



Funding of VET - Norway

## Skills2Capabilities – Blog post

December 2025

Terence Hogarth and Emily Erickson (Warwick IER)

**The Norwegian IVET system is one characterised by stability following the reforms introduced in 1994. This is true of the overall structure of provision and its funding. The Norwegian case demonstrates how funding policy has been amended at the margins to increase participation in apprenticeship training to ensure that there are sufficient places for those wanting to take this pathway through upper secondary education and ensure that supply meets demand for certain skills.**

The Norwegian system of initial vocational education and training is almost entirely based on public funding European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 4. The 15 regional county administrations are responsible for upper secondary education both for young people and adults. Everyone who has completed compulsory schooling has a statutory right to complete upper secondary education. Almost all young people start upper secondary education after completing compulsory school. Most VET qualifications are achieved through a combination of school-based VET followed by apprenticeship – mainly the 2+2 model of spending two years in school followed by two years in an apprenticeship.

Adults have various ways of obtaining formal vocational qualifications. First, adults can become apprentices. Second, the experience-based scheme allows workers who can document a long and varied practice within a vocational field to register for the final practical-theoretical test and obtain formal vocational qualifications. This scheme is numerically important as it accounts for around one third of all new qualification achievements each year. Third, the Trade Certificate at the Workplace, established in 2018, gives workers with some experience in a vocational field (minimum one year) the opportunity to receive training towards formal vocational qualification in the occupation while still working.

Overall, the funding of VET on EQF 4 follows a model where the school-based part is funded by public budgets while apprenticeships are funded by a combination of employers, public grants, and the apprentices themselves.



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The **school-based part** of education and training is funded by the regional county administrations. The level and distribution are up to the county administrations provided they deliver education that fulfil general requirements laid down by law. The share to be covered by public funding (85 per cent) is determined by law. The remaining 15 per cent can be covered by tuition fees paid by students.

**Apprenticeships** are partially funded by public grants from the regional county administration to training companies. These grants are based on the number of apprentices they have. The levels are determined by government regulations. For young people the rate is around EUR 16,220 for a two-year apprenticeship, while for adults the rate is EUR 528 a month, with a maximum EUR 12,680 for two years.

Some regional counties have decided to offer extra grants to companies that take on apprentices who are disadvantaged and may need extra help. Some counties also offer extra grants for taking on apprentices in selected vocational fields. Public grants can be used to cover all types of costs the company have related to apprentice training; they are not tied to specific cost components.

The funding system for young people in upper secondary VET has been stable over the past thirty years. Nothing major has happened since the fundamental reform in 1994. The public funding level for apprenticeships has increased considerably over the past twenty years though. While the grant to companies for training young people in 2006 was NOK 88,100 for a two-year apprenticeship, the level in 2025 was NOK 183,093. This is an increase in real terms of 46 per cent. For adults, the rise (from NOK 50,350 to 143,000) is even higher, by 75 percent in real terms. It seems likely that public funding now accounts for a higher share of the costs than before.

The increased public funding reflects an increased attention to VET in the public debate over the past 20 years. While public debate on VET in the early 2000s focused on its low esteem, the debate has shifted more onto the high need for skilled workers and the importance of VET for the economy. Furthermore, availability of apprenticeships is crucial for young people and adults to complete upper secondary education. An education policy goal for successive governments, in alliance with the social partners, has been to increase the number of apprenticeship places.



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Three successive “societal contracts” for more apprenticeship places were signed by all major employer and employee federations and the ministries of education and of local government (2011-2015, 2016-2020, 2022-2026). These “contracts” are strategy plans with defined follow-up tasks for each partner. The aim of the first was to increase the number of apprenticeship places by 20 per cent, while the aim of the second and third has been that all qualified applicants should be able to obtain an apprenticeship.

The share of qualified applicants who obtain an apprenticeship place has increased from around 70 to over 80 per cent over the past ten years (84 percent in 2024), indicating that the strategy has had some degree of success, although it is difficult to know how much can be attributed to it, and what the relative importance of increased funding has been. The number of apprenticeship places has also increased considerably, from around 37,000 in 2008 to 48,500 in 2024, with most of the increase taking place after 2015.

The most notable feature of the funding system for upper secondary level VET (EQF4) in Norwegian is its stability. The changes in funding over the past 20 years have been on the fringes of the system, especially to make it more accessible to target groups with for instance those with weak Norwegian language skills.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEE:

[https://skills2capabilities.eu/files/results/papers/10\\_wp8\\_norway\\_case\\_study\\_on\\_template\\_for\\_website\\_v2\\_final.pdf](https://skills2capabilities.eu/files/results/papers/10_wp8_norway_case_study_on_template_for_website_v2_final.pdf)



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This Blog is part of the Skills2Capabilitiy Work Package 8 entitled 'Funding of VET and AL and the Sharing of Costs.' For more information please visit [skills2capabilities.eu](http://skills2capabilities.eu)

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