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Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

DENMARK

School year 2007/08

Education is compulsory from 7 to 16 but schooling is not. Pupils must receive an education whose requirements are similar to those in the schools referred to as *folkeskole*. A *folkeskole* is an integrated school with common general training for everyone. It is organised as a single structure, without a transition between primary and lower secondary levels and without a change of school. There is therefore no division into different pathways during compulsory schooling.

Pupils may enrol in a 10th year of education, which may be considered as a transition year before upper secondary: 60 % of pupils are enrolled. At the end of the 9th (and/or 10th) year, pupils may write the external final exam for *folkeskole*. The vast majority of pupils take this exam (90 to 95 % after the 9th year and 85 to 90 % after the 10th year). Approximately 95 % of an age group leaving *folkeskole* move on to secondary education.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

With the guidance system decentralised at municipal level, the policies and objectives of the different institutions which provide services are expressed in various legal documents aimed at different sectors and types of public. The different guidance services work according to two distinct perspectives: the perspective of young people whom the services must help in their choices based on their interests and aptitudes; and the social perspective which is aimed at reinforcing the qualifications of workers in Danish society.

In the framework of national education, the 2004 law on educational and vocational guidance *(Lov om Uddannelses- og Erhvervsvejledning)* and its amendment in 2007 and 2008 define the guidance framework and specify that it must prepare each individual to choose an educational and vocational pathway.

At employment policy level, vocational guidance is considered to be a strategic instrument in the stabilisation of the labour market.

In the social sector, guidance services facilitate a return to the labour market.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The general structure is determined at national level whereas the responsibility for ensuring educational and vocational guidance is distributed according to the level of education, either at national level or at municipal level. At municipal level, youth guidance is ensured by 45 municipal guidance offices (*Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning* – UU) responsible for the transition from compulsory education to youth education. Higher education guidance is ensured by the National Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance (*Landscenter for Uddannelses- og Erhvervsejledning* – LUE).

Seven regional centres *(Studievalg)* provide the required services: these centres group together different schools and are required to cooperate with the partners from each region (schools, colleges of higher education, social partners, municipalities). The services of the Ministry of Labour are aimed mainly at people seeking employment, the unemployed, etc.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

Educational and vocational guidance and the initiation to the professional world must be offered from the 1st to the 9th year of education. Career counselling is obtained through career education in general in a cross-cutting approach throughout compulsory education. Schools and teachers are responsible for this and for the objectives to be reached. There is no minimum time required for general career education or for guidance in the choice of studies.

Traineeships within the framework of the curriculum

Traineeships are organised in compulsory education in the 9th and 10th form, often as part of bridge-building to youth education. It can be of a duration of 1 week to 4 weeks maximum, often combined with visits to upper-secondary training institutions in order to prepare the young people for making qualified choices of future studies and employment.

Vocational education (at upper secondary level) is based on the dual training principle with alternation between school-based periods (25 %) and training in a company (75 %).

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

Contacts with the professional world

The guidance activities at school are centred on daily life and the local environment of pupils. Among others, school visits to local companies, visits to vocational education centres for young people, and periods of one or two weeks' experience in a professional setting are organised. Each *folkeskole* in collaboration with the municipal guidance centre (UU), ensures that the necessary contacts are established with private companies, public services and the institutions concerned.

Guidance services at school

In each *folkeskole*, a teacher is designated as a part-time guidance counsellor (on average for 20 % of his or her working hours). He or she provides assistance in the area of educational psychology and vocational guidance in cooperation with and supervision from the guidance centre. In each school, a guidance plan is established in cooperation between the school and the local youth guidance centre. It must meet pupils' needs in terms of their choice of educational and vocational pathway.

The municipal youth guidance centres (UU) organise compulsory activities for all pupils from the 6th to the 9th year of *folkeskole* and throughout general and vocational secondary education. The guidance activities take place at school or sometimes at the guidance centre, and include individual activities and group sessions. The objective is to help young people in an optimal search for information on training and careers. For the younger pupils, the

activities are held exclusively at school. The guidance centres work in close collaboration with the schools and organise guidance activities in schools in order to be in direct contact with young people. Teachers and counsellors work together, and guidance counsellors have an office in each school.

Through regular discussions with the counsellors in guidance centres, each pupil develops his or her own *'logbook'*, which will accompany him or her until the end of compulsory education.

Guidance is reinforced from the 6th year of *folkeskole* and is aimed at pupils in difficulty. Early school leavers (4 %) are offered the possibility to participate in activities outside school, in order to clarify their requirements and return to school. Individual guidance plans are freely elaborated by pupils entering the 9th year and onwards. The 10th year is a transition year between compulsory education and the choice of specialisation which may follow. These plans are called 'bridge building' and include introductory courses on post-compulsory education. In the 9th form there is a possibility to be accompanied by a mentor, if the young person experiences difficulties in establishing social ties or if he or she has a hard time with daily life. The municipalities are obliged to offer their guidance services to young people under the age of 25 who have not begun or who have abandoned an educational pathway.

Guidance services outside school

The youth guidance centres (*Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning* – UU) are a source of coordination, methodological inspiration and content development for schools guidance practitioners.

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

In the schools

A large number of teachers provide guidance services part-time. Many of them work in compulsory education and spend on average seven hours per week providing guidance services. However, it is important to distinguish between guidance counselling and teaching. In order to become a guidance practitioner at schools, the teacher must complete a training programme for guidance practitioners at diploma level. It is equivalent to 12 months full-time studies and 60 ECTS points.

In other guidance services

In the centres, guidance practitioners have many different professional backgrounds. The majority are teachers, others are social workers or have experience from the social, the educational and/or the labour market sector. The amendment in 2007 of the law of 2004 requires that all people who provide guidance must further their training with the diploma programme mentioned above. This programme is offered by five university colleges. Access to these centres is free. It is estimated that approximately 3,000 people provide educational and vocational guidance full-time.

The Danish School of Education offers a master's programme in guidance and counselling. Both the diploma and the master's programme are further training programmes which are

offered within the framework of the Danish adult education and training system, i.e. they are aimed at and adapted to adults who already have another higher education degree and who have at least two years of relevant work experience.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Close cooperation exists between schools, VET institutions, institutions of higher education and the guidance centres in order to secure a smooth transition from compulsory school to higher education. Much attention is given to the prevention of drop-outs. Parents and employers are involved whenever necessary.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the national guidance portal (www.ug.dk) which provides information on careers, living conditions and labour market statistics, education and learning possibilities at all levels, and the study programmes taught in English at Danish universities and colleges.

All national institutions and organisations also offer discussion forums. A national programme ensures the uniformity and propagation of guidance services throughout the country.

Internet references

Guidance services in the education sector: http://eng.uvm.dk/guidance

Sources

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