary education (compulsory education), for the building and maintenance of school buildings and for the appointment of teachers. The counties are responsible for upper secondary education, for the administration of the schools, the intake of pupils and the appointment of teachers. The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs administers the institutions of higher education and research directly.

### Central level

The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs is responsible for policy issues and all matters of relevance to the educational system as a whole. Employing some 320 people (in 1998), the ministry's budget amounts to some NOK 37 billion (in 1999).

A Core Curriculum (*Læreplan for grunnskole, videregående opplæring og voksenopplæring, Generell del*) includes general principles for compulsory education, upper secondary education and for adult education in school and industry. This document provides a basis for curriculum development within all these educational sectors.

According to the law, the Ministry of Education draws up curriculum guidelines for compulsory school. The Core Curriculum for primary, secondary and adult education came into force in 1993 and replaced the first part of the Curriculum Guidelines for primary and lower secondary education. In August 1997, the new national curriculum for the 10-year compulsory school came into force.

The new curriculum, having been issued as a directive, is a legal obligation for local authorities, schools and teachers all over the country. However, it is based on the principle of community and adaptation, which emphasises the sense of community through a common heritage as well as adaptation due to local and individual varieties and differences.

One of the most significant developments in the new curriculum is that greater emphasis has been placed on a central curriculum. This is intended to ensure a nation-wide education system with a common content of knowledge, traditions and values regardless of where the

pupils live, their social background, gender, religion or their mental or physical ability. At the same time and in the tradition of Norwegian education policy, there is still scope at the local and individual level to adapt the policies, adjust the specifications and supplement the activities.

The Ministry is also responsible for establishing the main curriculum and timetables for upper secondary school and organising the school leaving examinations. The curricula are to a large extent developed on the basis of local initiatives or the initiatives of various bodies of experts.

In higher education, institutions are funded directly by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, generally in the form of framework allocations. The Ministry also approves study programmes following application from the institutions concerned, and in accordance with the provisions of the 1995 Universities and Colleges Act.

Some of the Ministry's work is done in the National Education Offices (*Statens utdanningskontorer*), by advisory bodies or in other institutions competent in other areas.

### County level

The counties are responsible for providing upper secondary education (post-compulsory education). Each county has a County Education Committee (*Fylkesskolestyre*) elected by the County Council (*Fylkestyre*), which is responsible for running schools in accordance with current laws and regulations and for maintaining school standards. The Committee is also responsible for the intake of students and for the appointment/employment of teachers, and assists in school development. The tasks of the Committee are carried out by the County Chief Education Officer (*Fylkesskolesjef*). For apprenticeship training there is a special Vocational Training Committee (*Yrkesopplæringsnemnd*) in each county, which is responsible for the administration of the apprenticeship contracts, approves the enterprises and organisations which will provide the training, organises the examinations and issues the certificates.

### Municipal level

According to the new Education Act of 1998, the municipality shall comply with the right of all residents in the municipality to primary and lower secondary education and special educational assistance pursuant to the act. This responsibility does not apply to pupils or other persons for whom the county authority is responsible. The Ministry issues regulations or instructions in individual cases concerning who may be regarded as residents of the

municipality, and concerning reimbursement of costs of primary and lower secondary education incurred by other municipalities. Publicly maintained primary and lower secondary schools shall be run by municipalities. In special cases the state or the county authority may run primary and lower secondary schools. In such cases, county authorities must receive the approval of the Ministry. The municipal administration shall have personnel above the level of the school with qualifications in education.

### **Institutional level**

The head teacher of each school is responsible for the provision of education, the management of the teaching staff and the administration of the school. Local work on subject syllabuses should mainly be done at the individual school or by groups of schools. It should establish the foundation for teachers' planning of their teaching at classroom and pupil level.

Emphasis should be given to

- More detailed formulation of plans in various subjects, especially

- Specification, weighting and coordination of the contents in the main subject elements,

- Supplementing the main subject elements, and

- Choosing working methods and organisation;

- Allocation of time according to subjects and weekly periods;

- Coordination of related main subject elements from different subjects with a view to interdisciplinary work;

- Planning the thematic structuring of contents and project work;

- Planning "school's and pupils' options".

As far as learning materials are concerned, a distinction is made between textbooks and supplementary materials. Textbooks are subject to approval by the appropriate authority; books, which have not been approved, may not be used. Supplementary materials, on the other hand, can be used freely without official approval being needed.

All the state higher education institutions are administered by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Act of 12 May 1995 No 22 on Universities and Colleges. The act explicitly provides for discretionary decisions in strategic policy, general management, daily administration and the management of teaching and research - provided that the relevant laws, regulations and national policies are adhered to.

## **1.4 Inspection/supervision/guidance**

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There are no inspectorate, or the equivalent to inspectorate in Norway. However, the National Education Offices are invited to discuss educational matters with the Ministry. A national system of evaluation is being developed by the Ministry of Education, where school-based assessment is seen as an important part of the evaluation system.

There is an educational-psychological service (*Pedagogisk-psykologisk tjeneste*) in every municipality as a part of the municipal school administration responsible for providing pedagogical, psychological and subject-related advice for pupils and their parents, teachers and educational institutions.

The educational-psychological service also caters for pre-primary children and day-care institutions (*barnehager*) at that level.

Every lower secondary school has a counsellor whose primary task is to provide information about upper secondary education and employment and to make this information available to pupils at lower secondary level. Vocational guidance and information about the world of work are integral to lower secondary education.

At upper secondary schools, the counsellor's task is to provide information about the different branches of study, the choice of subjects, apprenticeship training possibilities and to give individual advice on the choices faced by individual pupils. The counsellor has contact with outside employers and the advice covers employment opportunities in addition to opportunities in further and higher education. Advice is provided, but the final decision is the pupil's.

A county-based counselling service exists in every county. The service is responsible for providing pedagogical, psychological and subject-related advice for teachers and institutions. The service also assists in diagnosing individual pupils' learning difficulties, takes part in the planning process and provides the tools necessary for continued instruction in the ordinary class context.

In higher education, the Network Norway Council is responsible for evaluation and quality assessment.

## 1.5 Financing

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All public education and training is subsidised by the central government.

At primary and secondary level, a major step in the direction of the decentralisation of decision-making was made by the introduction of a new sector grant system in 1986. The former earmarking of grants to primary and secondary education from central to municipal/county authorities was then abolished and replaced by a system whereby each of these authorities receives one lump sum covering all central government expenditure on school education, health services and culture. Municipalities and counties thus have considerable autonomy in their expenditure decisions.

In a few fields, there are still earmarked grants, for instance for day-care facilities for school children, for the teaching of mother tongue and Norwegian as a second language to immigrant children, and for the teaching of Norwegian as a second language to adult immigrants.

Upper secondary schools are mainly financed by the county. The costs in this sector vary considerably from one county to another.

Extra state subsidies and provisions are also made to avoid regional disparities, e.g. for state schools or courses in some trades which cannot be organised in each region and for some schools for pupils with special needs. There are about 20 national resource centres for special education; all are financed by the state. There are also special measures for the three northernmost counties.

Higher education in Norway is mostly financed by the state. The total amount of funding to be granted directly by the Ministry is determined by the Storting as part of the annual budget. It is meant to cover most of the costs necessary for the running of the institutions. The funding of state institutions can be divided into three main categories: allocations for salaries and other ordinary costs, for investment and new equipment, and for other measures (e.g. activities common to several institutions). Buildings and equipment are funded after a special evaluation has been made.

In addition, all the state higher education institutions can earn complementary funds from research and development activities carried out in cooperation with (or for) national or local research institutes, from private or public funding of special projects or activities, or from the sale of publications, etc. - provided the relevant national regulations for the sector are adhered to.

The education budget for primary and secondary education for adults is the responsibility of the municipal and county educational authorities, which are given a grant of money for these purposes. The remaining adult education programmes are financed by earmarked grants or subsidised by the government. Grants are given to county authorities, municipalities, organisations and institutions, companies and national associations of companies in accordance with the requirements of the Adult Education Act. The study associations and the distance education institutions may also receive contributions from public funds according to rules set out in the same act. These contributions are given on the basis of implemented hours of adult education activity and also according to special applications for pedagogical development work etc. The main source of financing for the study associations is, however, the participant fees.

Education in public institutions at all levels is provided free of charge. In compulsory primary and lower secondary education, textbooks are also free of charge.

The State Educational Loan Fund (*Statens lånekasse for utdanning*), established in 1947, is a government-run organisation that allocates financial aid to students attending courses in upper secondary and higher education. Each year, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs provides the fund with regulations as to how student financial aid is to be administered and allocated. The scheme consists of loans and grants.

Students at public institutions of higher education are not required to pay tuition fees. However, a small fee has to be paid each term to the Student Welfare Organisation (*Studentsamskipnaden*) by all students.

## 1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

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A characteristic feature of the Norwegian education system has been the large number of advisory bodies concerned with specific types of education.

The Network Norway Council, a new advisory body to the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs on matters concerning higher education, was set up in April 1998. The activities of the Council are related to issues like the distribution of disciplines and study programmes between the higher education institutions, academic assessment of

applications concerning the recognition of private higher education, and the provision of information on higher education in general, including higher education abroad.

National Education Offices for regional administration were established in each county (Oslo and Akershus have one in common) in 1992 to carry out tasks delegated by the central government. The head of each office is a Director of Education (*Utdanningsdirektør*).

The responsibilities of the offices cover all levels of education within the county - the exception being higher education where their responsibility is limited to coordinating activities of relevance for the school sector, notably further education and training for teachers. The offices are consultative bodies. They have a quality control function, but the emphasis is on consultation with each school and municipality. Communication between the national authorities, teachers' unions, parents' associations, and pupils' and students' associations is also the responsibility of the National Education Offices. In addition to the responsibilities common to all the Offices, the Ministry can choose to give certain Offices special assignments. For example, the office of Oslo and Akershus is responsible for the administration of national leaving examinations from upper secondary school. As a result, the different offices cover quite different educational fields.

There are also a number of advisory bodies acting at the national level. The existence and activities of these national centres/councils are based on Acts of Parliament or Orders in Council.

The bodies covering several levels in the education system are the following:

The National Centre for Educational Resources whose main function is to assist in the development of textbooks and other learning materials.

Committees, representing employers and employees, which serve as advisory bodies to the government on issues not covered by general agreements, laws or regulations.

In addition, there are several bodies providing advice on areas such as Sami affairs, vocational training, university cooperation, adult education, distance education etc.

## 1.7 Private schools

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Norway has few private schools compared with other countries. They have primarily been considered as supplementary to public education and are not designed to compete with it. Most of the private schools are based on a particular religious denomination, philosophy of life or pedagogical theory that result in an alternative educational system.

In primary and lower secondary education, about 1.6% of the pupils attend private schools. Fees may be charged at private schools. However, these schools usually also receive public funding. The Act relating to State Grants to Private Schools was implemented in 1985.

Private schools at primary and lower and upper secondary level receive a certain rate of public funding, which usually corresponds to 85% of the school's total expenses. The rate is decided according to the type of school.

Private higher education is regulated by the Act of 11 June 1986 No 53 on the recognition of study programmes at, and the state funding of, private higher education institutions, a law entirely administered by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. The aim of the law was to give more security to the private higher education institutions, particularly academically, by introducing a system for the recognition of study programmes at such institutions. Private higher education institutions may only receive state funding for recognised study programmes but they are not automatically entitled to such support. In practice, the private higher education institutions receive varying shares of their funding from the state, from zero to nearly full financing.

Non-governmental organisations and institutions carrying out open and distance learning are private education bodies run according to the Adult Education Act.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Pre-primary education (early childhood education and care) covers the age-group from 0 to 5. Participation in a pre-primary programme is voluntary. Pre-primary institutions are the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. They are generally referred to as day-care institutions (*barnehager*) and are regulated by the Day-care Institution Act of 5 May 1995. All approved institutions receive financing from the state authorities. Municipalities are responsible for the administration and activities of both private and municipal institutions and for ensuring that institutions are run according to goals set by the national government.

Day-care institutions serve a dual function: they contribute to the education of children of pre-primary age, and they provide care during parents' working hours. A national framework plan stating the general aims of the pre-primary education was implemented in 1996.

In general, there are three types of child care institutions in Norway: ordinary child care institutions (*vanlige barnehager*), family child care institutions (*familiebarnehager*) and open child care institutions (*åpne barnehager*). They are all coeducational, but there are differences in other respects.

Attendance at day-care institutions is not compulsory and there are no formal entrance requirements. Existing limitations are more a consequence of capacity and cost. The establishment of new day-care institutions varies from one municipality to another, and shortage of places mainly affects children under 3 years.

Parental leave of absence has recently undergone reforms which make it possible to benefit from the right to parental leave in a more flexible manner. A cash benefit scheme entered into force for 1-year-olds in August 1998 and was introduced for 2-year-olds in January 1999. The need for child care for the youngest children will be reduced in the future in view of these reforms.

There are no formal links between day-care institutions and primary schools or institutions providing teacher training. However, from 1997, the school entry age has been lowered to 6 years, and experiments have been conducted to find an appropriate gentle transition from day-care to primary school. These experiments

varied from school to school and municipality to municipality, as did the number of children admitted. The principal idea resulting from the experiments is to model the first school year to a large extent on pre-primary pedagogical principles, and pre-primary teachers will be qualified to teach this year.

### 2.1 Organisation

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The provision of day-care services is the responsibility of the municipalities. A considerable part of the total service is provided by private organisations, under municipal supervision. The government covers part of the annual cost, at present about 40% on average, of all approved institutions, private or public. The rest of the cost is shared between the municipality and the parents. The municipality decides whether it wishes to subsidise privately owned institutions. For children with special needs, such as disabled children and immigrants, the government gives special economic support to local authorities. This support makes it possible to establish programmes for integrating children with special needs in day-care institutions.

In Norway, children attend day-care institutions from 6 to about 50 hours a week. Children may attend day-care institutions full-time or part-time. Ordinary day-care institutions are usually open at least 41 hours per week. A total number of 5,991 day-care institutions were registered in 1999. The size of the institutions varies from small ones with 10-18 children to larger ones with 50-100 children, according to local needs.

Ordinary child care institutions, which are the most common, may be divided into departments which are again split into groups consisting of children either in the age-group 0 to 3 or 3 to 6. The youngest children are organised in groups of 8 or 9, while the older ones are in groups of 16 to 20 children. There are also age-integrated groups for 1 to 5 year-olds. Head teachers and teaching staff should be qualified pre-primary teachers. The rest of the staff are mainly assistants; there are generally 1 or 2 assistants for each group.

Family child care institutions are mainly aimed at younger children. This type of child care is organised in private homes, and involves small groups of children; no more than 3 to 5 children in each group. They are under the supervision of a pre-primary teacher who normally supervises several homes.

The third type of child care is in open child care institutions. Parents with children in an open institution can bring their children whenever they want within the working hours of the institution. These institutions can be regarded as places where pre-primary teachers, parents and children can meet.

Parents normally have to contribute financially to have their child in a child care institution. Some parents find it too expensive to do so. Parents on low income or whose child is physically handicapped may apply for a free place; their expenses are then paid by the municipality. The amount parents contribute varies from one child care institution and from one municipality to another.

## 2.2 Curriculum/ assessment

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The framework plan recommends five basic themes:

- Society, religion and ethics
- Aesthetic subjects
- Language, text and communication
- Nature, environment and technology
- Physical activities and health
- Another important part of the program is daily-life activities aimed at developing the child's social skills

Most institutions have a daily routine. This often consists of free time to play, outdoor activities playing in groups, supervised activities, meals and reading/show-and-tell time. The hours spent on the different activities and the order of the activities vary, however.

There is no formal evaluation at pre-primary level. The monitoring of progress has tended to be concentrated around the child's ability to function socially as part of a group. The teachers give informal information to parents about their children's progress once or twice a year. This information is normally given in person during meetings between the teacher and the parents of one child at a time. If the teacher finds that any child does not develop

normally, he or she is responsible for discussing her/his observation of this problem with the parents, and giving them advice on how to get in touch with a specialist in the field. According to the framework plan the staff should observe and evaluate their daily work. A concrete evaluation programme must be part of the annual plan.

According to different ways of organising the children in groups, they may attend the same group for several years. The children have a legal right to enter compulsory school the year they turn six years.

There are no regulations on the size of groups but there are on the number of children per teacher (maximum 18 children over the age of three or 9 children under the age of three per one teacher).

## 2.3 Teachers

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Head teachers and the rest of the teaching staff should be qualified pre-primary teachers. In addition, there are assistants without the same level of qualifications. Depending on the organisation of groups, the teacher will stay with a group for several years or the group may have a new teacher. The state has no guidelines concerning this point.

Pre-primary teachers follow 3 years of higher education at a state college. Students receive training in educational theory and practice, aesthetics, social science and the Norwegian language. There is no formal training for teaching assistants. Some of them have only completed compulsory school, but others have attended courses in upper secondary education relevant for work in a child care institution.

Staff in child care institutions may work full-time or part-time. Both categories are well represented amongst pre-primary teachers and assistants. There are no regulations concerning the teachers' in-service training.

## 2.4 Statistics

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In 1999, some 189,300 children, 52% of all children between the age of 0 and 5, attended day-care institutions. The coverage, low for the youngest children, increases with the age and reached about 80% for the 5-year-olds.

Approximately 63% or 119,500 of those children were in day-care institutions for more than 32 hours per week.

There were 5,991 day-care institutions in Norway in 1999; 3,013 of these were public.

52,898 people were employed in day-care

institutions in 1999. About 93% of the staff were women. 16,529 were qualified pre-primary teachers.

(Source: Statistics Norway)

### 3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND TRAINING (*grunnskole*)

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In Norway, there is a long tradition of combining primary and lower secondary education in a comprehensive and compulsory school system (*grunnskole*) with a common legislative framework and a national curriculum.

Compulsory education, comprising mixed ability and co-educational classes, has the aim of offering all pupils an education suited to their individual abilities. This principle applies just as much to the education of pupils with learning and other difficulties as to pupils with special abilities, be these theoretical, practical, physical or aesthetic. In such cases, extra resources can be allocated to the pupils who have special needs or to the class as a whole.

According to the Education Act of 1998, the purpose of primary and lower secondary education should be "in agreement and cooperation with the home, to help to give pupils a Christian and moral upbringing, to develop their mental and physical abilities, and to give them good general knowledge so that they may become useful and independent human beings at home and in society". The school "shall further the equal status and equal rights of all human beings, intellectual freedom and tolerance, ecological understanding and international co-responsibility. Teaching shall provide a foundation for further education and for lifelong learning and provide support for a common foundation of knowledge, culture and basic values, and a high general level of education in the population. Teaching shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of individual pupils. Emphasis shall be placed on creating satisfactory forms of cooperation between teachers and pupils and between the school and the home. All persons associated with the school shall make efforts to ensure that pupils are not injured or exposed to offensive words or deeds."

Starting in 1997, as part of Reform '97, Norwegian children start school during the calendar year they reach the age of 6 (previously, the age was 7). Compulsory education has been extended to 10 years (instead of 9) and consists of three stages:

- Primary stage: grades 1-4 (age 6-10);
- Intermediate stage: grades 5-7 (age 10-13); and
- Lower secondary stage: grades 8-10 (age 13-16).

No formal division is made between the stages of education. Some schools have pupils at all stages while others are purely primary schools (*barneskoler*, grades 1-7) or lower secondary schools (*ungdomsskoler*, grades 8-10). Dividing compulsory education between two schools is often done for practical reasons, such as the number of pupils, the size of the buildings and the historical traditions in the local area.

Education in the publicly maintained primary and lower secondary schools shall be free of charge. The municipality shall provide pupils attending the primary and lower secondary school with textbooks and readers, equipment for writing and drawing and other learning materials.

Fees are charged in private schools, which usually receive public funding (85% of total expenses).

A system of organised day-care facilities (*skolefritidsordning*) for children at the primary stage has been established and expanded as part of the reform of primary and lower secondary education. From 1 January 1999, all municipalities are legally obliged to provide such activities before and after school hours to those pupils in grades 1 to 4 who need it.

Guidelines have been laid down concerning recognition and funding of such activities. The municipalities also approve and supervise private activities, which receive state support under this system.

### 3.1 Organisation of the school

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Since 1994, the school year has been 38 weeks for pupils and 39 weeks for teachers.

Subjects are allocated a number of 45 minute periods within each main stage. This leaves schools greater flexibility to plan the school year.

The total annual number of periods is 6118 for all primary school pupils (grades 1-7) and 3420 for all lower secondary school pupils (grades 8-10).

The law sets a limit of a maximum of 28 pupils per class in primary school (grades 1-7) and 30 pupils per class in lower secondary school (grades 8-10). Each class functions as a teaching and as an administrative unit. Normally, each class stays together as a heterogeneous unit from grade 1 to grade 7, and from grade 8 to grade 10, sometimes even from grade 1 to grade 10.

Normally, classes are organised according to age, consisting of pupils born in the same calendar year. Schools organised in this way are called fully graded schools (*fulldelte skoler*). However, Norway has a relatively large number of small schools situated in remote and sparsely populated areas. In these schools, different year groups are taught in the same classroom. Approximately one third of schools in Norway are such multigraded schools (*fådelte skoler*).

All pupils in Norway are taught in mixed-ability classes and permanent grouping within a class is not allowed. However, schools are free to develop their own systems of flexible groupings within the system of class units in order to maximise the possibilities presented by the new curriculum in individual and pedagogical terms.

At primary and intermediate level, each class has a class teacher who is largely responsible for the teaching of most subjects. First grade classes with more than 18 pupils must have two teachers.

At lower secondary level, a class teacher, who also teaches the class in at least one subject, or perhaps a team of teachers, usually handles the administration of the class. Teachers at lower secondary school level may have different

academic backgrounds, some having studied general teacher education at state colleges and some having a university background plus teacher training. Teachers are almost always required to teach a range of subjects.

There are no prescribed textbooks, but all textbooks must be submitted for approval to the central authorities. Textbooks are authorised by The National Centre for Educational Resources (*Nasjonalt læremiddelsenter*). This requirement does not apply to supplementary materials.

### 3.2 Curriculum

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The 1997 curricula, referred to as L97, contain new syllabuses for the subjects. The earlier optional subjects have been replaced by compulsory additional subjects and the school's and pupils' options. The choices made by the school or the pupils shall have a local profile and the syllabus shall be designed by the school in accordance with the objectives of the national curriculum. The education can take place in the form of projects carried out in the school and in the local community.

Compulsory additional subjects are chosen from one of three alternatives:

1. A second foreign language: the pupils may choose to learn another foreign language in addition to English, i.e. German or French, or possibly another language for local or regional reasons.
2. Supplementary language study (i.e. English, Norwegian, *Sami* or Sign language).
3. Practical project work: The pupils can choose a practical activity, where they take part in the planning of a project.

Allocation of periods in compulsory education:

Subjects and lessons per year	Grades 1-4	Grades 5-7	Grades 8-10	Sum
Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical education	266	266	247	779
Norwegian	912	589	532	2,033
Mathematics	532	437	418	1,387
Social Studies	190	285	380	855
Art and Crafts	228	380	228	836
Science and the Environment	152	247	342	741
English	95	266	342	703
Music	152	228	114	494
Home Economics	38	114	114	266
Physical Education	228	266	304	798
Compulsory additional subjects			304	304
Class and pupil activities			95	95
Free activities	247			247
Periods per year	3,040	3,078	3,420	9,538
School's and pupils' options	152	114	152	418
Finnish/Sami as second language				1,111

There is a separate *Sami* curriculum, usually referred to as L97S, which has been introduced to cover the overall education of pupils living in certain *Sami* administrative regions of Norway where there are long traditions of *Sami* language and culture. L97S has the same status as L97.

Pupil participation is a basic principle of the curriculum. The pupils will gradually be given more responsibility for planning their own learning and, at the lower secondary stage, they shall share the responsibility for planning and evaluating the tasks they carry out themselves or together with others.

Education shall include practical tasks that give rise to questions requiring well-founded solutions. The pupils shall learn to plan, organise and carry out practical tasks in different areas. The pupils shall be able to obtain information from different sources, and subject this information to critical judgement.

A certain minimum percentage of the available time must be devoted to theme and project work (60% at primary stage, 30% at intermediate stage and 20% at lower secondary stage). In the initial grades especially, learning takes place through a combination of play, work on themes and other learning activities.

Pupils have some homework at all levels. There are no regulations as to how much homework pupils should have.

Vocational guidance and information about the world of work are integrated as important parts of education.

The initial stage (grades 1-4): The teaching is based on the traditions of both the day-care institutions and the school, and shall ensure an easy transition from day-care institution to school. Emphasis shall be placed on exploring and learning through play. Large shares of the teaching shall be organised into themes containing elements from different subjects. The teaching shall gradually become more subject-specific as the pupils move up through the grades.

The intermediate stage (grades 5-7): At this stage, the different subjects become more distinct. The practical and theoretical elements of the subjects shall be distinguished more clearly. The organisation of the subject matter into themes and project work shall show how the subjects are interconnected. The education shall help the pupils to develop skills and relationships.

The lower secondary stage (grades 8-10): The education shall be based on and further develop what the pupils have learned already, and shall ensure a good transition to upper secondary education. More detailed learning and greater coherence of the subject matter, together with practical work, shall give the pupils practice in analytical and critical methods of approach. The education shall emphasise working across subjects and give the pupils experience of project work.

A new subject, Christian knowledge and religious and ethical education, was introduced in 1997/98 and was intended to include all pupils. On the basis of a written application from his/her parents/guardians, a pupil is entitled to be exempted from those parts of the school's programme which, in the parents' point of view, is practice of another religion or condoning another faith.

### 3.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

There has been a development in the view of assessment in Norwegian schools in recent years in favour of putting greater emphasis on continuous and formative assessment. This development is reflected in L97. Assessment should reflect the general aims and the objectives of the subject and the main subject elements. It should be an integral and continuous part of the learning process in which the pupils must take an active part, and it shall be supplemented by regular meetings between teachers, parents and pupils.

Progression from year to year throughout compulsory education is automatic. Pupils in difficulty may receive additional educational support.

Assessment at the primary and intermediate stages does not involve the awarding of marks. Only at lower secondary level is a system of marks introduced, and this is in addition to the ongoing informal assessment system. A numerical marking system has now been introduced on a 6-to-1 scale, 6 being the top mark and 1 the lowest.

All pupils in grade 10 are required to take a centrally-set written examination in one of three subjects: Norwegian, Mathematics or English. Every year it is decided centrally which schools will take the Norwegian examination, which the Mathematics and which the English. Pupils are only told a few days before the examination which subject has been assigned to their school. Approximately one third of the pupils in grade 10 throughout the country will take the examination in each of the three subjects. Most pupils will also have to sit an oral examination which is organised locally. The oral examination may be in any of the school subjects, except for Home Economics, Physical Education and Art and Crafts. In those subjects where the pupils have not taken an examination, the final mark is given on the basis of the teachers' assessment of the pupil throughout the year.

All pupils completing lower secondary school are entitled to three years of further education at upper secondary level.

### 3.4 Teachers

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Concerning compulsory education at primary level (grades 1 to 4), the current idea is to model it on a combination of pre-primary and school pedagogical principles, and pre-primary teachers will be qualified to teach these grades.

Generally, teachers in compulsory school are allocated by class. Each class has a class teacher who is responsible for the class and who generally teaches more than one subject in the class. The same teacher often teaches and administers the same group of children for several years. This is the traditional way of organising class teaching and administration at primary level. It is considered appropriate to the age of the pupils and to the need to integrate different aspects of education, such as cross-curricular goals and themes relevant to more than one subject.

At lower secondary level, there are some subject specialists (such as for the second foreign language, home economics and physical education).

Teacher training in Norway takes place either at state colleges or at universities. Often there will be a combination of the two. Until 1994, teachers in primary and (some in) lower secondary schools had to follow three years of general teacher education. From 1994 onwards, general teacher education, which takes place at state colleges, has been extended to four years. Alternatively, teachers in lower secondary schools may have completed four to six years of university study and then undergone teacher training at a university or a state college, including teaching practice. Prior to 1994, this training consisted of a half-year course but now the course has been extended to one year.

Teachers with general teacher education may teach all subjects at all levels at compulsory school. Teachers with university qualifications may only teach subjects in which they have passed a university examination.

Teachers in compulsory schools are employed by the municipal authorities. Most of them work full-time, but a large number of teachers work part-time, especially in primary schools. The school year allows for five planning days each year, which are often used for in-service training. The law states that teachers have a duty to attend in-service training to ensure that their education is in accordance with the national guidelines.

The Education Act does not specify the number of days per year that the teachers must attend in-service training.

### 3.5 Statistics

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Number of primary and lower secondary schools in the 1998/99 school year (excluding Norwegian schools abroad): 3,277

of which:

Fully graded schools: 2,001 (61%)

Multigraded schools: 1,276 (39%)

Number of pupils at primary and lower secondary level in the 1998/99 school year (excluding Norwegian schools abroad): 569,044

of which:

At fully graded schools: 88%

At multigraded schools: 12%

Number of purely primary schools (grades 1-7): 2,086, of which 896 (43%) are multigraded.

Number of purely lower secondary schools (grades 8-10): 485, of which 4 (less than 1%) are multigraded (most purely lower secondary schools have a larger number of pupils because they have a larger catchment area and thus there are fewer multigraded schools at this level).

Number of combined schools: 706, of which 376 (53%) are multigraded.

Average number of pupils per class: 19.9

Average number of pupils per school: 174

(Source: GSI - Grunnskolens informasjonssystem)

Close to 100% of all pupils complete compulsory schooling. Approximately 94 to 95% enter general or vocational upper secondary education, and 4% to 5% enter employment or unemployment. Most pupils continue in upper secondary schools in the same area.

Number of teachers at primary and lower secondary level in the 1997/98 school year:

62,817 (men: 19,924; women: 42,893)

of which

Full-time: 43,568 (men: 16,976; women: 26,592)

Part-time: 19,249 (men: 2,948; women: 16,301).

(Source: Statistics Norway)

## 4. POST-COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

Upper secondary education normally covers the 16 to 19 age group, or the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth year of education and training. It includes general and vocational education at upper secondary schools, vocational training at technical schools and apprenticeship training.

There is one major type of school at this level of education: the upper secondary school (*videregående skole*), administered by the county. Upper secondary schools are generally of modest size and are invariably coeducational; their pupils are recruited from the lower secondary schools in their areas.

The large majority of upper secondary schools are combined schools, i.e. schools offering both general studies and vocational training.

Technical colleges, whose history is different from that of upper secondary schools, are now administered as a part of upper secondary education. They have traditionally offered further vocational qualifications within a broad range of trades, and have acted as a stepping

stone to higher education. They now offer 2-year courses to pupils who already have trade skills, practical experience in employment, and/or upper secondary education. In consequence, pupils tend to be somewhat older than the average upper secondary pupil.

Since the introduction of Reform'94, the Act Concerning Upper Secondary Education and the Act Concerning Vocational Training have had the same principal aims. They stipulate that pupils should be prepared for an occupation and for participation in civic affairs, be given the basis for further education and encouraged in their personal development. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic Christian and humanist values, of Norwegian traditions as a part of their cultural heritage, of democratic ideals and of scientific method should be developed. In addition, vocational education has the general aim of ensuring coordinated theoretical and practical education, providing skilled workers in the various crafts and industries, and reducing unemployment among youth.

One of the main goals of upper secondary education is to make it possible for all pupils to attain a recognised qualification.

The Education Act governs primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. It incorporates the changes in upper secondary education introduced during the 1990s and contains a chapter on vocational training and apprenticeship.

## 4.1 Organisation of the school

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School buildings are used by one set of pupils per day, but are generally available for adult education courses in the evenings.

While the institutions to some extent specialise in different fields and offer a full education in different areas, the goal is that every county should offer all courses.

Classes are organised by courses. A pupil starting upper secondary education has the right to a place on one of his/her three preferred foundation courses. Admission to specific courses can be affected by factors such as the applicant's grades and the county's course provision. However, more than 90% are admitted to their first choice. A pupil with a handicap that makes it necessary to provide special education has the right to be accepted on a specific foundation course at the request of the pupil, parents and teacher.

Streaming is unknown in Norwegian schools; pupils in upper secondary schools work in mixed-ability classes.

All pupils have between 30 and 35 lessons per week over the approximately 38-week school year; small variations are found between courses.

As far as learning materials are concerned, a distinction is made between textbooks and supplementary materials. Textbooks are subject to approval by the appropriate authority; textbooks that have not been approved may not be used. The National Centre for Educational Resources is responsible for ensuring that textbooks meet the requirements specified by the Ministry of Education. Supplementary materials, on the other hand, can be used freely without any need for official approval.

The authorities do not prescribe textbooks and there are often several competing books on the market. It is the school and its teachers who decide which textbooks the pupils should buy and use in class. Pupils buy their own textbooks

and all other necessary materials.

## 4.2 Curriculum

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In the autumn of 1994, a major reform was implemented. From then all pupils leaving lower secondary education are entitled to three years of upper secondary education that provide the pupil with either an academic or a vocational education. In addition, the authorities are legally obliged to make adequate provision for older pupils who wish to start, continue or complete their education at this level. The education comprises a one-year foundation course and two years of advanced courses (the advanced courses only apply to vocational education). There are 13 foundation courses (3 general, 10 vocational education) and a much larger number of advanced courses. Pupils are normally accepted on courses building on the foundation course they have followed. In the case of apprenticeship training, the third year of schooling is replaced by one year of full-time instruction in a recognised training establishment followed by one year of productive work in the same establishment.

The subject syllabuses are broad, applicable regardless of where the education/training takes place and of what groups receive it. The modular structure of the courses is designed to accommodate the varying needs of pupils (including adults); it also makes it easier for schools to relate their courses to the needs of industry. A broad concept of knowledge is applied, including not only the development of knowledge and skills, but also ethical values and attitudes and such personal qualities as social competence, entrepreneurial skills, communicative skills etc. Internationalisation, environmental concerns and computer technology are integrated into the syllabuses.

A working knowledge of Norwegian is expected of all pupils, including immigrants, entering upper secondary education. Language courses are available, and an examination in Norwegian as a second language can be taken in place of the normal Norwegian examination.

To a limited extent it is possible to combine a foundation course from one branch of study with advanced courses at level I and II from other branches of study (3 general, 10 vocational education).

If there are not enough apprenticeship places, the county provides a school-based specialisation option that leads to a craft or journeyman's certificate in the form of an

advanced course II at school. The structure requires a close relationship between schools and industry.

### 4.3 Assessment/certification/ guidance

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Pupils normally have to attain a minimum standard at one course level (e.g. the foundation course) before being admitted to the next level (e.g. advanced course I). In certain cases, pupils without this minimum standard may be admitted to the next level if the school accepts that their skills and knowledge meet the requirements.

Most schools organise orientation sessions at the start of the school year. A Pupils' Guide has also been prepared which shows pupils how they can participate actively in the planning and implementation of their courses. The Guide also gives pupils advice on being responsible for their own learning and participating in the democratic activities of the school. The Ministry is also working on a Training Book in which the pupil/apprentice puts his/her name to what has been learnt and the teacher/training leader writes up what has been taught. The intention is that its book should accompany the pupil/apprentice through the three- or four-year period of education and training.

In general academic subjects, written and oral assignments are given, class discussions, project work and group tasks are used, and the school's resources, including school libraries and ICT, are employed.

Two types of marks are awarded in the upper secondary school and recorded on pupils' certificates. Marks are awarded for overall achievement and are based on the pupils' work during the school year including practical work, work in class, homework, tests, project work and group work. These marks are awarded each term, but only the end-of-year marks are recorded on the certificate. The marks are given on a seven-point scale from 0 (lowest) to 6 (highest); decimal points are not used. In the case of trade certificates, centrally-set theoretical and practical examinations are held; the mark is "passed" or "not passed".

Examinations are either written, oral, a combination of the two or practical. In the general area of study, written examinations in Norwegian composition are compulsory. In addition, pupils normally take at least two written examinations in at least two other subjects.

Most examinations in written subjects are organised by public examination boards. Answer papers are evaluated centrally by groups of experienced teachers. As a safeguard against possible error, a separate commission of examiners deals with appeals. Their decision is final.

Concerning the final qualifications awarded at upper secondary level, a distinction is made between occupational qualifications and qualifications for higher education. Of the 13 foundation courses, the first three are the main entry route to higher education.

There are basically two different kinds of certificates:

- a) The craft/journeyman's certificate in crafts and trades governed by the Act Concerning Vocational Training.
- b) The certificate awarded on completion of 3 years of upper secondary education leading to either general entrance qualifications for higher education or vocational qualifications in vocational subjects not governed by the Act Concerning Vocational Education.

Every year, examinations are held for external candidates. This category of examinees includes adults who are in employment and wish to qualify for further studies.

### 4.4 Teachers

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The principal of the school is the administrative and pedagogical leader. However, each teacher and class is free to adopt the methods that are most appropriate, taking into consideration the overall aims, attainment targets and focal points of the course, and the interests, skills and learning strategies of the pupils.

Teachers in upper secondary schools are subject specialists; this applies to both the academic and vocational areas of study. The subjects that they are qualified to teach therefore determine both their appointment to a specific school and their allocation to classes.

In foundation and advanced courses, pupils have different teachers in all subjects. Pupils choosing the same subject in advanced course I and II can often have the same teacher in the subject during the two years.

Teachers of academic subjects have completed four to six years of university and/or college studies and are normally qualified to teach two

or three different subjects; teachers of vocational subjects have full trade qualifications. Both groups of teachers have, in addition, one year of compulsory teacher training.

Teachers in upper secondary education are employed by the county authorities. Their workload allows for five planning days each school year; these planning days are often used for in-service training.

## 4.5 Statistics

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Numbers refer to the 1997/98 school year.

Number of pupils in upper secondary education: 171,486

Number of pupils at different levels of upper secondary education:

Foundation courses: 65,401

Advanced course I: 59,173

Advanced course II: 46,912

(Source: LINDA *Inntak*)

Number of upper secondary schools: 531

Run by the state: 12

Run by the counties: 456

Run by municipalities: 0

Private: 63

(Source: VSI – *Videregående skoles informasjonssystem*)

Number of teachers in upper secondary schools: 28,980 (men: 16,906; women: 12,074)

of which

Full-time: 21,134

(men: 13,830; women: 7,304)

Part-time: 7,846

(men: 3,076; women: 4,770).

(Source: Statistics Norway)

## 5. INITIAL/VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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Vocational training and apprenticeships in Norway must be seen in the light of what is said above about the structure of upper secondary education. The trend towards combined schools, i.e. schools offering both general studies and vocational training, and the parallel effort to avoid higher status being awarded to specific areas of study have resulted in a greater integration of practical and theoretical subjects. This in turn makes it difficult to provide statistics based on an assumption of the separation of general studies and vocational training at this level.

### 5.1 Organisation

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Vocational training, including the trade examination, is regulated by the Education Act of July 1998. According to the act, vocational training aims to develop competence and promote an understanding of the role of vocational training in relation to the occupations themselves and society. The central body under the act is the National Council for Vocational Training. Each craft or industry has a training council which produces training plans, curricula

and examination regulations. The training plans and curricula are approved by the Ministry of Education. Each county has a Vocational Training Committee which administers apprenticeship contracts, approves training establishments (which can be private or public enterprises or organisations), organises tests, etc. The main employer and employee associations are given a key role in the administration of the act and in the development of the training programmes covering the various recognised trades.

The development of schools into regional/local resource centres is seen as a step towards closer cooperation between schools and the working community.

## 5.2 Education/ training establishments

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The vocational training system at upper secondary level in Norway is based on close cooperation between school and the working community and on a combination of schooling and apprenticeship. Most trades and crafts have an apprenticeship period of 3 or 4 years (full-time). The norm for training is two years of vocational training in an upper secondary school (classroom teaching and practical experience in the school workshop) followed by two years in a training establishment (one year of practical training and one year of work experience - known as the '2+2' model). The training establishment (*lærebedrift*), an enterprise or public organisation, has to be recognised as such by the local Vocational Training Committee. Each firm must have a trained specialist, called a training manager, in charge of the training. The training manager, together with the employee representatives, is responsible for seeing that the establishment provides adequate training opportunities and that the training curriculum laid down for the trade or craft is followed.

## 5.3 Financing

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Apprentices have to be paid a regular wage, which is determined by the appropriate wage agreement, and an apprentice can only be laid off if the training establishment is not able to provide work suitable for on-the-job training for a transitional period, or if both parties agree.

Training establishments entering into contracts with apprentices receive a state subsidy. Establishments are also recompensed for the supervisory work involved during training and testing. In some trades, the labour market training authorities subsidise equal-status measures, and some counties give additional grants.

## 5.4 Curriculum

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Since 1994, more weight has been placed on general subjects in vocational training. The foundation course in all vocational areas of study includes at least 11 periods of general subjects per week (Norwegian, English, mathematics, science and physical education) while 22 periods per week are available for subjects directly related to the area of training.

## 5.6 Assessment/qualification/ guidance

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There is continuous assessment and regular, formal testing during the first two school-based years. During the in-company training period, the company is responsible for determining when and how the assessment should be conducted. There is a centrally-monitored final examination for the trade certificate. The examination consists of a practical and a theoretical part. The theoretical part is finalised when the apprentice has passed the final examination for the appropriate course at upper secondary school. The practical part varies a great deal depending on the trade involved. In some trades, the practical work has to be done in the course of a day; in others, the candidate may spend weeks on it. The work has to be assessed by the examination board.

On completion of the apprenticeship, a trade examination (*Fagprøve*) or journeyman's examination (*Svenneprøve*) is taken, leading to the award of a trade or journeyman's certificate. In a few subjects, the trade examination can be taken on completion of advanced course II, but in most cases a period of practical experience is needed in order to satisfy the requirements. In certain circumstances, it is possible to take the trade or journeyman's certificate without having been an apprentice, e.g. adult employees with sufficient work experience.

During the school-based training, guidance is provided by advisers. During the on-the-job training, it is provided by the training manager. Later, the government's employment advisory service is available.

## 5.7 Teachers

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Vocational teachers in schools are required to have a full trade qualification, a minimum period of work experience, one year of additional education in their field and they should have completed a one-year teaching course.

Teachers are appointed full-time or part-time. Like other teachers in upper secondary education, they are employed by the counties and are expected to keep up to date with developments in their subject areas and to follow relevant in-service training courses.

## 5.8 Statistics

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New apprenticeship contracts in the period 1 January to 31 December:

1996	17,588
1997	6,045
1998	15,896

Apprenticeship contracts in force on 31 December:

1996	25,836
1997	30,268
1998	31,793

Trade or journeyman's examination, numbers taken and pass rate:

1997	28,330	
	Pass rate	86%
1998	37,997	
	Pass rate	91%

Source: LINDA-fagoppl ring / Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs.

## 6. HIGHER EDUCATION

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The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs is responsible for all public higher education with the exception of training for the police and the military.

There are 38 state higher education institutions in Norway, including

- 4 universities
- 6 university colleges (national higher education institutions specialising in specific fields of study)
- 26 state colleges, and
- 2 colleges/academies of arts and crafts.

In addition, there are 26 private higher education institutions with recognised study programmes, of which 19 receive state funding for (part of) their activities.

The universities are those of Oslo, Bergen and Troms , and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in *Trondheim*.

The twenty-six state colleges offer programmes lasting for one to four years. Longer courses and graduate programmes of up to six years have also been introduced at some of the institutions. Most programmes are oriented towards specific professions, their graduates becoming professional or para-professional personnel in areas such as teaching at pre-primary and at compulsory school level, engineering, social

work, administration, economics, electronics-based data, health professions, libraries, journalism, etc.

As a means of facilitating and encouraging student mobility between higher education institutions in the country, degrees (most often 'cand.mag.') can be conferred on the basis of studies from a combination of higher education institutions. This system generally implies reciprocal recognition of study programmes between higher education institutions on a time for time basis.

New policies for the organisation of higher education were drawn up by the government in a white paper adopted by the *Storting* in 1991. The basic idea is to link institutions of higher education together in an integrated "Network Norway" in order to create a structural framework for increased cooperation and communication between the institutions. As part of the follow-up of the 1991 white paper, the 1995 Universities and Colleges Act was introduced. The most important objectives of the act were the establishment of a common legal basis for the university and the non-university sectors, and to give the institutions of the non-university sector (the state colleges, and since 1997, the art colleges) a greater degree of autonomy.

About 9% of the student population is enrolled in private institutions of higher education.

## 6.1 Admission Requirements

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Admission capacity to higher education is decided centrally by the government. The normal requirement for access to higher education is the completion of a 3-year study programme in general subjects at the upper secondary level or in some of the areas of study in technical and vocational subjects. A general matriculation standard has been introduced, setting minimum requirements which include the following components:

- Successful completion of three years of upper secondary education including foundation course, advanced course I and advanced course II (regardless of area of study) or possession of a recognised vocational qualification/trade certificate.
- Included in, or in addition to, the above-mentioned criteria, is the necessity of having successfully completed upper secondary studies corresponding to a specific level of attainment, determined in periods (or

lessons) per week, within the following general subject areas: Norwegian (14); English (5); history and social studies (6); mathematics (5); natural science (5).

Applicants can be admitted to higher education without having passed the normal upper secondary final examinations. Such students must, however, fulfil the specific minimum subject requirements mentioned above, be 23 years of age or more, and have at least five years of work experience or a combination of work experience, education and training.

Admission to many areas of study is competitive since demand exceeds the number of places available. Entry to higher education is thus regulated quantitatively and is determined by the capacity of the individual institution as laid down by the *Storting* (for the universities) and the government (for the remaining higher education institutions).

## 6.2 Fees/ financial support for students

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Studies in public institutions of higher education are free of tuition fees, but a small fee has to be paid each semester to the student welfare organisation.

The State Educational Loan Fund provides financial support for the students in the form of scholarships and loans granted twice a year. These are mainly to cover expenses for accommodation, food and study materials.

## 6.3 Academic year

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The academic year is normally divided into two terms:

- Autumn term from mid-August to mid-December
- Spring term from mid-January to mid-June.

Studies generally begin in August. However, certain programmes admit students only in the spring term.

At some institutions a summer term was introduced in 1992. This lasts for about two months with dates varying from one institution to another.

## 6.4 Courses

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The degrees awarded by universities and other institutions of higher education vary from one institution to another. The titles of degrees, the examinations concerned, and the normal duration of studies are decided by the government.

The main structure of degrees and the duration of study periods are as follows:

- Vocationally-oriented study programmes of 2 to 4 years' duration at the state colleges can lead to one of the specific college degrees "*høgskolekandidat*" (college graduate), or "*høgskoleingeniør*" (college engineer).
- The first, or lower degree, *candidata/candidatus magisterii* (commonly referred to as *cand.mag.*), is normally obtained after 3½ (natural sciences) or 4 years of full-time study. For some combinations of studies, it takes more than 4 years. The *cand.mag.* degree is awarded by all the universities, all the state colleges and a good number of the other higher education institutions, both private and public, and it is the most general national degree.
- The second, or higher degree, in general consist of 1½ to 2 additional years of study. The most common degrees are called *cand.philol.* (humanities), *cand.scient.* (natural sciences), *cand.polit.* (social sciences) and *cand.san.* (paramedical/health education). Some subjects have an alternative higher degree with a more comprehensive thesis, called *mag.art.*
- In addition, some university faculties and the university colleges offer professional degree programmes requiring 4½ to 6 years of study. The programmes cover areas such as agricultural sciences, psychology, medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, law, engineering and theology.
- The doctor's degree programmes generally consist of 3 years of study after completion of the higher degree or other professional degree programmes (the exception is *dr.oecon.*, which takes 2 years). In the humanities, the doctor's degree is called *dr.artium*, in the natural sciences *dr.scient.* and in the social sciences *dr.polit.* There is also a traditional general doctor's degree, *dr.philos.*

Doctorates are awarded on the basis of high level research conducted over a number of years leading to the successful defence of a substantial thesis.

A number of universities and university colleges have also introduced degree programmes modelled on the English education system, designed to further internationalisation. In these programmes the language of teaching and examination is English.

## 6.5 Assessment/qualifications

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Student assessment is decided by the institutions. It usually takes the form of both written and oral examinations at the end of courses. Marks range from 6.0 to 1.0, where 1.0 is the best mark and 4.0 is the pass mark.

(The names of the qualifications are given under point 6.4)

## 6.6 Teachers

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In higher education, the institutions appoint their own staff, and, following central (i.e. national level) negotiations between the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs and the relevant national trade unions, the right to negotiate salaries in so-called "local negotiations" was delegated to the institutions as of 1 May 1996.

Until recently, the categories of teaching staff differed somewhat between the various kinds of higher education institutions, particularly between those of the university and the non-university sectors. However, on 1 February 1995, a new, unified system or "structure" for positions of academic staff was introduced, meaning that from then on, the academic (and/or artistic and/or other) requirements for teaching staff are the same for all with the same professional title in the whole sector, whether they are at a university, a university college, or a state college. The proportions and numbers of the various categories of staff still vary between institutions, and are likely to continue to do so, because of differences in institution size, academic profile and study programmes.

## 6.7 Statistics

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Number of students according to sector and institution as of 1 October 1997:

Total number of students in higher education: 180,741 (103,162 women and 77,579 men)

University sector in all: 83,484

Non-university sector in all: 97,257

(Source: Statistics Norway)

## 7. ADULT EDUCATION

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Educational opportunities for adults and the principle that learning is a lifelong task are the two basic tenets of a Norwegian adult education policy which aims to raise the general level of education of the entire adult population regardless of where in the country they live. A major concern has therefore been to integrate adult education into the current school reforms.

The Core Curriculum applies to adult education as well as primary and secondary education.

### The Competence Reform

The challenges of the future demand the continuous renewal of competence in the population. A broad concept of competence is needed and the basis for the Competence Reform is the need for competence in and outside the labour market, in society and by the individual. The Storting has approved the legal right for adults to primary and lower secondary education and to leave for educational purposes. It has also established a system for the documentation of non-formal learning.

From the perspective of lifelong learning, a good basic education will to a large degree be the basis for further learning. Basic and continuing education complement one another and together they will lay the foundation for a long-term rise in competence.

### 7.1 Specific legislative framework

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Adult education is regulated by the Act concerning Adult Education (1976) and the Education Act (1998). Under the Adult Education Act, the provision of courses is the responsibility of the respective public education authorities at the various levels of education. The Education Act regulates primary and lower secondary, and upper secondary education for adults. The act also regulates special education for adults.

In addition, there is the Act concerning Folk High Schools (1984); the folk high schools are an important part of adult education.

### 7.2 Administration

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Responsibility for adult education is shared between the public authorities and the study associations representing non-governmental organisations with adult education as their main objective, such as the Folk University (*Folkeuniversitetet*) and The Workers' Educational Association (*Arbeidernes opplysningsforbund*). The municipalities are responsible for adult education at primary and lower secondary level, and the counties at upper secondary level. The study associations and

distance education institutions also provide courses at these levels, as well as courses in higher education and courses not offered by the public institutions.

At present, no authorities coordinate and control the complete field, but the National Education Offices have a certain responsibility for the coordination and cooperation between different actors of adult education in their respective regions. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the administration of the statutory educational provisions of the Act as well as developing curriculum guidelines. The municipalities and counties are responsible for the development of adult education in their respective areas.

### 7.3 Funding

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The state subsidises adult education in accordance with the provisions of the Adult Education Act.

The authorities' responsibility for the provision of financial resources depends on the level and type of education provided. The cost of primary and secondary education to adults is covered by the municipal and county education authorities respectively. The participants must meet the cost of textbooks in upper secondary education, and there is a fee for both lower and upper secondary examinations. The educational authorities also meet the cost of adult immigrant education. The boarding costs at folk high schools is covered by a fee paid by the pupils (approx. 35,000 NOK a year in 1999) and by state grants. Fees are charged for distance education and for courses organised and offered by study associations. These courses also receive state support.

There are seven main types of adult education based partly on the type of education offered and partly on the organisation involved:

1. 23 non-governmental study associations receive public support for running a comprehensive series of courses and study groups for adults.
2. National funding covers about 50% of the costs of folk high schools, 5/6 by the government and 1/6 by the counties.
3. 16 distance education institutions currently receive financial support.
4. Tuition of adults in Norwegian as a second language and lower secondary education for immigrants between the age of 16 and

20 years are covered by national funding. Responsibility lies with the municipalities.

5. Labour market courses provide occupational qualifications. They are part of the government's labour market strategy and are fully financed by the state. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the content and pedagogical aspects of the courses, while the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration is responsible for the finances, the numbers, and the localisation of the courses as well as determining the level of demand and making decisions regarding who should teach.
6. Adult education at primary and lower secondary level is organised by the municipalities. The municipality receives financial support as a part of national funding and decisions about priorities for adult education at this level lie with the municipality.
7. The county education authorities are responsible for adult education at upper secondary level. The county receives financial support as a part of national funding, and the decisions about priorities for adult education lie with the county.

### 7.4 Organisation

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The number of organisations, the different authorities involved and the number of courses offered at different levels make the picture of adult education in Norway very complex.

There are seven main types of adult education based partly on the type of education offered and partly on the organisation involved:

#### Study associations

Study associations offer a comprehensive series of courses and study groups for adults. They are responsible for the content of the courses; most of the courses are not bound by national curricula and examination systems. The courses cover a large number of activities, from purely leisure activities to academic subjects and work training. Some associations offer courses qualifying for lower and upper secondary education and higher education. These courses are regulated by the respective national guidelines and laws.

### **Folk high schools**

They provide general education courses of different lengths for young people and adults, but these do not result in formal qualifications. The 82 (1999) folk high schools are boarding schools owned and run by religious organisations, independent foundations or county authorities, in various parts of the country. They have room for some 8,000 students. There are no examinations and external curricular requirements at the folk high schools, but the national assembly has decided that from the school-year 1997/98, the whole-year-pupils are credited three points in the competition for admission to higher education.

### **Distance education**

Distance education is also fairly widespread. While distance education earlier consisted mainly of correspondence courses, this educational branch today comprises a number of multimedia programmes. The courses cover fields ranging from leisure activities to university and college level subjects up to degree level. An increasing number of courses are also related to in-service vocational training. Most distance education courses covered by the Adult Education Act are courses leading to work-related qualifications. More than half of the courses cover subjects related to social/health care, management/economics and technical subjects.

### **Courses in Norwegian as a second language**

Courses for adults in Norwegian as a second language have been extended from 1998 so that immigrants are given lessons sufficient to reach a minimum level of competence. The courses consist of a 3000 hours course for persons with little or no schooling from their home country and an 850 hours course for persons with a better educational background. The courses are offered to all inhabitants with Norwegian as their second language with the exception of those who have Swedish, Danish or Sami as their first language. From 1998 immigrants between the age of 16 and 20 years who have not completed lower secondary school, are offered courses to pass the examination at this level.

### **Labour market courses**

These courses are a means of preparing unemployed people for work and motivating them for participation in further education. They provide occupational qualifications. The courses quite often cover the subjects and levels offered by upper secondary schools. The courses take place in upper secondary schools, in separate centres attached to the schools or in business and industry. They are run by labour market authorities, adult associations and school authorities in cooperation with each other.

### **Primary and lower secondary level**

Adult education at primary and lower secondary level (compulsory education) is organised by the municipalities. The National Education Office in every county gives advice and stimulates the work in each municipality as regards determining the needs for adult primary and secondary education and making plans to provide it in the individual municipality. Primary and lower secondary education can be taken at local primary and lower secondary schools as well as at municipal adult education centres. Primary and lower secondary education courses can also be arranged by distance education institutions or study associations cooperating with the municipalities. Courses at lower secondary level leading to examinations in different subjects cover mainly the 9th and 10th grades. Additional subjects are taken, depending on the participants' skills and knowledge. Most adults take these examinations as external candidates.

### **Upper secondary level**

Adult education at upper secondary level is given at upper secondary schools, county-based adult education centres and the State Adult Education Centre. In addition, some study associations, distance education institutions and labour market authorities offer courses which qualify as parts of a full secondary education programme. Adults wishing to follow vocational courses have additional requirements regarding age (over 21) and qualifications. Distance study methods are frequently used. Adults with all-round work experience within a specific field may present themselves as external candidates for a craft examination consisting of both a practical and a theoretical part. About 60% of those obtaining the craft certificate avail themselves of this arrangement. Special needs education within primary and lower secondary school for young people between 16 and 20 years of age is a responsibility which is delegated to the county education authorities.

## 7.5 Statistics

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The number of adults participating, and the level of national financial support (1998), in the different programmes as reported by the organisers are given below.

The study associations (23 recognised associations with over 400 member organisations):

- Participants – 681,359
- Percentage of women – 56%
- National financial support – 209,5 mill. NOK
- Number of courses – 61,428
- Average number of participants per course – 11
- Average length of each course – 30 hours
- Percentage of courses taught by a teacher – 80%

The folk high schools (79 folk high schools and 3 analogous equivalent organisations):

- Participants at courses from 16,5 weeks to 33 weeks – 12,965
- Participants at courses shorter than 16,5 weeks – 18,290
- National financial support – 356 mill. NOK

Distance study offered by the 16 private institutions receiving state support (1997):

Approx. 52,000 participants complete courses, which corresponds to approx. 5,200 full time students.

- National financial support – 36,6 mill. NOK

Courses for adults in Norwegian as a second language:

- Participants – 28,957
- Teaching hours – 673,653
- National financial support – 358 mill. NOK

Labour market courses (1997):

- Participants – 39,787
- Courses – 2,645
- National financial support – 1,342 mill. NOK

Primary and lower secondary education examinations:

- Hovedmål* (the language standard of first choice) – 354
- Sidemål* (the language standard of second choice) – 319
- Norwegian as a second language – 262
- Mathematics – 600
- English – 623

Upper secondary education:

- Participants – 16,969 full time participants above 20 years of age.

(Sources: *Voksenopplæring i Norge, Nøkkeltall 1998* / *Utdanning i Norge, Nøkkeltall 1998* / St.prp nr.1 (1998–99))