



Recognition of vocational education and training (EQF-levels 3 to 5) in the Nordic countries

Table of contents

Executive summary	5
Introduction	6
Mandate	6
Organization.....	7
Limitations by the ad hoc working group	8
Vocational education and training in the Nordic countries	9
Vocational education and training.....	9
Iceland	9
Denmark	10
Finland	11
Sweden	12
Norway	13
Comparison of the Nordic systems.....	14
Most popular qualifications 2021.....	14
Top 10 qualifications at EQF level 3 and 4 – Upper secondary school.....	15
Top 10 qualifications at EQF level 5 – Upper secondary and post-secondary	16
The Nordic ENIC-NARIC recognition schemes	16
Iceland	17
Denmark	17
Finland	17
Sweden	18
Norway	18
Stakeholder involvement in the Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices’ recognition schemes.....	19
Iceland	19
Denmark	19
Finland	19
Sweden	19
Norway	20
Collected information from relevant stakeholders	20
Descriptions and comparison of the Nordic ENIC-NARIC office’s recognition schemes.....	21
EQF 3 and 4.....	21
EQF 5.....	23
Elements that are common to EQF level 3–5.....	23
Assessment criteria for the recognition of VET-qualifications (EQF level 3–5).....	24

Challenges in recognition of VET and TVET qualifications	26
Exemplified outcomes of assessments	27
EQF Level 3 qualification	27
EQF Level 4 – Vocational qualification as a Cook	28
EQF Level 5 Vocational Qualification.....	29
Impact of the recognition schemes	29
Nordic agreements that ensure mutual recognition	31
Mobility within the Nordic countries – Status quo.....	31
Explore the findings	33
Nordic network on recognition on VET/TVET – EQF level 3, 4 and 5	33
The role as information providers	33
Possibilities for further collaboration	33
Findings and recommendations	34
Appendix	35
Definitions.....	35
Nordic VET/TVET systems	37
The Nordic recognition schemes	51
Application statistics.....	59
Feedback from relevant stakeholders in Norway.....	62

Executive summary

The focus for the ad hoc working group has been to map how the Nordic offices deal with recognition of qualifications on EQF (European Qualification Framework) level 3–5.

The organization of vocational education and training (VET) varies in the Nordic countries. The mandates for the different recognition schemes are not identical, and variation exists in the involvement of stakeholders.

The ad hoc working group's soft recommendation to the Nordic Council of Ministers is therefore to strengthen the cooperation between Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices regarding recognition of qualifications on EQF levels 3-5, and to explore the possibility of creating a NORRIC information platform for these qualification levels.

The ad hoc working group recommends that automatic recognition of the educational level of Nordic VET is explored further, and that this should be investigated with the relevant stakeholders.

Introduction

In November 2021, the Nordic Council of Ministers set up an ad hoc group on recognition of vocational education and training qualifications. The mandate described the background and goals of the group as follows in this chapter.

Mandate

The mandate of the ad hoc group on recognition of vocational education and training is described below.

Recognition of educational and vocational qualifications is a focus area for the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Freedom of Movement Council as well as the Nordic Council because the ability to study or work in another Nordic country without any obstacles is considered to be an important part of the Nordic vision to become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world. Consequently, it is stated in the Nordic Council of Minister's action plan 2021-2024 (objective 7) that

“a specific example of a focus area in the coming years is efforts to, as far as possible, ensure the immediate recognition of Nordic vocational and educational qualifications in the other Nordic countries.”

In 2018, the Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research (ÄK-U) decided to not only focus on recognition of qualifications of higher education in the future, but also on educational qualifications at other levels such as VET qualifications. Hence, at ÄK-U 01/21 it was decided to set up an ad hoc group on VET qualifications in order to map possibilities for closer cooperation between the Nordic countries in the field of recognition of VET qualifications and thus ultimately provide better services to citizens in the Nordic countries.

The Nordic countries have collaborated closely for many years on recognition of qualifications of higher education via the NORRIC network. Recently, it has been concluded that most qualifications of higher education are mutually, if not automatically recognized within the region. Such close cooperation does not yet exist when it comes to recognition of VET qualifications. And both the structure of the Nordic VET systems as well as the way the Nordic countries deal with recognition of these types of qualifications seem more diverse. However, all Nordic countries now have one single office closely linked to the national NORRIC offices responsible for recognition issues regarding VET qualifications.

To examine the potential for closer Nordic collaboration on recognition of VET qualifications and ensure fair and smooth recognition of these qualifications, the Nordic Council of Ministers invites the ad hoc group to:

- map how each of the five Nordic countries/offices deal with recognition of VET qualifications including a description of the national mandates of each office.
- describe the outcome of an assessment (advice, statement, assessment, etc.) and what it can be used for (employment, further studies, etc.)
- establish a Nordic network on recognition of VET qualifications with participation of the relevant recognition offices/authorities
- point out possibilities for further collaboration including co-operation with other relevant networks and stakeholders
- list the most typical VET qualifications – or sources for information – from other Nordic countries including the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands and start considering how they are assessed in general.
- explore possible solutions for mutual recognition within the region.

The ad hoc group is to report the outcome of the findings to the ÄK-U at the end of the mandate period.

It is emphasized that the focus of the work is VET qualifications at EQF levels 3, 4 and 5 but not professional qualifications covered by Directive 2005/36/EC. The ad hoc group should further be aware of and take in to account the differences between the Nordic countries in how vocational education and training is organized as well as the division of responsibilities between the formal education system and the employers in granting comparable qualifications.

Organization

The working period of the ad hoc working group has been from 1 November 2021 until 21 December 2022. The ad hoc group was invited by the secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers on behalf of the Committee of Senior Officials of Education and Research (ÅK-U) and it consists of one participant from the Icelandic NORRIC office and two participants from each of the other four NORRIC offices. The group was chaired by the Finnish NORRIC office in 2021 and by the Norwegian NORRIC office in 2022.

The working group had three physical meetings, in Reykjavik, Oslo and Stockholm.

Members of the ad hoc working group

Denmark:

- Credential evaluator, Cecilia Løfgren, Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science
- Credential evaluator, Maria Graversgaard Jørgensen, Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science

Finland

- Senior Adviser, Education Johanna Niemi, Finnish National Agency for Education
- Specialist Salla Lauerma, Finnish National Agency for Education

Iceland:

- Department Manager Gisli Fannberg, ENIC/NARIC Iceland

Sverige:

- Credential evaluator, Julieta Vergara, Department for Qualifications Recognition, The Swedish Council for Higher Education
- Credential evaluator, Per-Anders Stensson, Department for Qualifications Recognition, The Swedish Council for Higher Education

Norway:

- Head of Section, Silje Molander, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), Norwegian ENIC-NARIC
- Senior Adviser, Johanne Dubois Fossan, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), Norwegian ENIC-NARIC

Limitations by the ad hoc working group

The mandate given by the Nordic Council of Ministers gave the ad- hoc working group some limitations concerning EQF level 3-5 qualifications and to exclude the regulated professions in accordance with the directive. In addition, the working group has set limitations to the examination and involvement of relevant stakeholders. This is because the various Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices have different mandates and operationalization of their recognition schemes. The ad hoc working group has chosen to explain relevant stakeholders and their involvement in light of the ENIC-NARIC offices' mandates. Stakeholders in the vocational education system are not considered by the working group. When it comes to describing the mandate, it is limited to the mandate regarding the recognition schemes for foreign qualifications on EQF levels 3–5.

European Qualification Framework – EQF

- EQF is a translation tool for all types of qualifications between different national qualifications frameworks. This framework contributes to transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications. In the Nordic context these tools are used, for example, by credential evaluators, educational institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

The EQF covers all types and all levels of qualifications. It describes qualifications by using learning outcomes in order to make it clear what a person knows, understands and is able to do. The EQF is linked to national qualifications frameworks, and qualifications in Europe are increasingly accessible through qualification databases, which makes information easier to access.

Vocational education and training in the Nordic countries

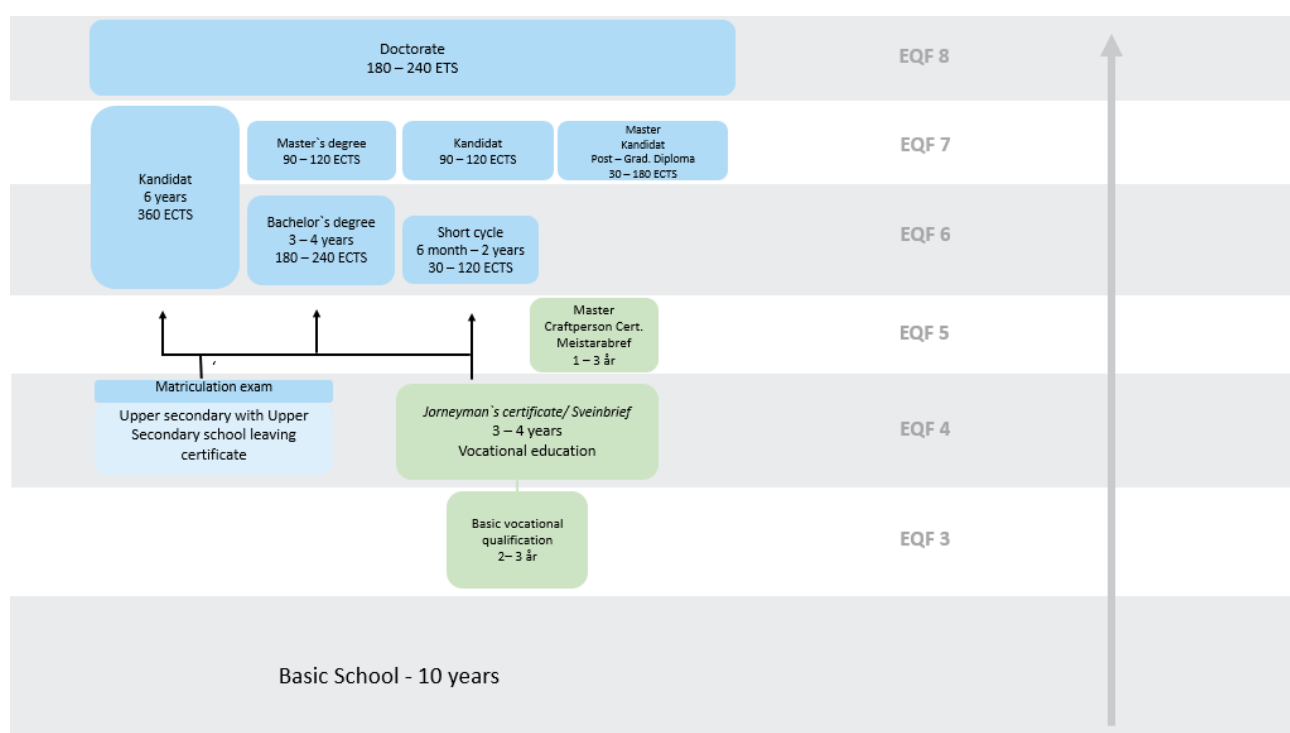
Vocational education and training

It is important to have sufficient knowledge of the different national educational systems, for better understanding of the context. The working group has described the national educational systems in the Nordic countries with emphasis on EQF level 3 - 5.

Each country is described briefly bellow and a complete description of the countries is found in the appendix.

The autonomous regions of Åland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are presented in the appendix.

Iceland



Vocational model EQF level 3 and 4 (Upper secondary)

EQF level 3 and 4 education (either general or vocational) is governed by the state. 23 of the 38 upper secondary schools offer VET programs. Study programs vary in length from one school year to four years of combined school and workplace training. All upper secondary (EQF level 3 and 4) schools have "school curricula" where education aims, intended learning outcomes, assessment, content and the connections between these elements are listed.

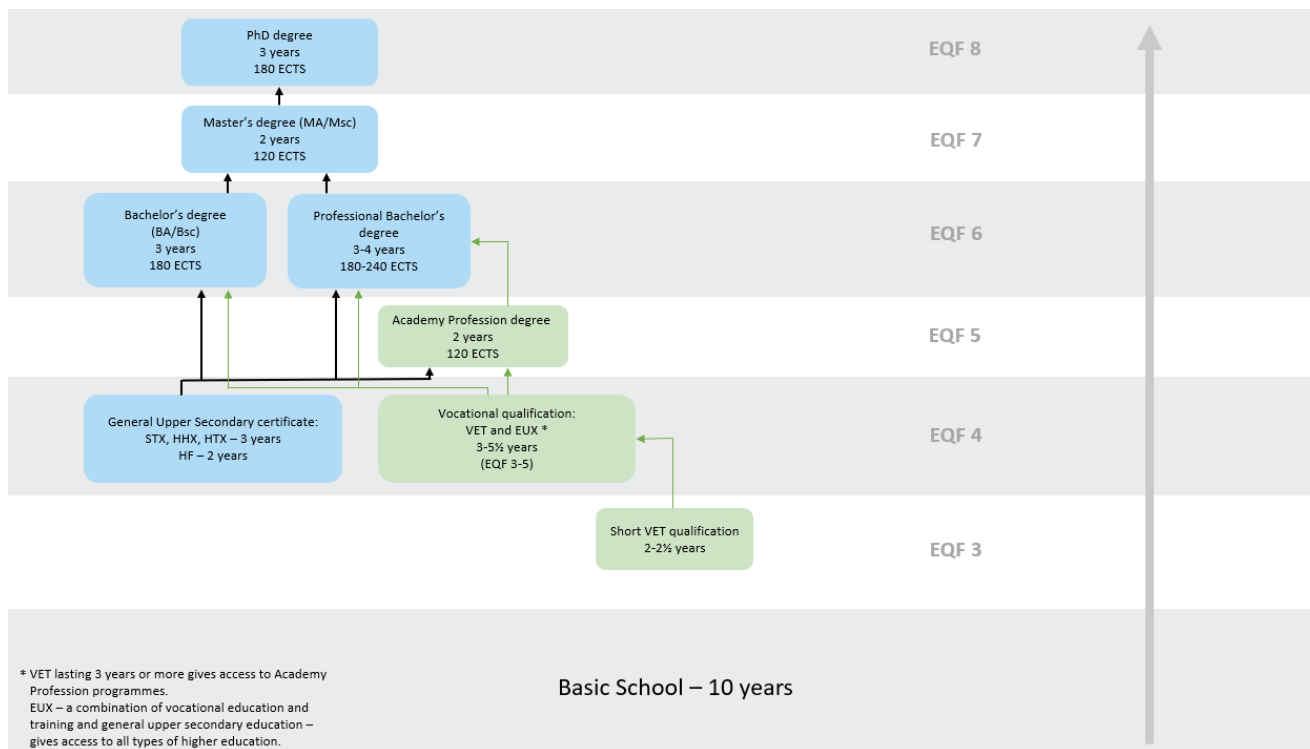
Almost all initial VET in Iceland is in regulated professions and built on an apprenticeship system, where most of the education takes place in school that is supplemented by workplace training. The duration of the time spent in school and the time spent at the workplace varies between programs and branches.

In addition, there are a small number of VET programs where all the education and training take place in school and are not certified trades, such as in computer technology and various arts.¹

Vocational model EQF 5

EQF level 5 (post-secondary, non-tertiary) education is governed by the state. Study programs may vary in length. All secondary schools have “school curricula” where education aims, intended learning outcomes, assessment, content and the connections between these elements are listed. All EQF level 5 as well as EQF level 3 and 4 programs have to be certified by the Directorate of Education.

Denmark



Vocational model EQF level 3–5

The upper-secondary vocational education and training system in Denmark is roughly divided into short and regular vocational qualifications. The duration varies from 2 to 5½ years, but most programs have a duration between 3 to 4 years. The qualifications are primarily placed at levels 3 and 4, but a few are also found at level 5 in the NQF/EQF.

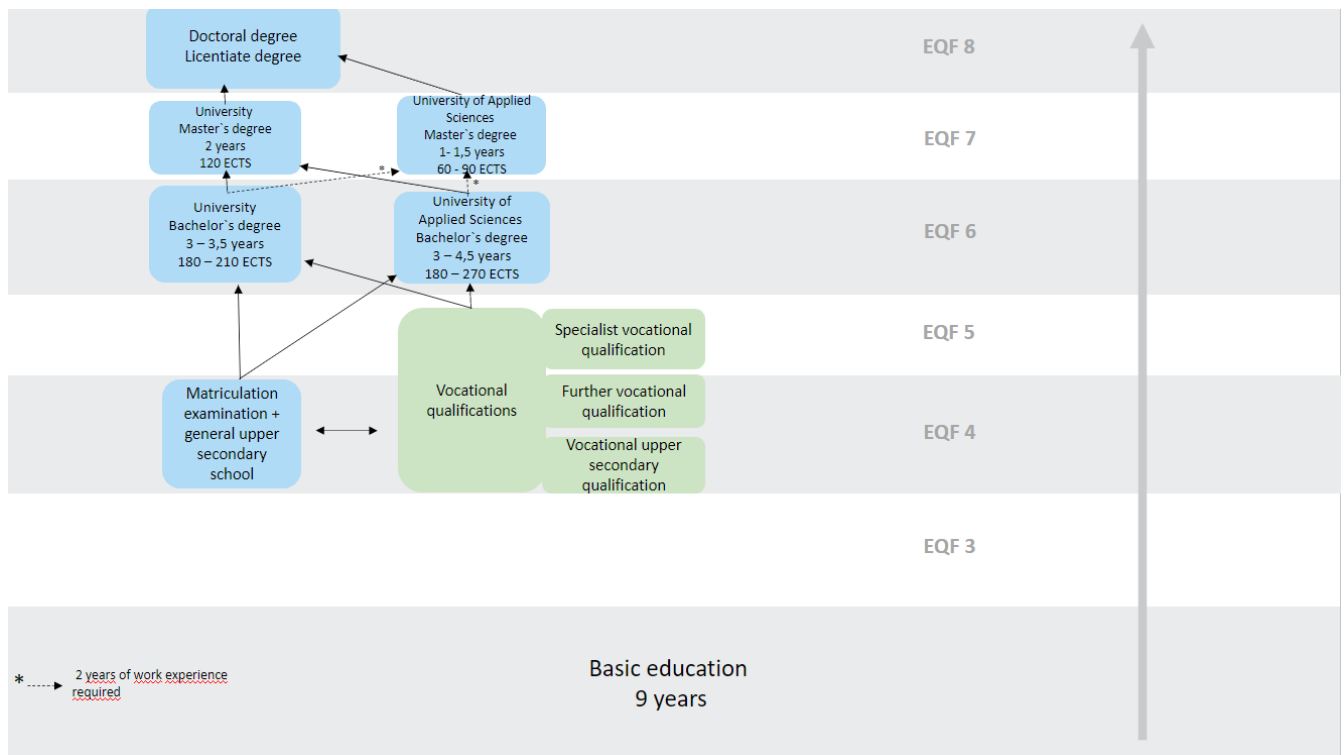
One of the cornerstones of Danish vocational education is the principle of alternating between school and practical training as part of an apprenticeship throughout the entire VET program. Normally, 1/3 of the time is spent at a vocational school and 2/3 of the time is spent on practical training in an approved company or organization. The structure of the VET programs is divided into a basic program consisting of two basic courses (grundforløb, GF1+GF2) and a dual main program (hovedforløb). As a general rule of thumb, the length of the two basic courses are 20 weeks each. The main program is typically organized as 4 or 5 periods alternating between school-based education and training at the workplace. The main program requires an apprenticeship contract with either a company or a vocational school that is recognized by the social partners as a training company or institution. The final exam, which is usually a combination of theoretical

¹ Spotlight on VET – Iceland: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8060_en.pdf

and practical exams (svendprøve), leads to a training certificate (skolebevis) as well as a journeyman's certificate (svendebrev) upon completion. VET programs are most often offered by vocational technical colleges, business colleges and social- and healthcare colleges.²

The Danish VET system also offers VET program combining a general upper secondary education and VET (eux) which qualifies students for a job and gives general access to higher education. Thus, the program is completed with both a journeyman's certificate as well as a general upper secondary certificate.³

Finland



Vocational model EQF level 3–5

The qualifications structure in vocational education and training comprises three types of qualifications: vocational upper secondary qualification (ammattillinen perustutkinto / yrkesinriktad grundexamen), further vocational qualification (ammattitutkinto / yrkesexamen) and specialist vocational qualification (erikoisammattitutkinto / specialyrkesexamen). Vocational upper secondary qualifications and further vocational qualifications are on EQF level 4, and the specialist vocational qualifications are on EQF level 5.

All of the VET qualifications mentioned here are composed of units of learning outcomes. Vocational qualifications consist of vocational units and common units. Further and specialist qualifications comprise only vocational units and the necessity for common units is assessed when preparing the personal competence development plan.

Vocational units are either compulsory or optional. Students can complete entire qualifications, parts of them or smaller units, or combine parts of different qualifications based on their needs. Competence

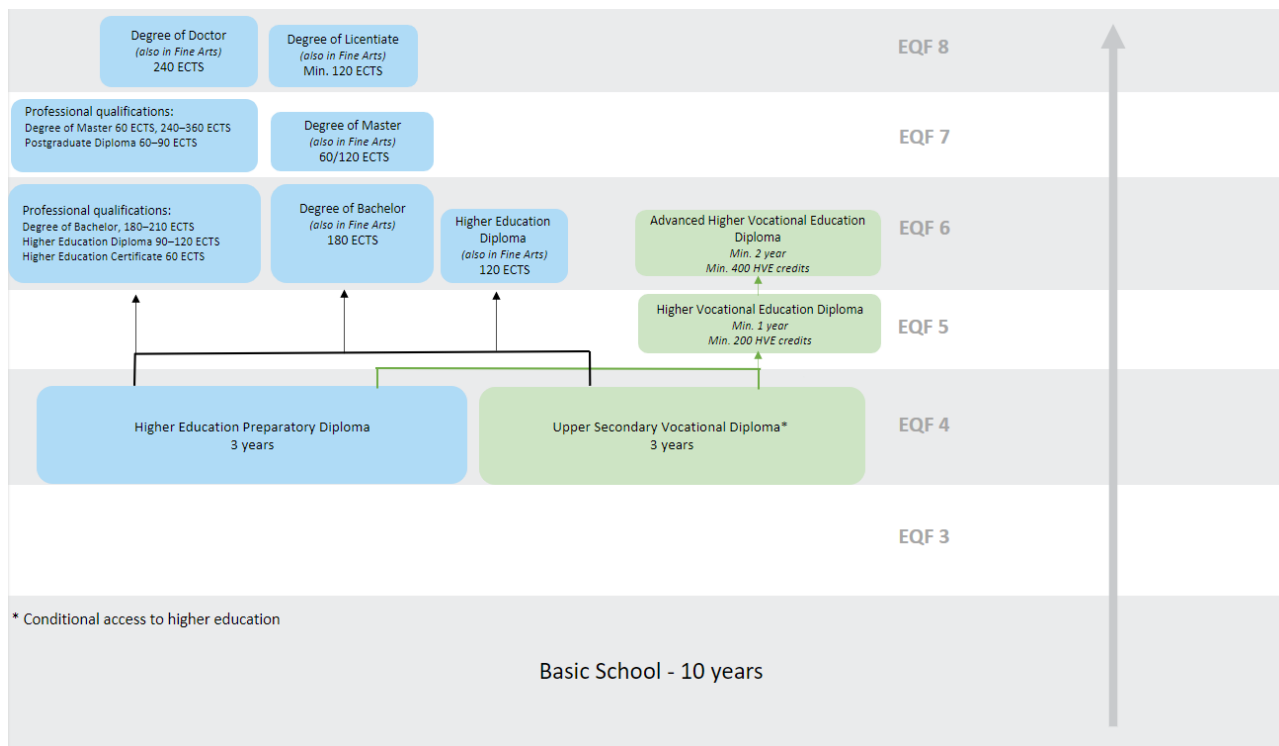
² Spotlight on VET – Denmark: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8101_en.pdf

³ Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet. (2022). The Danish Education System. Retrieved 19 January 2022, from <https://ufm.dk/publikationer/2022/the-danish-education-system>

requirements are the same in all learning environments, also in workplaces. Qualifications are the same for young people and adults.

Vocational qualifications are independent of the way the vocational skills have been acquired. They can be completed in school-based VET or as competence-based qualifications. VET is organized mainly in institutions (on-the-job learning included) or as apprenticeship training.⁴

Sweden



Vocational model EQF 3 and 4

Upper secondary vocational programs last three years and are offered in the form of school-based VET (skolförlagd utbildning) and apprenticeships (lärlingsutbildning). Upon successful completion of the vocational course, graduates are awarded an upper secondary vocational diploma (Yrksexamen). The main difference between these two programs is the proportion of work-based learning (WBL). Whereas apprentices need a minimum of 50% of WBL, school-based learners have a minimum of 15 weeks (approximately 15%) of WBL. Diploma goals, subject syllabuses, and orientations as well as the admission and diploma requirements are the same in both paths.⁵

Vocational model EQF 5

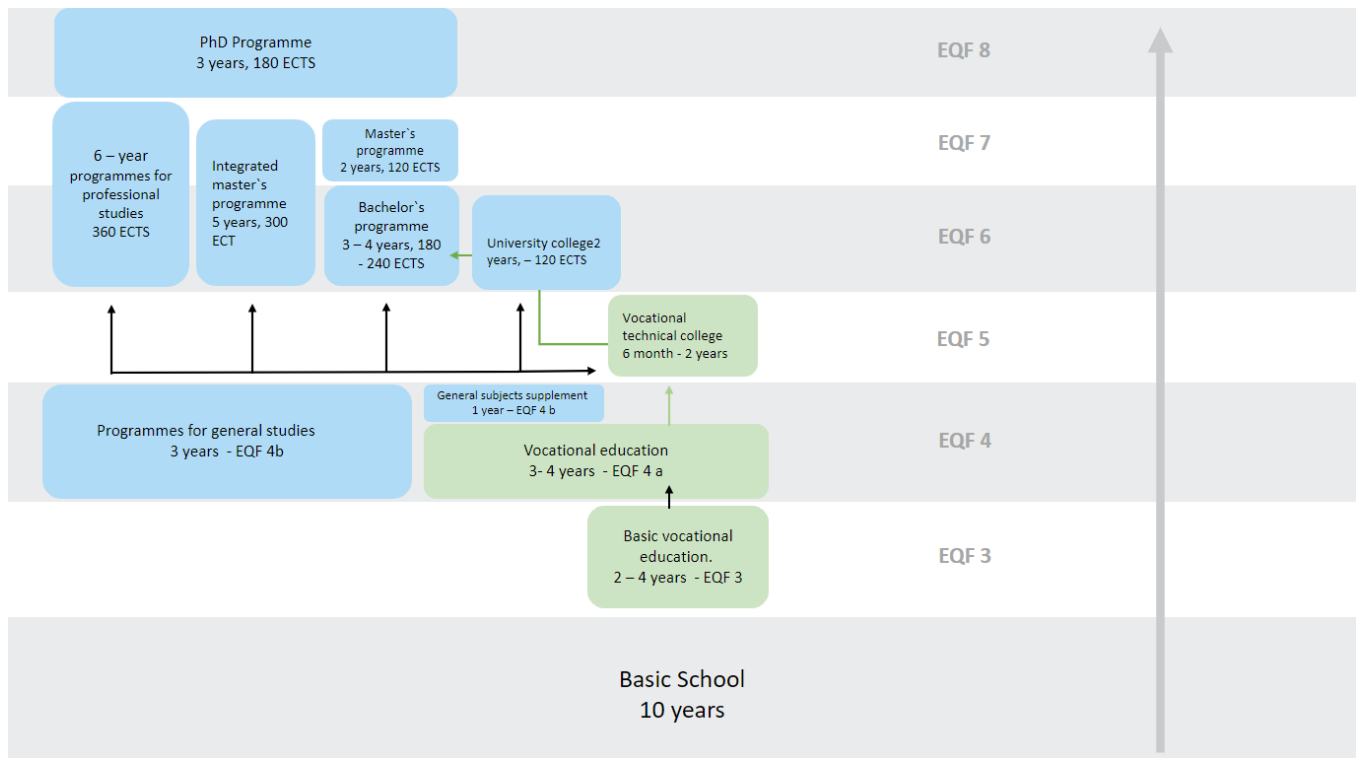
Higher vocational education is a type of Government regulated formal VET at EQF level 5 (and 6) which is provided by Yrkeshögskolan in Sweden. Higher Vocational Education is a post-secondary form of education that combines theoretical and practical studies in close cooperation with employers and industry. Programs

⁴ Vocational education and training in Finland. The Ministry of Education and Culture: <https://okm.fi/en/vocational-education-and-training>

⁵ Spotlight on VET – Sweden: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8095_en.pdf

at these levels have a strong emphasis on workplace training (Lärande i arbetslivet – LIA). After graduating students are qualified to go straight into employment.

Norway



Vocational model EQF 3

Students who do not complete their vocational qualification after upper secondary education, will receive a certificate of competence that shows the acquired competencies and subjects. With the certificate of competence, it is still possible to later reach full professional competence.

Vocational model EQF 4

Vocational training is part of the structure for upper secondary education in Norway. Traditionally, vocational training in Norway is based on learning in working life and transfer of knowledge from a master to an apprentice. In Norway, the industry takes a large part of the responsibility for the training and in the vast majority of trades, the vocational training is organized through apprenticeships.

Today there are 10 vocational programs. The standard training path is a 2+2 model consisting of a combination of school and company training, where the apprenticeship contract must be agreed with an approved company. The final exam, which is usually a combination of theoretical and practical exercises, leads to a diploma of completion and a trade – or journeyman certificate.⁶

For subjects where one achieves vocational competence, not a trade or journeyman's certificate, the training is 3-years long and takes place only in a school enlisted as a pupil.⁷

⁶ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/norway-2019>

⁷ https://utdanning.no/sok/#query_value=praksisbrev

Vocational model EQF 5

Programs are short programs of vocational study, offered at both private and public schools. The programs vary in length within a scope of 6 months to two years. This type of education builds on upper secondary education or equivalent prior learning and work experience, but the entry requirements do not entail a higher education entrance qualification.⁸

Comparison of the Nordic systems

Although the Nordic countries are similar in many areas, there are still significant differences between the countries when it comes to the organization of vocational and vocational training.

There is a difference as to whether qualifications in the same trades are regulated by the Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EEC) or not in the different countries. The same qualifications do not exist in all the Nordic countries, and similar educational qualifications are not always placed at levels that corresponds to the same EQF-levels in the various Nordic countries' education systems. An example of this is in Norway, where no formal vocational qualification exists below EQF level 4. EQF level 3 is basic competence at upper secondary school in an occupational field. Iceland and Denmark, on the other hand, offers full-fledged vocational qualifications at EQF-level 3. In all countries, individuals can obtain vocational qualifications at EQF level 4, which at the same time also corresponds to finishing upper secondary level in each country. There are moreover similarities, both in terms of governance and the extent to which the industries are involved in the design of curricula and study programs.

At EQF level 5, vocational qualifications can be found in all countries. Finland, Norway and Sweden have very clearly established higher vocational education placed at EQF 5. In Denmark, the VET qualifications vary from EQF 3 – 5 in upper secondary school, where most qualifications are placed at EQF 4 and only very few VET programs are placed at EQF level 5. There is no post-secondary, non-tertiary level in the Danish educational system and most of the qualifications placed at EQF level 5 are Academy Profession Degree programs which are a part of the higher educational system at short cycle level. In Iceland the only vocational qualification placed at EQF level 5 is the Master Craftman Certificate.

Most popular qualifications 2021

In attempting to determine the most popular qualifications, the various offices have not been able to extract data based on the same criterion. This is because the same type of data is not available in the different countries. At EQF level 4, the Norwegian, Danish and Finnish office provide data on the number of graduates, while the Swedish and Icelandic offices have collected data on the number of students currently active.

At EQF level 5 data has been extracted based on somewhat different criteria, where data from the Finnish, Icelandic and Danish office are based on the number of graduates from specific field and the Swedish and Norwegian offices have extracted figures on graduates sorted by fields of study.

Since the education system is different in the Nordic countries, the tables are presented with both EQF level and which position in the school system the EQF level can be achieved.

⁸ https://utdanning.no/tema/nyttig_informasjon/fakta_om_fagskole

Top 10 qualifications at EQF level 3 and 4 – Upper secondary school

EQF level 3 is an integrated part of the Danish and Icelandic upper secondary school system, where it is possible to achieve fully fledged qualifications. This is not the case in Finland and Sweden. In Norway it is only possible to achieve basic competence at this level. There is a common table for EQF level 3 and 4, where Iceland and Denmark are presented with qualifications at both levels.

Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Denmark
Social and health care (EQF 4)	Carpenter (EQF 4)	Health work professional (EQF 4)	Electrician (EQF 4)	Office Clerk including specialisations, (EQF 4)
Business (EQF 4)	Electrical installer (EQF 4)	Carpenter (EQF 4)	Carpenter (EQF 4)	Social and Healthcare Assistant, (EQF 4)
Electrical engineering and automation technology (EQF 4)	Practical nurse (EQF 4)	Electrician (EQF 4)	Animal care (EQF 4)	Retail Sales including specialisations, (EQF 4)
Further vocational qualification in first-level management (EQF 4)	Electronics (EQF 4)	Child - and youth worker (EQF 4)	Pedagogical work (EQF 4)	Social and Healthcare Helper, EQF 3
Further vocational qualification in business (EQF 4)	Plumber (EQF 4)	Sales worker (EQF 4)	Transportation (EQF 4)	Carpenter, (EQF 4)
Construction (EQF 4)	Chefs mate (EQF 4)	Car mechanic – light vehicles (EQF 4)	Car mechanic – light vehicles (EQF 4)	Electrician, (EQF 4)
Logistics (EQF 4)	Industrial mechanic (EQF 4)	Plumber (EQF 4)	Computer and communication technician (EQF 4)	Pedagogic Assistant, (EQF 4)
Restaurant and catering (EQF 4)	Skipper/captain (EQF 4)	Construction machine operator (EQF 4)	Leisure and health (EQF 4)	Data and Communication including specialisations, (EQF 4-5 depending on specialisation)
Vehicle sector (EQF 4)	Car mechanic (EQF 4)	Industrial mechanic (EQF 4)	Farming (EQF 4)	Car Mechanic including specialisations, (EQF 3-4 depending on specialisation)
Education and guidance (EQF 4)	Arts (EQF 3/4)	Professional driver -bus/truck (EQF 4)	Other crafts (EQF 4)	Commerce including specialisations, (EQF 4)

Reflections

The qualifications Carpenter and Car Mechanic (or similar) appear in all the Nordic countries. Despite many other qualifications appearing amongst the most popular in several countries (3 or more), these professions are regulated by law only in some of the countries. In the top three of popular qualifications in Norway, for example, there are two professions regulated by Directive 2005/36/EC (Health care worker and Electrician), whereas Health care worker is not regulated in Sweden (although it will be soon).

Top 10 qualifications at EQF level 5 – Upper secondary and post-secondary

Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Denmark
Leadership and business management (Post-secondary)	Master Craftsman (Post-secondary)	Humanities and aesthetics (Post-secondary)	Economics, administration and sales (Post-secondary)	Data Technician Specializing in Infrastructure (Upper Secondary)
Product development (Post-secondary)	Tourist Guiding (Post-secondary)	Teacher education and education in pedagogy (Post-secondary)	Data/IT (Post-secondary)	Data Technician Specializing in Programming (Upper Secondary)
Business (Post-secondary)	Photography (Post-secondary)	Social studies and legal subjects (Post-secondary)	Civil engineering and building technology (Post-secondary)	EMT – Emergency Medical Technician (Upper Secondary)
First-Level Management in Production (Post-secondary)	Digital Design (Post-secondary)	Economic and administrative subjects (Post-secondary)	Healthcare and social work (Post-secondary)	Film and TV Production Technician (Upper Secondary)
Rehabilitation, Support and Guidance Services (Post-secondary)	Film Studies (Post-secondary)	Science subjects, crafts subjects, technical subjects (Post-secondary)	Technology and manufacturing (Post-secondary)	Retail Manager (Upper Secondary)
Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work (Post-secondary)	N/A	Health, social and sport subjects (Post-secondary)	Culture, media and design (Post-secondary)	Aircraft Mechanic (Upper Secondary)
Sustainability and Environmental Technology (Post-secondary)	N/A	Primary business subjects (Post-secondary)	Hotels, restaurants and tourism (Post-secondary)	Tool Technician (Upper Secondary)
Business Advisers (Post-secondary)	N/A	Transport, service and safety subjects (Post-secondary)	Transport services (Post-secondary)	N/A
Security Officers (Post-secondary)	N/A	N/A	Pedagogy and teaching (Post-secondary)	N/A
Building Maintenance Technology (Post-secondary)	N/A	N/A	Agriculture, animal husbandry, gardening, forestry and fishing (Post-secondary)	N/A

Reflections

The qualifications from Iceland and Denmark are derived from a low or relatively low number of graduates, e.g., the qualifications listed from Iceland represents the programs with 10 graduates or more. The Danish qualification as a Tool Technician had 11 graduates in 2021 and the top-rated qualification had 228 graduates.

Study programs with a varied combination of these designations business/economics/leadership/administration appear in several of the countries (3 or more).

Beyond this, the tendencies may appear more different than they are. The fact that the Swedish and Norwegian studies are not subject-specific means that, in addition to the above stated it is difficult to draw similarities across all countries. If one instead draws parallels across countries with similar sets of criteria, however, several common denominators become apparent. For example, that both educational - health - and social studies subjects appear in both Norway and Sweden and film studies in both Denmark and Iceland

The Nordic ENIC-NARIC recognition schemes

The following section will present the various offices' mandate in the recognition schemes on EQF level 3–5, vocational education. The Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices will present relevant stakeholders, if any, when it comes to the recognition schemes.

There will also be thorough descriptions of the structure of the different recognition schemes' structure and how the recognition offices use them. The chapter also include an example of how a certain qualification is assessed by the different offices. More information regarding the recognition schemes is available in the appendix.

Iceland

EQF level 3–5

Mandate

In accordance with an agreement between the University and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Icelandic ENIC-NARIC office is located in the Academic Affairs Division at the University of Iceland. According to this agreement, on behalf of the Ministry, the university shall discharge the functions of an information center (ENIC/NARIC office) under Article IX.2 of the **Lisbon Convention** on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher education in the European Region.

The remit is limited to academic recognition for institutions, universities, ministries, individuals, companies and other stakeholders and the recognition decision is not a binding assessment; it merely provides guidance or counselling regarding recognition.

Application statistics may be found in the appendix, page 60 -61.

Denmark

EQF 3-5 (Upper secondary VET)

Mandate

The Danish Agency of Higher Education and Science has since 2000 functioned as the Danish ENIC-NARIC and is the central office where citizens, companies, institutions and authorities can apply for assessments of foreign educational qualifications and obtain advice on recognition of foreign qualifications and competencies. The Agency is both an assessment authority and an information and knowledge center for assessment and recognition on the basis of the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications Act (Consolidation Act no. 579 of 1 June 2014) and the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The agency assesses foreign qualifications at all levels from all countries in the world. This means that all assessments of foreign qualifications follow the same assessment criteria whether it is higher educational, general upper secondary, basic education or VET-qualifications. The main principle is that a foreign qualification should be recognized unless substantial differences can be demonstrated. The assessment letter issued to the individual applicant is legally binding.

The Danish Agency offers various types of assessments aimed for different stakeholders. For more information, cf. appendix, page 52.

Application statistics may be found in the appendix, page 60 -61.

Finland

EQF 4–5 (Upper secondary VET)

Mandate

The Finnish National Agency for Education (FNAE) decides on the eligibility that foreign qualifications give for civil service posts or a regulated profession, e.g., in the field of early childhood education and care and teaching. The FNAE also issues recognition statements on upper- and post-secondary vocational qualifications completed abroad and on Finnish qualifications for international use. The FNAE functions as the National assistance center for the Professional Qualifications Directive, ENIC-NARIC / NORRIC center of Finland and National Co-ordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework.

The recognition statements on foreign vocational qualifications are issued as an expert service and might be helpful especially when applying for a job on the non-regulated labor market. The FNAE also provides advice

and guidance as well as general information on foreign education systems directly to the employers, higher education institutions and guidance professionals on its website and through webinars and other events.

Application statistics may be found in the appendix, page 60 -61.

Sweden

EQF 3–5 (Upper secondary VET)

Mandate

The Department of Qualifications Recognition at The Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och högskolerådet) is the ENIC-NARIC office in Sweden and as such provides individual assessment to people holding foreign vocational qualifications. The recognition procedure and the assessment criteria for vocational qualifications are not regulated by national legislation. The procedure and the assessment criteria are developed in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and other international recommendations and best practices.

Neither tripartite cooperation nor social partners are directly involved in the assessment of foreign vocational qualifications in Sweden.

The tasks of the ENIC-NARIC office are interpreted from the ENIC-NARIC Charter. The specific task to handle assessments of foreign qualifications is regulated in the Swedish Council for Higher education's statutes "Instruktion och förordning för Universitets- och högskolerådet SFS 2012:811 § 4".

Application statistics may be found in the appendix, page 60 -61.

Norway

EQF 4 (Upper secondary VET)

Mandate

The legal basis is found under the provisions of Act of 17 July 1998 no. 61 relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training (the Education Act) § 3-4 a:

"The Ministry [of Education and Research] decides on the basis of individual applications, if foreign vocational education and training shall be recognized as comparable to a Norwegian craft or journeyman's certificate or diploma. Vocational education and training is considered comparable if and when, it has the same level and scope as the Norwegian vocational education and training and comprises many of the essential elements of the given profession." (Official translation)

EQF 5 (Post-secondary VET)

Mandate

Recognition of foreign tertiary vocational education includes an assessment of the education in comparison to the Norwegian education system, in accordance with Act relating to Tertiary Vocational Education (fagskoleloven) section 7 (in Norwegian). The assessment provides information on the level and scope of the education, and what rights or positions this can qualify for in the country of origin. This recognition scheme does not assess the vocational content of the education.

NOKUT's assessment, issued on both EQF level 4 and 5, are both legally binding decisions in accordance with the Public Administration Act section 2 b.

Application statistics may be found in the appendix, page 60 -61.

Stakeholder involvement in the Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices' recognition schemes

The level of involvement of stakeholders in the recognition schemes varies between the Nordic offices. Below, we give a brief overview of the level of participation in the different countries.

Iceland

The stakeholders in Iceland would be the schools, public institutions, Iðan, Rafmennt, Menntamálastofun, Embætti landlæknis and the occupational councils.

The stakeholders may ask the ENIC-NARIC office for information on or evaluation of the qualifications that they are evaluating, but they do not set any limits or directions on how the ENIC-NARIC office does its work of recognition.

Denmark

The Danish ENIC-NARIC office supports stakeholders such as employers, educational institutions, guidance professionals and integration officers concerning various needs of recognition of foreign qualifications. The stakeholders are not formally involved in the recognition processes. The Danish employers generally decide themselves whether a future employee with foreign qualifications fulfill the specific requirements for the job and can ask for an assessment as part of their recruitment process. The Danish ENIC-NARIC also supports the Danish educational institutions in their admission of students with foreign access qualifications.

Finland

The Finnish National Agency for Education has contacts with stakeholders, such as employers, higher education institutions, other educational institutions and guidance professionals, within its variety of tasks related to recognition of qualifications. In Finland, the employers generally assess the competence conferred by a foreign qualification themselves when deciding on employee recruitment for non-regulated professions. Higher education institutions and other educational institutions decide on the eligibility that foreign qualifications give for further studies and on recognition of prior learning. The National Agency for Education supports the stakeholders on questions concerning academic and professional recognition of foreign qualifications in Finland. According to the information the agency has, recognition of qualifications from the other Nordic countries is functioning well.

Sweden

The Swedish ENIC-NARIC office has limited contact with stakeholders and social partners since they are not involved in the Swedish ENIC-NARICs recognition process. In addition, the recognition statement is not mandatory to access the non-regulated labor market, although it is used as a guidance in the employment process. Nevertheless, The Swedish Council for Higher Education, in its role as ENIC-NARIC office, assists and provides information to stakeholders (employers, educational institutions, student counselors, other Swedish authorities etc.) on questions concerning recognition of foreign vocational qualifications in Sweden.

There is no formalized cooperation between the Swedish ENIC-NARIC office and joint training boards and trade associations.

Norway

Norway has two different recognition schemes for level 4 and level 5 VET qualifications. As explained further down in the report, the level 4 recognition scheme involves expert assessment by stakeholders, whereas the level 5 recognition scheme is a general assessment that does not involve stakeholders in a case-by-case assessment. The difference between the two recognition schemes and their involvement of stakeholders can be understood by the establishment and development of the schemes:

Level 4

The establishment of the recognition scheme was founded on both sides of the labor market (both trade- and worker unions). In the preparatory work for the Education Act § 3-4 a, Prop. 72 L (2015–2016)³, the Ministry of Education and Research requests that the competent authority use professional experts with cutting-edge expertise in the respective qualifications to assess the professional content of foreign qualifications. These experts must be proposed by the professional councils and thus secure connection to working life in the respective trades or professions. The recognition scheme is organized in a two-step assessment where a more general assessment is first conducted by a credential evaluator at the Norwegian office before an expert in the relevant occupational field of Norwegian vocational education and training undertakes an assessment of the qualification's vocational content. They compare foreign curricula towards Norwegian curricula.

Norway differs from the other Nordic countries as the recognition scheme has been developed with social partners and experts on Norwegian vocational education and training being involved in the recognition scheme. In the other Nordic countries, no social partners are directly involved in the recognition scheme.

Level 5

In the establishment of the recognition scheme there was a close dialog with the National Vocational School Council (EQF level 5) However they are not involved in the daily work.

Collected information from relevant stakeholders

The mandates of the ENIC-NARIC offices in the Nordic region are different in organization and the distribution of roles.

Since the recognition schemes in Norway are developed in close cooperation with the stakeholders, Norway has been able to turn to the Vocational Councils (EQF level 4) and the National Vocational School Council (EQF 5) who is central to the design of vocational education and training in Norway. They are the relevant stakeholders within the different industries. They have given valuable input on the importance, possible obstacles and also the need for mutual agreement between the Nordic countries, both on EQF level 4 and 5. The feedback from the Norwegian stakeholders is that they think the Nordic countries can agree on a systemic assessment of professional and apprenticeship certificates, from one Nordic country to another. They emphasize that it is important to have trust in each other's educational systems. Furthermore, they call for a mutual alignment or harmonization of the Nordic qualifications. They claim that this will secure that skilled workers in the Nordic countries will achieve the same salary conditions as those with a Norwegian trade – or journeyman certificate. The same applies when it comes to meeting industry-specific requirements for skilled workers in tenders and assignments⁹. The Norwegian stakeholders stress that this should not cover the requirement for training apprentices, cf. appendix, page 62.

⁹ <https://www-regjeringen-no.translate.goog/no/aktuelt/ny-norges-modell-for-et-seriost-arbeidsliv/id2895366/? x tr sl=no& x tr tl=en& x tr hl=en& x tr pto=sc>

The Icelandic ENIC-NARIC office contacted Iðan to get information on any obstacles in recognition of VET qualifications for registered professions from the other Nordic countries, and they reported they did not have any problems with recognition of qualifications within the area.

Descriptions and comparison of the Nordic ENIC-NARIC office's recognition schemes

EQF 3 and 4

	Scope of education	Scope of practical training	Type of statement	Level criteria	Official status (in home country)	Countries	Qualifications	Law regulated professions	Cooperation with social partners
Sweden	11/12 years	Not required	Advisory statement - comparison to the closest Swedish qualification or educational level	Vocational qualifications at upper secondary school level. EQF/NQF 3 and 4.	Recognized and fully completed vocational qualifications falling within the formal educational system in the country of origin.	Universal	Universal	The licence required to work in a regulated profession is issued by the competent authority and not the Swedish-Enic Naric.	Not formally involved in assessment of foreign qualifications.
Denmark	Open. But the Danish Enic-Naric do not assess short courses or incompleting programmes	Open	General assessment	Use EQF as a guideline	Fully completed qualifications falling within the official system of education of the country	Universal	Universal	The licence required to work in a regulated profession is issued by the competent authority and not the Danish Enic Naric. However, the Danish Enic-Naric is the competent authority for the teaching profession.	Not formally involved in the assessment of foreign qualifications.
Iceland	Open	Open	General assessment	1 to 5	Must be recognized by educational authorities	Universal	Universal	Law reg. prof. and not reg. prof.	Yes
Finland	Open	Open	Description of the qualification's level, extent and content	Vocational qualifications and professionally-oriented HEI qualifications that cannot be recognised as comparable to a HEI degree completed in Finland	Fully completed qualifications falling within the official system of education of the country	Universal	No limitations / not applicable. The advisory statements do not include comparisons with a Finnish qualification	Field-specific competent authorities decide on eligibility for regulated professions.	Yes, but with no influence on the assessment process and outcome
Norway	3 years	1 year	Assessment of vocational content - compared to the current Norwegian curriculum	Only use EQF a guideline. Must be considered as vocational secondary education in home country	Must be adequate quality assurance and be publicly recognized upper secondary qualification	Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, (Gradual expansion in European area)	22 qualifications (Gradual expansion)	The licence required to work in a regulated profession is issued by the competent authority and not the Norwegian Enic Naric. However, the Norwegian Enic-Naric is the competent authority for the teaching profession	Yes, and they have been involved in the development and evaluations of the scheme

Recognition and recognition statements

In the Norwegian statement the content of a foreign qualification is compared to a Norwegian craft or journeyman's certificate. The Norwegian statement is a recognition decision considered as a tool to help the holder of the foreign qualification to become established in the non-regulated Norwegian labor market and it is up to each employer to decide whether they require NOKUT's recognition or not. The statement is legally binding.

In Finland, the Finnish National Agency for Education issues recognition statements on foreign vocational qualifications as an expert service. The statement consists of a description of the qualification based on the documents submitted by the applicant. It does not include comparisons with a Finnish qualification. The statement might be helpful especially when applying for a job on the non-regulated labor market. The employers assess independently whether the job seeker with a foreign qualification is qualified for the job. Higher education institutions and other educational institutions decide on student admission and recognition of previous studies. The Finnish National Agency for Education also provides advice and guidance as well as general information on foreign education systems directly to the employers, higher education institutions and guidance professionals on its website and through webinars and other events.

In Iceland, the office does not offer binding assessment as it only provides guidance or counselling regarding recognition. The Icelandic statement is considered as a recognition statement, and it includes a comparison to an Icelandic educational level. It is not mandatory to have an assessment when seeking employment or further studies, and as in Finland, it is up to the employer or school to decide if- the person has the required competence for the job or school program.

In Sweden, the office issues a recognition statement which in brief describes the foreign qualification and the closest comparable qualification or education level in the Swedish education system. In the case of vocational qualifications which grant access to higher education, the statement also indicates whether the foreign qualification meets the general entry requirements to Swedish higher education at the undergraduate program-level. The statement is not a requirement to apply to university or to access the non-regulated Swedish labor market. The Swedish statement is, as in previously mentioned countries, meant to facilitate access to the Swedish labor market.

In Denmark, the assessment is legally binding. This means that, if the Danish ENIC-NARIC has issued an assessment for an individuals' qualification, a Danish publicly recognized educational institution, a public employer or unemployment fund is required to consider that recognition decision when admitting or employing the person. This implies that an educational institution, unemployment fund or public employer cannot deny admission or a specific wage level, by arguing that the foreign education does not meet the general requirement or level, if the Danish ENIC-NARIC recognizes the foreign qualification as comparable in level to a Danish qualification giving access to the said study program or comparable as a given qualification level.

The assessment letter includes a comparison of the foreign qualification to the closest qualification or alternatively a broader field of area or qualification level in Denmark. As in the case of Finland, Iceland, and Sweden it is up to the individual employer to decide whether the holder of the vocational qualifications has the right competences for the job.

The recognition statement from the Danish ENIC-NARIC is not a requirement in the labor-market or admission processes, but it is used as a supportive document related to employment processes, integration matters and admission to further studies in Denmark.

EQF 5

	Scope of education	Scope of practical training	Type of statement	Level criteria	Official status (in home country)	Countries	Qualifications	Law regulated professions	Cooperation with social partners
Sweden	6 months - upwards No scope required for non formal qualifications referenced to EQF level 5, 6 and 7	Not required	Advisory statement - comparison to the closest Swedish qualification, educational level or SeQF-level.	Vocational qualifications at post secondary level. EQF/NQF level 5, 6 and 7. Level 4 and 5 (ISCED 2011) and level 4B and 5B (ISCED 97).	Recognized and fully completed vocational qualifications falling within the formal/non formal educational system in the country of origin. And also education recognised by international ed. organizations	Universal	Universal	The licence required to work in a regulated profession is issued by the competent authority and not the Swedish-Enic Naric.	Not formally involved in assessment of foreign qualifications.
Denmark	Open. But the Danish Enic-Naric do not assess short courses or incompleting programmes	Open	General assessment	Use EQF as a guideline	Fully completed qualifications falling within the official system of education of the country	Universal	Universal	The licence required to work in a regulated profession is issued by the competent authority and not the Danish Enic Naric. However, the Danish Enic-Naric is the competent authority for the teaching profession.	Not formally involved in the assessment of foreign qualifications.
Iceland	One semester and upwards	Not necessary	General assessment	No requirement	Must be recognized by educational authorities	Universal	Universal	If asked for we do evaluate education for regulated professions although professional recognition takes place elsewhere	We serve them when asked, but they have no influence on assessment process or outcome
Finland	Open	Open	Description of the qualification's level, extent and content	Vocational qualifications and professionally-oriented HEI qualifications that cannot be recognised as comparable to a HEI degree completed in Finland	Fully completed qualifications falling within the official system of education of the country	Universal	No limitations / not applicable. The advisory statements do not include comparisons with a Finnish qualification	Field-specific competent authorities decide on eligibility for regulated professions.	Yes, but with no influence on the assessment process and outcome
Norway	6 month. - 2 years	None - But need to have a professional profile	General assessment	Only use EQF a guideline. Must be considered as vocational post secondary education in country of origin	Must be adequate quality assurance and be publicly recognized as above upper secondary education, but not higher education	Universal	Universal	Yes – But the licence required to work in a regulated profession is issued by the competent authority , not NOKUT.	Yes

Recognitions and recognition statements

The recognition schemes for level 5 qualifications are quite similar but they separate to some extent when it comes to the content of the recognition statements. While the Icelandic office makes a comparison of the foreign qualification to the closest one in their system, the Norwegian and the Swedish offices make a general assessment of level and scope against the national higher vocational education system. The Finnish office, in virtue of their national mandate, issues a comprehensive description of the foreign qualification but does not compare the qualification to Finnish qualifications. Likewise, the Danish office, because of the low number of programs at level 5 in Denmark, issues a recognition statement with a descriptive character of the foreign qualification. As for level 4 qualifications, the recognition statements for level 5 qualifications are meant to facilitate access into the non-regulated labor market.

Elements that are common to EQF level 3–5

Right to appeal

The appeals procedure is usually given by the national legislation in the Nordic countries. The Swedish, Danish and Norwegian assessments can be appealed by the applicant. The recognition statements issued by the Finnish National Agency for Education, are an expert service that is not regulated by law and therefore cannot be appealed. In Finland, they provide a description of the qualification but neither compare foreign qualifications with Finnish qualifications nor provide eligibility for a profession or duty that is regulated in Finland. The same goes for Iceland, its statements are not regulated by law and cannot be appealed.

Cost

It is free of charge to apply for an assessment in Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland. The Finnish office charges a fee for issuing a recognition statement.

Issuing languages

The statements are issued in the national languages in Sweden, Norway, and Finland (Finnish and Swedish). Iceland and Denmark also offer statements in English.

Assessment criteria for the recognition of VET-qualifications (EQF level 3–5)

This working group's main task has been to identify differences and disparities when it comes to the recognition schemes.

In Denmark, the legislation is developed in line with the recommendations of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the assessment criteria for the recognition of VET qualifications are regulated by law in Denmark. In Norway, work has been initiated to develop regulations for the recognition scheme at EQF level 4. For the time being the assessment criteria is decided by the Board of NOKUT. In Sweden, Iceland, and Finland there is no national legislation setting standards for the assessment criteria of vocational qualifications, but the assessment criteria are developed in accordance with international recommendations and best practices.

Limitations (Countries and occupations fields)

The Norwegian scheme for EQF level 4 qualifications is limited to applicants with vocational education and training from certain countries,¹⁰ and with certain qualifications¹¹ for the time being. The Norwegian office plans to extend the scheme to cover countries from the rest of the European area. For the time being, applicants from the other Nordic countries do not have the same possibility to have their qualifications assessed by the Norwegian office. However, on EQF level 5 there are no such limitations to countries.

Status of the qualification and the issuing institution

The foreign qualification must be completed and recognized in the country of origin in all of the Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices, except Iceland. In Iceland applicants can receive evaluation of incomplete studies. The recognition statement would then state how many credits the student has completed and at what level, and to how many credits, and at what level, it would correspond in the Icelandic educational system.

The status of the issuing institution is a decisive criterion in all the countries and no assessment is issued without considering this parameter.

In Sweden, Denmark and in Norway it is, on some levels, possible to have qualifications that lack national recognition status recognized, based on their status within the international community. This applies to qualifications under the auspices of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Iceland on the other side may evaluate non-formal education as comparable to continuing education in Iceland.

Level of the qualification

The Swedish office assesses foreign vocational qualifications that are part of the formal education system at EQF level 3, 4 and 5. At level 5, the Sweden offers also recognition to vocational qualifications which are part of the non-formal education system in the country of origin. The level of the foreign qualification is determined by its position within the foreign national education system, and/or qualifications framework

¹⁰ Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland

¹¹ Bricklayer, Butcher, Cabinet maker, Carpenter, Cook, institutional cook, Cosmetologist, Glazier, Hairdresser, Industrial concrete worker, Industrial machinery mechanic, Meat cutter, Motor vehicle mechanic, light and/or heavy vehicles, Retail butcher, Plumber, Roofer, Sausage maker, Tinsmith, Upholsterer, Waiter, and Wood products carpenter

and sometimes by using ISCED- parameters. The Norwegian office assesses the level of the vocational qualification based on where it is placed in the educational system in the country of origin.

The Icelandic and Danish offices assess all levels of vocational qualifications. The level of the qualification in the country of origin is taken into consideration in the evaluation. The Finnish office issues recognition statements on vocational qualifications of all levels. The statement includes a description of the level of the qualification in the country of origin.

Length/Workload

Of the Nordic countries, only the Norwegian recognition scheme on EQF level 4 has criteria for scope when assessing a foreign qualification. The scheme requires a total scope of at least three years where one of those years must be practical training.

The nominal duration of a previous level of education is decisive when assessing upper-secondary vocational qualification at EQF level 3 and 4 in Sweden. The foreign qualification must be at least one year and comprise at least eleven or twelve years of study. Regarding vocational qualifications comparable with Swedish higher vocational diploma at EQF level 5, the foreign qualification must have a duration of at least one year of full-time studies. Alternative recognition is also offered to non-formal qualifications with a minimum length of 6 months full-time studies.

There are no limits regarding length or workload in connection with recognition of vocational studies at the Icelandic office, it evaluates the qualifications or study periods that the individual has completed in the home country, regardless of its length or workload. The same applies to the recognition statements issued by the Finnish office as well as for the recognition statements by the Danish office. The Danish office also make partial recognitions based on the criteria in the Lisbon Recognition Convention, however, the Danish and the Finnish offices do not assess incomplete study periods or short courses.

Content/Profile

The Norwegian office assess foreign EQF level 4 qualifications against a specific Norwegian craft and journeyman certificate. Occupational experts determine whether the vocational content of a foreign qualification can be recognized as equivalent. The foreign qualification must comprise many of the essential elements of the given Norwegian qualification to be considered comparable. The Danish office also makes a comparison of the foreign qualification to the closest Danish qualification or alternatively a broader field of area or qualification level in Denmark if there are no similar Danish qualification. **Where the other Nordic countries either provide a recognition statement or a general assessment of level and scope, the professional similarity plays a decisive role in the Norwegian recognition process on EQF level 4 in Norway.**

Refugees and displaced persons without documentary evidence

Sweden has procedures for the recognition of EQF level 5 VET qualifications for refugees and displaced persons without traditional (i.e., copies of transcripts or diplomas) documentary evidence of their qualifications. Sweden issues a "background paper" describing the content and function of the qualification, and it is modeled on the diploma supplement format.

Likewise, Denmark and Iceland offer background reports on all educational levels and qualifications to refugees who are unable to provide sufficient documentation for an assessment.

The Norwegian office's recognitions schemes for vocational qualifications does not offer this service

The Finnish office has not established a separate procedure, but supports the employers, educational institutions and guidance professionals with information and advice

Translation of documents

Documentation issued in one of the Nordic languages is accepted in all the Nordic offices. No translations are required when assessing Nordic qualifications.

Challenges in recognition of VET and TVET qualifications

As stated above the recognition scheme on EQF level 4 in Norway differs from the other Nordic countries when it comes to the involvement with the social partners, both in the establishment and operation. Because experts on Norwegian vocational education and training are involved in the process, they have some ownership to the recognition scheme. Even though this operationalization ensures trust from the social partners, it has its limitations. The foreign qualification must be considered equal to a Norwegian qualification. Because the recognition scheme is expanding gradually, none of the Nordic countries are included in the recognition scheme.

In the case where the recognition statement comprises a comparison to a qualification in the home education system, the following challenges can be pointed out:

The Swedish Higher Vocational Education Diploma (Kvalificerad Yrkeshögskoleexamen) which is placed on EQF level 6 in Sweden is compared with a EQF level 5 qualification by the Icelandic office, i.e., one level lower than they are at in Sweden. Since this qualification is placed at vocational post-secondary level in Sweden, the Norwegian office would recognize this qualification as comparable with a Norwegian post-secondary education at EQF level 5.

In the Danish educational system, there is no post-secondary non-tertiary area. VET-programs can give access to relevant academy profession programs which are placed at NQF/EQF level 5 and professional bachelor's degree programs which are placed at NQF/EQF level 6. Consequently, the Danish ENIC-NARIC are issuing recognition statements with a descriptive character for the Norwegian and Swedish qualifications at level 5, i.e., Diploma for Tertiary Vocational Education (Vitnemål fra fagskoleutdanning) from Norway and Advanced/Higher Vocational Education Diplomas (Yrkeshögskoleexamen/Kvalificerad Yrkeshögskoleexamen) from Sweden. The recognition statement describes that the qualification is placed between upper secondary education and higher education.

Norwegian 6-months education leading to Diploma for Tertiary Vocational Education (Vitnemål fra fagskoleutdanning) at NKR/EQF level 5 is compared with an education level and not a Swedish Higher Vocational Education Diploma (SeQF 5/EQF 5) since the Swedish program must comprise at least one year of full-time studies. One year or longer Norwegian tertiary vocational education is compared to a Swedish Higher Vocational Education Diploma.

Nordic trade qualifications like Fagbrev and Svennebrev from Norway; Sveinsbréf from Iceland and Svendepøve from Denmark are compared by the Swedish office with a Swedish formal school-based qualification (Vocational Upper Secondary School Qualification) or a Swedish educational level (Swedish vocational education at upper secondary level) and not a Swedish trade certificate since those are issued by actors (Professional organisations) placed outside the Swedish formal education system.

Number of applicants from the Nordic region to the ENIC-NARIC offices

There is a limited number of applicants to all the mentioned Nordic schemes, cf. appendix page 58, from the other Nordic countries. For the time being Nordic qualifications on EQF level 4 does not have an opportunity to be assessed in Norway. The feedback from the Nordic offices is that the recognition assessment of Nordic qualifications does not take up a considerable amount of resources, on either EQF level 3, 4 or 5.

Exemplified outcomes of assessments

The following tables show how qualifications from each Nordic country would be assessed, through the different Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices' recognition schemes. At EQF level 4 the working group have chosen what appears to be one of the more common qualifications across the Nordic countries, which at the same time is not a regulated profession in the majority of the countries. At EQF level 3 and 5, it is the most common, not field-specified, degree/certificate from each country, with the exception of Iceland's qualification at EQF level 3, to give a broader view on the outcomes at this level.

EQF Level 3 qualification

Qualification	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Denmark
	No VET qualifications at EQF level 3	<i>Fish Technician</i>	<i>Practice letter</i> <i>Kompetansebevis for praksisbrevkandidat</i>	No VET-qualifications at EQF level 3	Evidence of training certificate + Journeyman's Certificate <i>Skolebevis + svendebrev</i>
Part of the formal education and training system		Yes	Yes		Yes
Length (years)/Workload		2 years/120 credits	2 år		2-3 years
Work-based learning (WBL)		1 year (60 credits out of 120)	2 years		Approximately 1/3 school-based, 2/3 apprenticeship
Access requirements		Basic education	Basic education		Basic education with a minimum pass grade in Danish and mathematics
Access to further studies			Access to build on the competence to achieve a trade- or journeyman's certificate		Gives access to relevant higher educational programmes (Academy Professions as well as Professional Bachelor's degrees)
Access to the occupation		N/A	Not as a skilled worker. Employers assess the applicant's competence		A qual. worker in their field, when completed. Employers assess the applicant's competence
Finland's assessment		Will issue an advisory statement for his/her qualification to aid the recognition in the labor market. Employers assess the applicant's competence	Will issue an advisory statement for his/her qualification to aid the recognition in the labor market. Employers assess the applicant's competence	N/A	Will issue an advisory statement for his/her qualification to aid the recognition in the labor market. Employers assess the applicant's competence
Iceland's assessment	N/A		Comparable to 2 years lokapróf at level 2 (EQF 3) from Icelandic secondary schools		Comparable to 2 to 3 years lokapróf at level 2 (EQF 3) from Icelandic secondary schools
Norway's assessment	N/A	This is not a qual. that is included in the Norwegian scheme for foreign trade- and journeyman certificates. EQF is used as a guideline for assessment and a qual. at EQF 3 could be assessed if it's considered to be a upper secondary qual. in Iceland.		N/A	Would need more information. EQF is only a guideline for assessment and could therefor be assessed professionally if it is comparable in duration, if it's considered to be upper secondary qualification in Denmark
Sweden's assessment	N/A	A comparison to level not an object. "A Vocational Education on Swedish upper secondary level (SeQF 3)"	A comparison to level not an object. "A Vocational Education on Swedish upper secondary level (SeQF 3)"		A comparison to level not an object. "A Vocational Education on Swedish upper secondary level (SeQF 3)"
Denmark's assessment	N/A	Depending on the specific qualification, the qualification would be comparable in level to 2 years of a Danish VET-program or a short Danish VET-prog.	Depending on the specific qualification, the qualification would be comparable in level to 2 years of a Danish VET-program or a short Danish VET-prog.	N/A	

Overview

Neither in Sweden nor in Finland do vocational qualifications appear at EQF level 3. In Iceland and Denmark, there exists full-fledged vocational qualifications at this level, while in Norway it is considered basic competence, but no qualification. Since Norway only uses the EQF as a guideline in the recognition process, it is still possible for Norway, under given criteria, to assess foreign qualifications that are placed at EQF 3 in their country of origin. Finland and Sweden, which do not have their own qualifications at this level, will still be able to issue a recognition statement to all the other Nordic qualifications at this level, as can Denmark and Iceland.

EQF Level 4 - Vocational qualification as a Cook

	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Denmark
Qualification	Vocational Qualification in Restaurant and Catering Services <i>Ravintola ja cateringalan perustutkinto</i>	Sveinspróf	Upper Secondary Vocational Diploma with a Trade Certificate Vitnemål med yrkeskompetanse Fagbrev som kokk	Upper Secondary Vocational Diploma <i>Yrkesexamen</i> Restaurant Management and Food Programme, Kitchen and serving <i>Restaurang- och livsmedelsprogrammet, Kök och servering</i>	Evidence of training certificate + Journeyman's Certificate <i>Skolebevis + svendebrev</i> Gastronom med speialet som kok (Gourmet specialising as Chef)
Formal education system	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes	Yes
Scope/Duration	3 years / 180 competence points	4 years/290 credits	4 years	3 years/2500 credits (gymnasiepoäng)	4 years and 3 months (4 years and 9 months as EUX)
Work-based learning (WBL)	According to personal competence development plan.	90 credits in school/200 credits work - based learning	2 years (2 years in school and 2 years in apprenticeship)	School-based VET: at least 15% WLB Apprenticeship: at least 50% WLB	Approximately 1/3 school-based, 2/3 apprenticeship
Access requirements	No formal qualifications required	Basic education	Basic education	Basic Education	Basic education, min. pass grade in Danish and math.
Access to further studies	General eligibility for higher education.	General access to higher education.	Briding courses for access to higher education Post – Secondary VET	Conditional. A vocational diploma gives access to higher education if passing grades in the following courses: Swedish, or Swedish as a second language 2 and 3, and English 6.	Access to relevant higher educational programmes If the programme is completed as EUX the it gives general access to higher education.
Access to the occupation	The qualification gives its holder the competences described in the qualification	Yes (regulated profession)	Qualified worker in their field	Qualified worker in their field	Qualified worker in their field
Iceland's assessment	Comparable to 3 years lokapróf at level 3 (EQF 4)		Comparable to 4 years lokapróf at level 3 (EQF 4)	Comparable to 3 years lokapróf at level 3 (EQF 4)	Comparable to 4 years lokapróf at level 3 (EQF 4)
Norway's assessment	Would be refused. The Nordics not included in the scheme			Would be refused. The Nordics not included in the scheme	
Sweden's assessment	The qualification would be comparable to a Swedish Upper Secondary Diploma (<i>Gymnasieexamen</i>), Kitchen and serving within the Restaurant Management and Food Programme.				Se assessment of qual.from the other Nordics
Denmark's assessment	The programme is comparable in level to a Danish vocational education and training as Gourmet specialising as Chef				

Overview

The Norwegian recognition scheme differs from the other schemes, as a cook from all of the Nordic countries will be rejected when applying for recognition at this level, as explained previously in the report. All the other Nordic schemes would accept an application for recognition from a EQF level 4 (from all the Nordic countries) and either issue an advisory statement or a binding recognition statement.

EQF Level 5 - Vocational Qualification

	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Denmark
Qualification	Specialist Vocational Qualification <i>Erikoisammattitutkinto /Specialyrkes examen</i>	Master Craftsperson Certificate <i>Meistarabréf</i>	Diploma for Tertiary Vocational Education <i>Vitnemål fra fagskoleutdanning</i>	Higher Vocational Education Diploma <i>Yrkeshögskoleexamen</i>	Evidence of training certificate + Journeyman's Certificate <i>Skolebevis + svendebrev</i>
Part of the formal ed. system	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Length (years)/Workload	160 -210 competence points	1 yr/60 credits	6 mo. - 2 yrs/30 – 120 stp.	At least 1 year	2 yrs and 6 mo to 6 yrs and 6 mo.
Work-based learning (WBL)	Based on a personal competence development plan.	School based	Varies, often in a combo of ed. and relevant work	WBL min.is not defined in the legislation	Approximately 1/3 school-based, 2/3 apprenticeship
Access requirements	No formal qualifications are required to take the competence test	Sveinspróf - Journeyman's certificate	Upper Secondary Education or equivalent	Upper Secondary Education or eqv.	Basic education with a minimum pass grade in Danish and math.
Access to further studies	General eligibility for higher education	NA	120 stp. is equivalent to general study competence.	No	Access to relevant higher ed. prog. Academy Professions and Prof. BA
Access to the occupation	The qualification gives its holder the competences described in the qualification requirements.	Yes (regulated profession)	Yes	The qualification gives its holder competences in a specific vocational field.	Most qual. are regulated, but otherwise employers will assess the applicant's competence for the position in question themselves
Finland's assessment		Employers assess the applicant's competence for the position in question themselves. The applicant may apply for an advisory statement of their qualification from the Finnish National Agency for Education to aid the recognition of the qualification in the labour market.			
Iceland's assessment	Comparable to 2.5 to 3.5 years lokapróf at level 4 (EQF 5)		Comparable to 0.5 to 2 years lokapróf at level 4 (EQF 5)	Comparable a 1 yr+ lokapróf level 4 (EQF 5)	Need more info on the level in the country of origin
Norway's assessment	Would be recognizes as equivalent with Norwegian EQF 5 qualification/ post-secondary education in level and scope	Equivalent with post – secondary ed. in level and scope. Would have to apply to Mesterbrev -nemnda for recognition as a Master craftsman.		Norwegian post – secondary education in level and scope if the program is accredited	Here we would need more information on the level in the country of origin
Sweden's assessment	Comparable to a Swedish Higher Vocational Education Diploma(EQF 5)				Comparable to a Higher Vocational Education Diploma
Denmark's assessment	If the qualification cannot be directly compared to a VET-Danish qualification, the final assessment will be of a more descriptive character. E.g. <i>The qualification is not comparable to a Danish educational level. The qualification is placed between upper secondary education and higher education.</i>				

Overview

All the Nordic offices will be able to assess qualifications from Nordic countries at this level. When it comes to recognition, EQF is one of many important recognition tools and the educational level is of great importance for both the Icelandic, Danish and Norwegian recognition scheme. The Norwegian office only uses the EQF as a guideline and would have to make sure that this is a qualification placed at a post-secondary level in e.g., the Danish educational system, in order to recognize it. That is also why the Norwegian recognition scheme could make a general assessment of the Icelandic Master Craftsman Certificate, even if the Norwegian Master Craftman's qualification is not part of the Norwegian EQF – system. As in Norway, the Swedish office uses the EQF to determinate the level of the qualification.

For the Swedish office, the position of the foreign qualification in its own education system is crucial. As in Norway, the Swedish office uses the EQF to determinate the level of the qualification. I. Foreign vocational qualifications which are not part of formal education system in the country of original are not compared to a Swedish degree (i.e., Higher Vocational Education Diploma). Non-formal vocational qualifications at level 5 are compared to a “generic” Swedish vocational education at post- secondary level or just to a level in the Swedish National Qualifications Framework (SeQF).

Impact of the recognition schemes

The Nordic offices have different insights and information about if and how their recognition schemes (EQF level 3–5) have benefits for the applicants and or the labor market.

Since the recognition scheme in Norway is relatively new and requires involvement of the social partners it was important to gain information regarding the impact of the recognition scheme, and the possibility to make adjustments.

The evaluation states that the proportion of recognition statements is limited when seen in relation to the volume of the total labor immigration. They found that it would be difficult for the scheme to contribute significantly to the efforts to combat social dumping, labor market crime, unregistered work and other challenges that it was intended to help rectify. At the same time the study found it highly likely that the individuals with approval were to be more attractive in the Norwegian labor market.¹²

The Norwegian office's findings from dialogue with stakeholders at both level 4 and 5 further indicate that there is a need and desire in the industries to have mutual trust in each other's education. That in several industries there is a great need for qualified personnel, both to get public tenders, but just as much to get assignments carried out and not least for the survival of small and protected professions. A common denominator is the need for sufficient information and knowledge about education and the education systems to gain better knowledge and trust. This seems to correspond both with the feedback from the Norwegian stakeholders and the cooperation that already exists to a large extent, especially with in the construction industry¹³

The Swedish ENIC-NARIC is currently developing a survey to gather information about the impact of the recognition assessment for holders with vocational qualifications at level 3, 4 and 5.

¹² <https://www.fao.no/zoo-publikasjoner/summaries/the-approval-scheme-for-foreign-craft-and-journeyman-s-certificates>

¹³ <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1209995/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Nordic agreements that ensure mutual recognition

There are three important agreements when it comes to recognizing education across the Nordic counties:

- Agreement on Nordic educational community at upper secondary level (general upper secondary and vocational schools)
- Agreement concluded by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden on Admission to Higher Education¹⁴
- Nordic Declaration on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education, The Reykjavik Declaration (Revised 2022)

At upper secondary level there is a Nordic agreement that ensures Nordic citizens, who want upper secondary education, access to their legally regulated general and vocational education at upper secondary school level on the same terms as the parties' own citizens.¹⁵

When it comes to access to higher education, the Nordic countries have concluded an agreement¹⁶ which was originally adopted in September 1996. The aim of the mutual agreement is to ensure that the applicants from another Nordic country have a right to apply to higher education in a Nordic country on the same or equivalent terms as the country's own applicants. An applicant who is qualified to apply for admission to higher education in the Nordic country in which he/she is domiciled is also qualified to apply for admission to courses of higher education in the other Nordic countries. The principles for automatic recognition for the purpose of accessing higher education have been previously discussed in the report on automatic recognition in the Nordic region from November 2019¹⁷. However, this does not apply for vocational education without bridging courses or if the qualification does not give general access to higher education.

The Reykjavik Declaration is de facto automatic recognition. It is a legal multilateral agreement that states that higher education qualifications from the region are recognized in the other Nordic countries.

Mobility within the Nordic countries – Status quo

With the focus of the green and digital shift all over Europe and the expected need for skilled workers in all sectors in all the Nordic countries,¹⁸ the working group finds it of great importance to shed light on the mobility that exists between the countries as of today.

By examining this, the working group found that the number of applications across national borders is relatively low on all levels (TVET and VET). The reason for this might vary. Ref. Appendix page...

The Icelandic office's experience is that the applications for recognition are mainly from the public sector, where the salary level is largely determined by the level of education. One plausible explanation why formal

¹⁴ <https://www.norden.org/en/declaration/agreement-concluded-denmark-finland-iceland-norway-and-sweden-admission-higher>

¹⁵ <https://lovdata.no/dokument/TRAKTAT/traktat/2004-11-03-104>

Agreement concluded by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden on Admission to Higher Education: <https://www.norden.org/en/declaration/agreement-concluded-denmark-finland-iceland-norway-and-sweden-admission-higher>

¹⁷ Automatic recognition in the Nordic Region. A policy paper initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers on ways forward to implement automatic recognition of qualifications among the Nordic countries. 2019. (<https://norrpic.org/wp-content/uploads/Automatic-Recognition-in-the-Nordic-region.pdf>)

¹⁸ https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf

recognition is not sought in the private job market may be the fact that companies hire people who will receive equal wages if they turn out to be skilled workers.

There are examples of both informal and formal agreements in the working life, ref. the agreement between the social partners in Norway and Sweden within construction - and civil engineering¹⁹. This is an agreement, renegotiated every second year, built on many years of experience and mutual trust. This ensures equal opportunities across these two countries. The feedback from Norwegian social partners is that this is a well-functioning agreement.

A number of trade unions in Norway have established better salary conditions for those who have been given approval by the Norwegian ENIC--NARIC office or who are given equal status in the Norwegian-Swedish agreement in addition to Nordic building and construction workers who are employed by Statsbygg²⁰. Some study programs at EQF level 5 are subject to international regulation and certification. An applicant with maritime education from one Nordic country will be endorsed by The Norwegian Maritime Authority.²¹

These are just a few examples on how mobility between the Nordic countries is facilitated. There might be several other both formal and informal channels and tools that help ensure smooth mobility and access to the labour market between the Nordic countries, but it is outside the remit of this working group to examine this further. However, previous studies on border barriers show that industry regulations contribute to a stronger border barrier than government regulations²². Furthermore, in the feedback from the Norwegian vocational councils, lack of knowledge about the VET and TVET education system in the other Nordic countries was reported as a major obstacle for mobility. With these factors in mind, it might be fair to assume that access to the labour market may differ across the Nordic region.

¹⁹ https://www.byggbranschensyrkesnamnd.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SV_Avtalet-omsesidigt-erkannande-2008.pdf

²⁰ <https://dok.statsbygg.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/reviderteSeriositetsbestemmelser2019.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.sdir.no/veiledninger/godkjenning-av-utenlandske-sertifikater-for-maritimt-personell-pa-norske-skip>

²² <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1209995/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Explore the findings

Nordic network on recognition on VET/TVET – EQF level 3, 4 and 5

The mandate and the organisation of the recognition schemes are different in the Nordic countries. It is difficult to point out external members outside the NORRIC offices that could be part of a Nordic network, at least at this point. However, the working group suggest to re - establish a permanent group in the Nordic ENIC-NARIC network focused on recognition of VET qualifications. The group would consist of representatives from each of the Nordic offices working with VET/ TVET qualifications. The heads at the Nordic offices will be responsible for the continuation of the network. The group would meet regularly, for example twice a year, to exchange information and share best practices in recognition of VET qualifications. Similar groups already exist within the Nordic network with different topics e.g., the Nordic group on recognition of teacher qualification and the Nordic information group. These could be used as an example when establishing the group.

The Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices cooperate actively in order to improve quality and efficiency in recognition work. Through such cooperation, each national office benefits from information available in other countries and gains inspiration from how other offices work. Nordic offices cooperate and share best practices, for example concerning specific countries and regions.

The role as information providers

Strengthening the cooperation and information exchange between the offices would also enhance their role as information providers. Information is given both to individuals and stakeholders, such as employers, higher education institutions and other educational institutions. The aim is to support mutual recognition of the level of the qualifications. According to the feedback the offices have received, their role is highly valued.

The working group considers that provision of information could be further developed, to strengthen the mutual trust and recognition of vocational qualifications completed in the Nordic countries. This can be done at both national and Nordic level, taking the national recognition systems and the needs of the relevant stakeholders into consideration.

Possibilities for further collaboration

The working group will also explore the possibility to follow the work being done in connection with ReferNet. ReferNet is a network of institutions that provide information regarding national vocational education and training (VET) systems and policies in the EU and EEA countries. The national partners offer first-hand information on VET's role, purpose, governance and structure, insights into developments and trends in VET policies, and in-depth analysis of how each country is progressing in its implementation of common European policy objectives. The network produces a large amount of information which is frequently updated. Products include a database with an overview of national VET systems and the most common VET qualifications.

As a reliable information provider, it can be useful for the Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices to be informed on development in this area. The working group also suggests that the Nordic group on VET/TVET establish a cooperation with Gränshinderrådet, a Nordic cooperation promoting a more open Nordic Region, where it is possible to study and run a business across national borders, which is established by the Nordic Council of Ministers. This is because Gränshinderrådet is focusing on recognizing vocational qualifications within the region. It might be useful to cooperate more closely regarding this topic.

Findings and recommendations

The organization of vocational education and training (VET) varies in the Nordic countries. The mandates for the different recognition schemes are not identical, and variation exists in the involvement of stakeholders.

The working group has understood the mandate from the Nordic Council of Ministers as a desire to explore the possibilities for mutual recognition of VET – qualifications at EQF – level 3–5.²³ This could give a Nordic skilled worker (EQF level 3–5) equal access to further education in another Nordic country, on the same terms as the given Nordic country's own citizens. Mutual recognition of the level of a VET-qualification could strengthen the opportunities to access further vocational or higher education studies, within the Nordic region and potentially also contribute to meeting the need for trust in Nordic qualifications in the Nordic labor market, without affecting employers' professional autonomy.

The working group considers it to be important that the principles of the Nordic agreement on access to higher education is expanded to cover vocational qualifications as well. However, because the examination has uncovered such a large difference in how the various countries involve the social partners and stakeholders in the recognition scheme that this might be premature. Furthermore, the mandate for recognition of qualifications on EQF level 3–5 is distributed between different authorities in the different countries, so that any further work along this line would have to be carried out with a much broader composed working group. It is up to the Nordic Council of Ministers to decide if further work along these lines should be initiated.

The working group's soft recommendation is that the Nordic ENIC-NARIC offices emphasize the focus on Nordic network and strengthen the role as information providers. With this, build on the cooperation between Nordic ENIC - NARIC offices regarding recognition of qualifications on EQF levels 3 - 5, and explore the possibility of creating a NORRIC information platform for these qualification levels. A common NORRIC information platform may to some extent reduce the impact of the different schemes

The working group further recommends that automatic recognition of the educational level of Nordic VET is explored further, but that this should have to be investigated with the relevant stakeholders respecting the national contexts.

²³ <https://www.norden.org/en/declaration/agreement-concluded-denmark-finland-iceland-norway-and-sweden-admission-higher>

Appendix

Definitions

Mutual recognition

It is a goal for the Nordic countries to facilitate the immediate recognition of vocational qualifications and education, as far as possible, in the other Nordic countries. This is desirable as part of creating a common Nordic labor market and enable mobility of knowledge²⁴

Mutual recognition of vocational qualifications and education will enable a qualification obtained in one Nordic country, to be automatically recognized in another Nordic country, but without the formal process of applying for equality.

Upper secondary

UNESCO: *Upper secondary education programs* are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education or provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Programs at this level offer students more varied, specialized and in-depth content than programs at lower secondary education level. They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available.

Post-secondary

UNESCO's definition of **post-secondary, non-tertiary education** as part of its ISCED classification is "Post-secondary non-tertiary education provides learning experiences building on secondary education, preparing for labor market entry as well as tertiary education. It aims at the individual acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies lower than the level of complexity characteristic of tertiary education."

Regulated vs. nonregulated

The European Commission's definition of a **regulated profession** is: "A professional activity or group of professional activities, access to which, the pursuit of which, or one of the modes of pursuit of which is subject, directly or indirectly, by virtue of legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to the possession of specific professional qualifications."

VET and TVET

From UNESCO: **Vocational education and training (VET)**: Education and training which aim to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competencies required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labor market." Their definition of **Vocational education** is "Education program that are designed for learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies specific to a particular occupation, trade, or class of occupations or trades. Vocational education may have work-based components (e.g., apprenticeships, dual-system education programs). Successful completion of such programs leads to labor market-relevant vocational qualifications acknowledged as occupationally oriented by the relevant national authorities and/or the labor market." **Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)**: "A range of learning experiences that are relevant for employability, portability of competencies and qualifications and recognition of skills, decent work opportunities and lifelong learning in and related to the world of work. The concept embraces the importance of innovation, competitiveness, productivity and the growth of the economy, considering that innovation creates new employment opportunities and also requires new approaches to education and training to meet the demand for new skills. The learning experiences may

²⁴ [Norden som verdens mest bærekraftige og integrerte region – Handlingsplan 2021–2024](#), page 16.

occur in a variety of learning contexts, including private and public training institutions, workplaces and informal learning places.” Furthermore, UNESCO adds a definition to Technical and vocational education (TVE): “A comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Technical and vocational education is further understood to be: (a) an integral part of general education; (b) a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work; (c) an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship; (d) an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development; (e) a method of facilitating poverty alleviation.”²⁵

²⁵ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000223059>
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory/european-inventory-glossary>
https://ec.europa.eu/immigration/glossary_en
<https://web.archive.org/web/20210401144041/>
<http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/isced-4-post-secondary-non-tertiary-education>
https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/regulated-profession_en

Nordic VET/TVET systems

Iceland

The education system in Iceland entails pre-school (leikskóli), compulsory education (a single structure primary and lower secondary school structure, grunnskóli), secondary education including VET (framhaldsskóli: upper and post - secondary education institutions), and higher education (háskóli).

EQF level 3 and 4 (Upper secondary) VET

EQF level 3 and 4 education (either general or vocational) is steered by the state. 23 of the 38 upper/post - secondary schools offer VET programs. Study programs vary in length from one school year to four years of combined school and workplace training. All upper EQF level 3 and 4 schools have “school curricula” where education aims, intended learning outcomes, assessment, content and the connections between these elements are listed.

Governance

The Ministry of Education and Children and the Directorate of Education is responsible for the EQF level 3 and 4 VET-system in Iceland.

New VET study programs are proposed by the upper/post - secondary schools, in cooperation with the occupational councils in the case of regulated professions (the occupational councils are composed of representatives of the relevant social partners, i.e., trade unions and employers’ associations and professional associations). The initiative often comes from the occupational councils that also define the quality, competences, skills and knowledge requirements as well as work descriptions. The directorate of education liaises between the two and the education ministry, which approves new study programs.

The role of the Occupational Council is (among other duties) to advise the Minister of Education and Children, and to provide opinion on the categorisation and division of occupations between the twelve Occupational Councils.

Stakeholders and social partners

The stakeholders in Iceland are the schools, public institutions, Iðan, Rafmennt, Menntamálastofun, Embætti landlæknis and the occupational councils.

Menntamálastofnun (Directorate of Education) is responsible for recognition of regulated VET qualifications for all VET professions apart from Health professions and Aviation and Sailing. Applicants apply to IÐAN Education Centre except for professional recognition in regulated professions, and in the case of Electrical professions, they apply to Rafmennt (Rafmennt Electrical VET Centre). IÐAN and Rafmennt process the applications and their experts evaluate the education.

The 12 occupational councils may be recognition to Iðan, Rafmennt and Menntamálastofun when it comes to professional recognition in their respective regulated professions.

Embætti Landlæknis (Directorate of Health) is responsible for recognition of VET qualifications within the field of regulated health professions.

Main vocational models

Almost all initial VET in Iceland is in certified trades and built on an apprenticeship system, where most of the education takes place in school, but workplace training is also often part of the education. The duration of the time spent in school and the time spent at the workplace varies between programs and branches. In addition, there are a small number of VET programs where all the education and training take place in school and are not certified trades, such as in computer technology and various arts.

The most common duration of VET studies in certified trades is four years.

EQF level 5 (Post-secondary VET)

Governance

EQF level 5 (Post – secondary, non-tertiary) education is steered by the state. Study programs may vary in length. All secondary schools have “school curricula” where education aims, intended learning outcomes, assessment, content and the connections between these elements are listed. EQF level 5 as well as EQF level 3 and 4 programs are required to be certified by the Directorate of Education.

Social partners and stakeholders

EQF level 5 study programs, in all trades, are developed in cooperation with the social partners of each branch, e through twelve occupational councils and new programs are later proposed by the secondary schools.

Main vocational models

VET at EQF level 5 is offered in a limited number of specialties (e.g. tour guides and masters of crafts) and is mostly composed of master of crafts’ programs where a journeyman’s certificate (in the relevant study program such as electrical, building or mechanical studies) is a prerequisite for enrolment.

CVET in Iceland

Further education (CVET) is defined as any kind of study, resources and advice intended to meet the needs of individuals through short formal schooling, which is not organized on the basis of the law on secondary schools or universities.

Education providers or other professionals deemed suitable by the Ministry of Education and Culture can apply for certification of CVET curricula/course descriptions to the Directorate of Education.

Denmark

In Denmark pupils can apply for admission to a general secondary school (gymnasiale uddannelser) and vocational education and training (erhvervsuddannelser) after attending compulsory ten-year community school (folkeskole). In Denmark around 20 percent of the students completing basic compulsory school continue to vocational education and training programs (VET programs).

VET programs qualify students for entry into the labor market as skilled workers and can qualify students for admission to specific higher education programs at NQF/EQF level 5 or 6. The VET system in Denmark includes more than 100 main study programs leading to almost 300 different qualifications.

Vocational education and training at NQF/EQF level 3–5

The upper-secondary vocational education and training system in Denmark is roughly divided into short and regular vocational qualifications. The duration varies from 2 to 5½ years, but most programs have a duration between 3 to 4 years. The qualifications are primarily placed at levels 3 and 4, but also a few exist at level 5 in the NQF/EQF.

One of the cornerstones of Danish vocational education is the principle of alternating between school and practical learning in an apprenticeship throughout the entire VET program. Normally, 1/3 of the time is spent at a vocational school and 2/3 of the time is spent on practical training in an approved company or organization. The structure of the VET programs is divided into a basic program consisting of two basic courses (grundforløb, GF1+GF2) and a dual main program (hovedforløb). As a general rule of thumb, the length of the two basic courses are 20 weeks each. The main program is typically organized as 4 or 5 periods alternating between school-based education and training in a workplace. The main program requires an

apprenticeship contract with either a company or a vocational school that is recognized by the social partners as a training company or institution. The final exam, which is usually a combination of theoretical and practical exams (svendep prøve), leads to a training certificate (skolebevis) as well as a journeyman's certificate (svendebrev) upon successful completion. VET programs are most often offered by vocational technical colleges, business colleges and social and healthcare colleges.

The VET qualifications are placed within the following four main subject areas:

- Care, health and educational theory
- Administration, commerce and business service
- Technology, construction and transport
- Food, agriculture and leisure industry

Admission to vocational education and training is based on the completion of compulsory education and a school-leaving certificate (folkeskolens 9.-klasseprøve) with a mark of at least 02 in Danish and Mathematics.

All VET-programs are described by using learning outcomes but not with ECVET or similar credits.

The Danish VET system also offers a VET program combining general upper secondary education and VET (eux) which both qualifies students for a job and gives them general access to higher education, i.e., leading to a journeyman's certificate as well as the general upper secondary certificate.

Following a regular vocational education and training program, students can apply for admission to a relevant professional bachelor's program (professionsbacheloruddannelse) or academy profession program (erhvervsakademiuddannelse). Both educational pathways are within the higher education area and are regulated in the Law of Vocational Academy Education and Vocational Bachelor Education (Bekendtgørelse af lov om erhvervsakademiuddannelser og professionsbacheloruddannelse) of December 10, 2019. Consequently, there is no post-secondary non-tertiary area in the Danish education system. The academy profession programs are placed at NQF/EQF level 5 and the professional bachelor's degree programs are placed at NQF/EQF level 6.

Upper secondary VET Governance and stakeholders

The parliament sets out the overall framework for VET which is administered by the Ministry of Children and Education (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet). The ministry has parliamentary, financial and legal responsibility for VET. Hence, laying down the overall objectives for programs and providing the legislative framework within which stakeholders (including social partners, colleges, enterprises, students and teachers) can adapt curricula and methodologies to labor market needs and students. The ministry is responsible for ensuring that VET programs have the breadth required for a youth education program and for allocating resources.

Even though the Ministry of Children and Education has the general responsibility for VET, the social partners (including e.g., trade committees (Faglige udvalg)) also have considerable influence on and great responsibility for VET in regard to duration, structure, learning outcomes, approval of practical training companies as well as complaints regarding school decisions on student admission and dismissal of the school-based part of the course. The ministry determines the legislative framework on the basis of recommendations of the social partners. The social partners are thus responsible for ensuring that the provision of VET is in line with the needs of the labor market.

Faroe Island

Short summary

Introduction

The educational system of the Faroe Islands has a close link to the Danish educational system. The primary and secondary school comprises 9-10 years of schooling which gives access to 3 years of upper secondary school and different VET-programs. The completed VET-programs can give access to Academy Programs and later Diploma Programs in the Faroe Islands.

One of the main differences from the Danish VET-system is that regular Faroese VET-programs are required to include an apprenticeship agreement. The programs that require an apprenticeship agreement are administered by Yrkisdepilin (www.yrkisdepilin.fo). These are the programs where the social partners own a part of the program. A full list of VET-programs can be found at Yrkisdepilins webpage. These are the programs where the social partners own a part of the program. A full list of VET-programs can be found at Yrkisdepilins webpage.

In addition to the regular VET-programs, there are two types of school-based vocational qualifications which do not require apprenticeship agreements. The first type of school-based qualification includes a placement period, which is administered by the school. Programs within Social- and Healthcare are examples of vocational school-based programs that are not qualified as VET-programs in the Faroe Islands. The Social and Health Care programs are solely administered by the schools including the administration of training places and the issuing of the final diploma.

The second type is also school-based, but after the school period has ended, the student has to complete a practical part in order to receive the final diploma. These types of school-based vocational programs are most commonly maritime programs.

School-based practical learning (skolepraktik) is not an option and is not approved in the Faroe Islands.

VET-qualifications in the Faroe Islands in numbers

Approximately 70 VET-qualifications are approved in the Faroe Islands. 12 of these can be completed with school-attendance at the Faroe Islands, while the rest of the VET-qualifications are completed with school-attendance at a Danish school. All the 70 programs are regarded as Faroese even though the program is completed at a Danish school. All the programs require a Faroese apprenticeship agreement and the final journeyman's certificate (svendebrev) is issued in Faroese language.

The length of the programs varies from 2 years and 6 months to 5 years and 6 months. Most qualifications have a duration of 4 years, which are divided into $\frac{1}{3}$ of school-attendance and $\frac{2}{3}$ of apprenticeship.

The proportion of the student population that begins a VET-qualification is currently at 50% per year.

The Faroese VET-programs can be divided in the following main vocational areas:

- Construction
- Food
- Resources and Nature
- Technology and Manufacturing
- Office and Commerce
- Leisure Industry and Service

VET Governance and stakeholders

The VET-system in the Faroe Islands is inspired by the Danish model, however changes have occurred throughout the years, so today there are differences in the two national systems.

The Trade Board and the Trade Committee are constituted by social partners. The two authorities give recommendations for decisions to the Minister regarding changes in the VET-qualifications. It is rare that changes in the VET system will be implemented without the approval of both authorities. An example of the recommendations for decisions from the Trade Board is closure of old VET-programs or establishment of new VET-programs. Changes in the professional content - both the school-based part and in the practical training in a company is within the responsibility of the Trade Committee. Furthermore, the Trade Committee is responsible for approving companies as training places, approving new apprenticeship agreements, handling applications due to changes in the apprenticeship agreement as well as to issue the final journeyman's certificates. Yrkisdepilin acts as secretariat for the social partners in the Trade Board and the Trade Committee and practically, it is the Yrkisdepilin that handles most of the tasks for the Trade Committee.

Originally there were many trade committees, however in 2007 it was decided to merge all the trade committees into one. Now, the Trade Committee makes use of professional specialists, when decisions are made outside their area of expertise.

Most typical upper – secondary VET-qualifications

VET-qualifications with the highest number of students from 2018–2022

1. Tømrer (Carpenter)
2. Salg og handel (Sales and Commerce)
3. Maskinsmed (Machinist)
4. Elektriker (Electrician)
5. Kontor (Office)
6. Gastronom - kok (Cook)
7. Automekaniker (Car Mechanic)
8. Frisør (Hairdresser)
9. Rørsmed og blikkenslager (Metalworker specialising in Industrial and Plumbing Pipes)
10. Receptionist (Receptionist)

Greenland

Short summary

Vocational training falls under the Greenland Self-Government's Department of Education and is regulated via the Act on vocational training.

Greenland's vocational training system is in most areas similar to the Danish vocational training system, and the two systems are in reality partially merged, as certain Greenlandic vocational training courses are completed in whole or in part at Danish vocational schools. With exception of education programs with a specific Greenlandic/Arctic profile (e.g., snowmobile mechanic), the competence targets are largely identical to the corresponding Danish qualifications, and Greenlandic vocational education qualifications are routinely equated with the Danish. In many cases, Danish examiners are systematically used for the final exams (e.g., on electrician training).

The Greenlandic vocational education system consists of basic education and continuing education courses. The basic training courses last from 5 months (maritime training) to 5 years (electrician training), and are in most cases structured as exchange courses, where the course alternates between school stays and

internships in a public or private company (apprenticeships). In most cases, the internship periods make up between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total length of the education, but there are large differences between the various educations.

However, in contrast to the Danish programs, it is (in principle) not possible to start on one exchange-based vocational training in Greenland without having signed a training agreement with a corporation.

Upper secondary vocational education and training

As in Denmark, the Greenlandic vocational education alternates between school and practical training in an apprenticeship throughout the entire VET program. The majority of the VET-programs comprise practical training in an approved company or organization.

A vocational program is oriented towards a particular trade or profession, which the student, after completing the program, will be capable of entering without further study. Some vocational programs take place exclusively in Greenland, while others involve periods of school attendance in Denmark. To enter VET programs, pupils must sign an apprenticeship contract with either a company or a vocational school that is recognized by the social partners as a training company or institution. The final exam, which is usually a combination of theoretical and practical exams (*svendep prøve*), leads to a training certificate (*skolebevis*) as well as a journeyman's certificate (*svendebrev*) upon completion.

A wide range of programs are available across eight study areas:

- Nutrition and foodstuffs
- Fishing and maritime
- Crafts and mechanics
- Office and commercial
- Art and culture
- Pedagogy and health
- Transport and technology
- Tourism and agriculture

The Greenlandic vocational schools are independent institutions that provide a basic program and a dual main program, and in some cases, also special vocational short and medium-term higher education education. The schools have a board that consists of the social partners within the relevant sector, as well as representatives of regional authorities, the students, the school management and the other employees.

There are 6 vocational schools in Greenland, each of which provides education within a special sector/branch, and they are therefore often called branch schools.

Like in Denmark, the parliament in Greenland sets out the overall framework for VET which is administered by the Ministry of (Departementet for Uddannelse). The ministry has parliamentary, financial and legal responsibility for VET. The ministry is responsible for ensuring that VET programs have the breadth required for a youth education program and for allocating resources.

Even though the Ministry of Education has the general responsibility for VET, the social partners (including e.g., trade committees (Bestyrelser) also have great responsibility for VET in regard to duration, structure, learning outcomes, approval of practical training companies as well as complaints regarding school decisions on student admission and dismissal of the school-based part of the course. The ministry determines the legislative framework on the basis of recommendations of the social partners. The social partners are thus responsible for ensuring that provision of VET is in line with the needs of the labor market.

Most typical VET-qualifications in Greenland in terms of graduates from 2018-2021, data from Uddannelsestøtteregisteret				
Qualifications	2018	2019	2020	2021
TNI Kontor (TNI Office)	46	31	37	47
TNI dagligvarehandel (TNI Grocery Sector)	12	6	14	16
Socialhjælper (Social Helper)	36	28	27	41
Sundhedshjælper (Healthcare Helper)	24	13	12	24
Sundhedsassistent (Healthcare Assistant)	10	16	10	12
Tømrer (Carpenter)	23	22	18	18
Automekaniker (Car Mechanic)	7	5	12	9
Vodbinder (Dragnet Manufacturer)	11	4	6	10
Marine- og snescootermekaniker (Marine and Snowscooter Mechanic)	6	3	8	7
Havne- og lufthavnsterminalarbejder (Dock and Airport Terminal Worker)	17	15	15	13
Ernæringsassistent (Health Care Cook)	5	4	11	12

Finland

After attending a nine-year compulsory basic education, pupils can either obtain a vocational qualification or attend a three-year general upper-secondary education. In Finland, around half of the students completing basic education continue to vocational education and training (VET). Both vocational education and training and general upper-secondary education give general eligibility for higher education studies, either at universities or universities of applied sciences. There are currently approximately 160 vocational qualifications.

Prospective students can apply to VET programmes whenever suitable and start their studies flexibly throughout the year. National joint application is organized each spring for those who have completed basic education and who do not have a secondary qualification. The aim is to ensure each young person a student place after basic education.

EQF 3–5 Vocational education and training

The qualifications structure in vocational education and training comprises three types of qualifications: vocational upper secondary qualification (ammattillinen perustutkinto / yrkesinriktad grundexamen), further

vocational qualification (ammattitutkinto / yrkesexamen) and specialist vocational qualification (erikoisammattitutkinto /specialyrkesexamen). Vocational upper secondary qualifications and further vocational qualifications are on EQF level 4, and the specialist vocational qualifications are on EQF level 5.

All of the VET qualifications mentioned here are composed of units of learning outcomes. Vocational qualifications consist of vocational units and common units. Further and specialist qualifications comprise only vocational units and the necessity for common units is assessed when preparing the personal competence development plan.

Vocational units are either compulsory or optional. Students can complete entire qualifications, parts of them or smaller units, or combine parts of different qualifications based on their needs. Competence requirements are the same in all learning environments, also in workplaces. Qualifications are the same for young people and adults.

Vocational qualifications are independent of the way the vocational skills have been acquired. They can be completed through school-based VET or as competence-based qualifications. VET is organized mainly in institutions (on-the-job learning included) or as apprenticeship training. As long as the individual learner's competences meet the national qualification requirements, they can be acquired in different learning environments and ways, at different times. Students demonstrate their skills in competence demonstrations at practical work.

A personal competence development plan is drawn up for each student. The plan is drawn up by a teacher or a guidance counsellor together with the student and, when applicable, representative of working life.

The plan charts and recognises the skills previously acquired by the student and outlines what kind of competences the student needs and how they will be acquired in different learning environments. Students may have obtained relevant skills from working life, another school, international study, work placement periods, family and leisure activities or through the media. Previous learning is recognised and only the missing skills are acquired.

The plan also includes information on the necessary supportive measures. The support received by a student may involve special teaching and studying arrangements due to learning difficulties, injury or illness, or studies that support study abilities.

A holder of a vocational upper secondary qualification has broad-based basic vocational skills to work in different tasks in the field as well as more specialised competence and the vocational skills required in work life in at least one section of the field. A holder of a further vocational qualification has vocational skills that meet the needs of working life and that are more advanced or more specialised than those acquired in the vocational upper secondary qualification. A holder of a specialist vocational qualification has vocational skills that meet the needs of working life and that are highly advanced or multidisciplinary.

Governance

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the strategic and normative steering of VET as well as leading national development. The Government Program and other strategies provide the overall policy framework for this work. The national objectives of VET, the structure of the vocational qualifications and the core/common units included in them are determined by Parliament or the Government. The Parliament decides on the legislation and the annual budget allocations to VET. The Government also makes decisions on the structure of vocational qualifications.

The Ministry of Education and Culture prepares legislation related to VET and steers, regulates, finances and monitors the industry. The Ministry of Education and Culture also determines the vocational qualifications and their scope.

The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) prepares the national qualification requirements for vocational qualifications and preparatory education and training for VET. The national qualification requirements describe the vocational skills requirements of qualifications and units and the methods and criteria to assess learning outcomes.

Stakeholders and social partners

Close cooperation with the working life at national, regional and education provider level is a significant part of the quality assurance of VET. Working life representatives participate in the anticipation of learning and education needs and the development of vocational qualifications as well as the preparation of plans for the implementation of education providers' competence assessments. They also take part in preparing students' personal competence development plans, implementing education at workplace and assessing competence demonstrations. Moreover, the feedback collected from working life is part of the VET funding system, providing information also for developing quality.

Working life committees play a key role in the quality assurance of VET. They participate in ensuring the quality of the implementation of competence demonstrations and competence assessment as well as developing the VET qualifications structure and qualification requirements. They also process rectification requests concerning the assessment of students' competence.

The network of vocational education and training providers have an essential role in implementing VET and ensuring the quality of training and qualifications. The Ministry of Education and Culture grants licenses to provide vocational education and training. The license determines the educational task of the education provider and ensures that education providers meet the preconditions for providing high-quality qualifications and education. The license covers VET provided to both young people and adults. The license entitles the organization to provide education required for completing vocational qualifications, to organize competence demonstrations and to grant qualifications.

Within the limits of their license, education providers decide independently on the allocation of the education they offer, and how and in which educational institutions and learning environments the education is organized. Education providers also decide how they are profiled based on different fields or customer groups and what kind of staff they have.

Åland

Short summary

The autonomous Åland has its own education legislation.

The Åland education system consists of:

- Childcare and early childhood education
- Comprehensive education
- Upper-secondary education: general upper-secondary education, or vocational upper-secondary education with comprehensive school as a basis, given within Ålands gymnasium (Åland upper-secondary school)
- Higher education (university of applied sciences education and courses) with upper secondary education as a basis, given at the Högskolan på Åland
- Adult education is offered at upper-secondary and higher education level.

Upper secondary education in Åland

The upper secondary education is provided by Ålands gymnasium at the schools Ålands lyceum and Ålands yrkesgymnasium. Ålands lyceum is a general upper secondary education institution. Completed studies

provide an upper-secondary qualification (allmänbildande gymnasieexamen). It includes an upper-secondary school certificate (gymnasieexamensbetyg) and a matriculation examination certificate (studentexamensbetyg). The qualification provides general eligibility for higher education studies.

Ålands yrkesgymnasium (Åland's Upper Secondary Vocational School) offers vocational upper-secondary education in several different vocational programs. Completed studies leads to an upper-secondary qualification with vocational direction (gymnasieexamen med yrkesinriktning). It includes an upper-secondary school certificate (gymnasiebetyg) and a certificate of skills demonstration (yrkesprovsbetyg).

The vocational programs prepare graduates to independently practice a profession or to continue on to higher education studies. The gymnasieexamen med yrkesinriktning provides general eligibility for further studies within universities of applied sciences and universities.

Apprenticeship

Vocational qualifications can also be completed by means of an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are based on a fixed-term employment relationship between an employer and a student, during which the student receives on-the-job training.

Most popular qualifications 2020

Below you can find a list of the qualifications with most graduates in 2020 in Åland.

Närvårdare	20
Företagsekonomi	21
Hotell- och restaurang, inr. Kock	16
Elteknik	14
VVS-montör / Husteknik	12
Samhällelig och social sektor	12
Fordons- och transportteknik	11
Informations- och kommunikationsteknik	10
Sjöfart, Fartygselektriker	8
Sjöfart, Däcks- och maskinreparatör	8
Sjöfart, Vaktstyrman	7
Hotell- och restaurang, servitör	4
Byggteknik	3

Sweden

Government regulated formal VET is provided at EQF level 4, 5 and 6 in Sweden. After ten years of compulsory school, students have the right to proceed to one of the twelve vocational programs (yrkesprogram) or to one of the six HE preparatory programs (högskoleförberedande program) in the upper secondary school (gymnasieskola) placed at SeQF/EQF level 4. At post-secondary level, there are higher vocational programs (yrkeshögskoleutbildningar) leading to VET qualifications placed at SeQF/EQF levels 5 and 6.

On completion of upper secondary VET some industries require a so called 'completing-education period' (*färdigutbildning*) before the person can take a journeyman examination (*gesällprov*) or a trade certificate (*yrkesbevis*). This period consists of a work placement or apprenticeship. Duration varies depending on the profession but can be up to five years.

Many other actors provide both initial and continuing VET. This includes non-formal education arranged by private companies and labor market partners, supplementary education, and programs offered by folk high schools (Folkhögskolan).

EQF 3–4 (Upper Secondary Vocational Education)

Upper secondary vocational programs last three years and are offered in the form of school-based VET (skolförlagd utbildning) and apprenticeships (lärlingsutbildning). Upon successful completion of the vocational course graduates are awarded an upper secondary vocational diploma (Yrkesexamen). The main difference between these two programs is the proportion of work-based learning (WBL). Whereas apprentices need a minimum of 50% of WBL, school-based learners have a minimum of 15 weeks (approximately 15%) of WBL. Diploma goals, subject syllabuses, and orientations as well as the admission and diploma requirements are the same in both paths.

Governance, stakeholders, and social partners in Upper secondary VET

The Ministry of Education and Research (Utbildningsdepartementet) is responsible for the Government's education and research policies. The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) is responsible for upper secondary school (gymnasieskola) and the municipal adult education (kommunernas vuxenutbildning). The core content is nationally determined by the Government. However, there is scope for flexibility and local adaptation.

For each secondary vocational program there is a national program council (Nationella programråd) with a broad cross-section of industry representatives and social partners in the vocational area for which the program provides education and training. One of the tasks of each program council is to advise and support the National Agency for Education in relation to the adaptation, development, and modernization of the supply of education and the content of upper secondary vocational education. The program councils fulfil a consultative function and can suggest revisions but are not decision-making bodies.

At local level, there must be one or several local program councils (Lokala programråd) for cooperation between school and working life; they cover all vocational programs in every upper secondary school.

Regarding design and provision of apprenticeships, social partners are less involved than many countries offering apprenticeship and the role of the school is stronger. The school is responsible for matching the student to the employer and for ensuring that students receive relevant WBL experience.

Most typical EQF level 4 qualifications (upper secondary VET-qualifications)

The most common VET qualifications at upper secondary level are the Upper Secondary Vocational Diploma (Yrkesexamen). Programs in building and construction; electricity and energy; and vehicle and transport enroll the largest share of VET students. The scope of the courses is defined by upper secondary credits (gymnasiepoäng). A student enrolled in an upper secondary program must accumulate 2 500 upper secondary credits. Passing grades in Swedish or Swedish as a second language, English, mathematics, and a diploma project are required. In the three-year lasting VET programs 1600 credits are allocated to courses in vocational subjects. EQF 5 (Post - secondary VET)

Government regulated formal VET at EQF level 5 (and 6) is provided at Higher vocational education (Yrkeshögskolan) in Sweden. Higher Vocational Education is a post-secondary form of education that combines theoretical and practical studies in close cooperation with employers and industry. Programs at these levels have a strong emphasis on workplace training (Lärande i arbetslivet – LIA). After graduating students are qualified to go straight into employment.

Governance, stakeholders, and social partners in Higher Vocational Education

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) is the responsible authority for Higher Vocational Education (Yrkeshögskolan) in Sweden.

Programs in higher vocational education must correspond to the needs of the labor market. For this reason, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education analyses and collects information about the skills in short supply in different industries and regions. The information is then used, together with the VET provider's application, as a basis for assessing the programs that are to be available in higher vocational education. External stakeholders such as employers and industry organizations, as well as central and regional authorities, also play an important contributory role in supplying information to the assessment and decision-making processes.

The Labor Market Council (Arbetsmarknadsråd) is a special body linked to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. The task of the council is to support the agency with information about the labor market: the vocational areas under development, the new qualifications that may be required, and the qualifications that need to be phased out.

Higher Vocational Education Diploma (*Yrkeshögskoleexamen*)

Higher VET-graduates receive a Higher Vocational Education Diploma (*Yrkeshögskoleexamen*) if they have received at least the lowest passing grade in all courses of the program, knowledge, skills, and competences at EQF level 5 (SeQF Level 5) and has accumulated at least 200 higher vocational education credits (*yrkeshögskolepoäng*). The qualification requires at least 1 year of full-time study.

Advanced Higher Vocational Education Diploma (*Kvalificerad yrkeshögskoleexamen*)

Graduates receive an Advanced Higher Vocational Education Diploma (*Kvalificerad yrkeshögskoleexamen*) if they have received at least the lowest passing grade in all courses included in the program, has attained knowledge, skills, and competences at a EQF level 6 (SeQF Level 6), have accumulated at least 400 higher vocational education credits and have completed a diploma project. A minimum of 25% workplace training must also have been included in the program. The qualification requires at least 2 years of full-time study.

Higher vocational education programs are available in 16 occupational fields, including construction, finance, administration, sales, ICT, tourism, healthcare, agriculture, media, design, engineering, and manufacturing. The programs that have the highest number of applicants per study place are train driver followed by dental nurse, healthcare administrator and accountant. Since higher vocational education is tailored to suit an evolving marketplace situation, programs and specializations change over time. New programs start and old programs cease as the labor market changes.

Norway

After completing 10 years of primary school, students continue their education at secondary school (videregående skole). Everyone has the right to at least three years of upper secondary education.

EQF 3 and 4 (Upper secondary VET)

Governance, Stakeholders and social partners

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for all areas of education, including vocational training. It defines the external framework, structures and curricula. Municipalities and regions can adapt the centrally developed curricula to local needs. The vocational training committees in the administrative districts monitor the quality of the training as well as the technical and journeyman examinations which are carried out by the examination committees. At upper secondary level, Norway has a long-standing tradition of close national and regional cooperation between education authorities and the social partners. National cooperation is organized in the National Council for VET (Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring – SRY), nine

vocational training councils (Faglige råd), one for each program area, and national appeal boards (Klagenemnder). Regional cooperation involves county vocational training boards (Yrkesopplæringsnemnder) and examination boards (Prøvenemnder).²⁶

Social partner representatives from business, industry and the public sector hold the majority of seats in all recognition bodies in the decision-making system for upper secondary VET. For new programs to be recognized in the VET structure, a needs assessment should be in place. The overall aim of the tripartite cooperation is to provide relevant VET skills. Tripartite cooperation is emphasized in the Norwegian Education Act (Opplæringsloven), which stipulates and formalises procedures for representation in central bodies. Furthermore, the involvement of social partners in VET is institutionalized through formal agreements between the social partners, the public sector and the industries.

Main vocational models EQF 3

Students who do not complete their vocational qualification after upper secondary education, will receive a certificate of competence that shows the acquired competencies and subjects. With the certificate of competence, there is still possible to later reach full professional competence.

Training candidate

Training candidates have the same rights and obligations as apprentices at EQF 4. The following applies to training candidates:

- The subject curriculum is replaced by the individual training plan
- The trade or journeyman's examination is replaced by the skills test
- The apprenticeship contract is replaced by the training contract

Training practice certificate

The training practice scheme is a two-year education scheme in the vocational education programs. The scheme is especially designed for those who want a more practical education after completing lower secondary education, for the most part in an enterprise.

- You have the opportunity to sit a training practice certificate test after two years' education/training.
- After achieving a training practice certificate, you may either go out into working life, or enter into an ordinary apprenticeship with a view to achieving a trade certificate/journeyman's certificate.

Main vocational models EQF 4

Vocational training is part of the structure for upper secondary education in Norway. Traditionally, vocational training in Norway is based on learning in working life and transfer of knowledge from a master to an apprentice. In Norway, working life takes a large part of the responsibility for the training and the vast majority of subjects are organized in apprenticeships. For subjects where one achieves vocational competence, not a trade or journeyman's certificate, the training comprises 3-years in school enlisted as a pupil. Today there are 10 vocational programs.²⁷

²⁶ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/norway-2019>

²⁷ <https://www.vilbli.no/nb/nb/no/utdanningsprogram-og-programomrader/a/032577>

Vocational competence with trade or journeyman's certificate

Most pre-employment programs consist of three consecutive levels (Vg 1-3). The first level (Vg1) represents a basic course, which is made up of general education and vocational subjects. In the second stage (Vg2), students specialize in a sub-category of the chosen educational program. The first two levels each last one year and take place at secondary schools. Students are taught core subjects (fellesfag), which are common to all programs, subject-specific subjects (programfag) and advanced subjects (yrkesfaglig fordypning). The first theory test usually takes place after the second year of training. After secondary school (Vg 1-2), the young people are not issued a certificate. The one or two-year third stage (Vg3) is mainly in-company training. After the third stage, the young people take the second theory test and a specialist or journeyman's examination and, depending on the profession, acquire a journeyman's certificate (svennebrev) or a trade certificate (fagbrev). The standard training path thus represents a 2+2 model which, as a combination of school and company training, leads to professional qualifications (professional competence)

EQF 5 (Post-secondary VET)

Mandate: Recognition of foreign tertiary vocational education includes an assessment of the education in comparison to the Norwegian education system, in accordance with Act relating to Tertiary Vocational Education (fagskoleloven) section 7 (in Norwegian). The assessment informs on the level and scope of the education, and what it usually can be used for in the country where it is completed. This recognition scheme does not assess the vocational content of the education.

The assessment is document-based. NOKUT's assessment is a decision in accordance with the Public Administration Act section 2 b.

Governance

Tertiary vocational programs are short programs of vocational study, offered at both private and public schools. The programs vary in length within a scope of 6 months – two years. This type of education builds on upper secondary education or equivalent prior learning and work experience, but the entry requirements do not entail a higher education entrance qualification.

The county authorities offer publicly funded technical and maritime programs as well as health and social work programs. Private providers offer many different programs in the areas of creative, commercial, service, media, multimedia and ICT studies. Tertiary vocational education is intended as an alternative to higher education that imparts knowledge and skills that are directly applicable in the workplace.

Higher vocational education makes up a relatively small part of formal education today. In 2021, there were over 28,000 students at vocational schools (HK-dir, 2022c). Vocational school students can take a higher vocational course or education such as basic education or further education.²⁸

Social partners and stakeholders

National professional councils

National professional councils must contribute to ensuring that the quality of vocational school education is good and accommodating the competence needs of working life. The professional councils must also contribute to professional development and coordination of vocational school education at national level.

The Vocational Council strives for an equal composition from the vocational school sector (public, private, non-profit and students) and working life (employers, representatives of independent entrepreneurs and

²⁸ <https://kompetansebehovsutvalget.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/KBU-temarapport-2022.pdf>

employees). The National Council of Vocational Schools is a recognition body appointed by the Ministry of Education

The Nordic recognition schemes

Iceland

EQF level 3 and 4 (Upper secondary) VET

Mandate: The stakeholders in Iceland are the schools, public institutions, Iðan, Rafmennt, Menntamálastofun, Embætti landlæknis and the occupational councils.

Menntamálastofnun (Directorate of Education) is responsible for recognition of regulated VET qualifications for all VET professions apart from Health professions and Aviation and Sailing. Applicants apply to IÐAN Education Centre except for professional recognition in regulated professions, but in the case of Electrical professions, they apply to Rafmennt (Rafmennt Electrical VET Centre). IÐAN and Rafmennt process the applications and their experts evaluate the education.

The occupational councils may be recognition to Iðan, Rafmennt and Menntamálastofun when it comes to professional recognition in their respective regulated professions.

Embætti Landlæknis (Directorate of Health) is responsible for recognition of VET qualifications within the field of regulated health professions.

These stakeholders may ask the ENIC/NARIC office for information on or evaluation of the qualifications that they are evaluating, but they do not set any limits or directions on how the ENIC/NARIC office does its recognition work. The Icelandic statement is considered to be a recognition statement, and it includes a comparison to an Icelandic education level. It is not mandatory to have an assessment when seeking employment or further studies as it is up to the employer or school to decide if the person has the required competence for the job or school program. The better access to information we have through networking with other ENIC/NARIC offices and through information platforms, the better we are suited to serve our stakeholders, as our role in the cooperation with the stakeholders is to be the source of information.

Criteria:

- Scope (Education and practical training)

There is no limit to scope regarding length or workload of the education and the amount of practical training.

- General assessment, recognition statement or assessment of vocational training

First and foremost, Iceland gives a recognition statement which is a level assessment. The statement does not describe or evaluate the actual vocational content of the studies or compare it with content in the Icelandic qualifications. The statement can be in Icelandic or English, or both

- EQF/ Other Level-criteria

There are no limitations regarding EQF level.

- Official status/ recognition in home country

The educational institution must be accredited by the educational authorities, if not the education may be compared to adult education.

Compensatory measures

-

Law regulated professions

Embætti Landlæknis (Directorate of Health) is responsible for recognition of VET qualifications within the field of health professions.

Applicants apply to the Embætti Landlæknis. The Embætti Landlæknis processes the applications and in many cases asks for comments from educational institutions that offer education in the relevant field. The Embætti Landlæknis issues the final result of the recognition process, approval or denial, and issues the licence.

Recognition of Nordic regulated qualifications

According to IÐAN there are in general no problems in professional recognition of VET from the Nordic countries for regulated professions. A completed "svendepröve" is easily recognised

The general requirement is 3 years studies plus 3 years of working experience (or Matriculation Examination plus 2 years studies plus 3 years of working experience)

An individual from the Nordic countries who has completed the school program but not the working experience and the "svendepröve" may get a contract in Iceland for the working experience and then complete "sveinspróf".

An applicant who is denied recognition may be allowed to complete up to three years of adaptation (through work) or to take courses in lacking subjects or undertake an aptitude test if:

- their studies are at least one year shorter than required here
- the contents of the studies are significantly different from what is required here
- the profession is registered in Iceland but not in the country of the applicant

Denmark

Upper secondary VET

Mandate:

The Danish Agency of Higher Education and Science is the central place where citizens, companies, institutions and authorities can apply for assessments of foreign educational qualifications and obtain advice on international recognition of qualifications and competencies. The Agency handles the tasks as an assessment authority and as an information and knowledge center for assessment and recognition on the basis of the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications Act (Consolidation Act no. 579 of 1 June 2014) and the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The agency assesses foreign qualifications from all countries in the world, and the main principle is, that a foreign qualification should be recognized unless substantial differences can be demonstrated.

The Danish Agency offers level assessments in the following ways:

- Individual assessments: Individual assessment that applicants with foreign qualifications can use when applying for a job, for admission to further studies, for membership of an unemployment fund as well as for other clarification and guidance.
- Background reports: An offer to refugees who are unable to provide sufficient documentation for an assessment.

- “Turbo- and Kvik-assessments”: Turbo-assessments are for companies in the progress of employing people with a foreign qualification. Kvik-assessments are for universities to use in their decisions on the admission of PhD students.
- “Pligtmæssig vurdering”: Mandatory assessments for licensing authorities. Competent authorities are obliged to consult the Danish Agency before making a decision on issuing an authorisation when applicants have foreign educational qualifications within a regulated profession.
- Hotline for educational institutions and local authorities on foreign qualifications in regard to further education or integration.

The Danish Agency is the national center within the European recognition networks, ENIC and NARIC. Hence, the office provides information on foreign examinations, educational systems and grade conversion. Furthermore, the agency acts as the EQF Coordination Point in Denmark. The Coordination Point functions as the information office for questions relating to the EQF and the correlation between the EQF and the Danish Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Finally, the agency is the competent authority for recognition of teaching qualifications. In addition, the Danish office acts as support center and coordinator for the EU directive on recognition of professional qualifications, meaning the agency coordinates and monitors the competent authorities’ administration of the directive. Decisions on access to regulated professions (apart from teaching), is made by other competent authorities.

The recognition statement

The individual assessment is issued to the person applying for an assessment of their foreign qualification. The recognition statement is issued in either Danish or English by choice of the applicant, is free of charge and is legally binding.

The recognition scheme is the same whether the qualification is a higher educational qualification, basic education, general upper secondary, or VET qualification. Common to all types of qualifications applies that the assessment only includes qualifications gained through formal education and training, not competencies acquired through professional experience, short courses, non-formal education or life experience. As far as possible, the assessment focuses on the learning outcomes of the education.

The Danish Enic-Naric makes a comparison between the foreign qualification and Danish qualifications taking into account, in particular, the following elements:

- Access requirements of the educational program: Do the access requirements of the program match the access requirements of a corresponding Danish program?
- Nominal length of the program: Is the length of the program comparable to that of a similar Danish program?
- Aims of the program.
- Subject combination and structure of the program: How does the subject combination compare to that of a similar Danish program?
- The ratio of theory and practice within the program.

The recognition statement comprises information on the qualification such as title, awarding institution, nominal length, access requirements, a short description of the qualification including examples of passed subjects as well as the level assessment to a Danish educational level and if possible, a comparison to the closest comparable qualification in the Danish educational system. The recognition statement is not a requirement to apply for admission to educational programs in Denmark or to access the labor market. The recognition statement functions as a supportive document for individuals, employers, educational institutions and local authorities. The recognition statement does not per se grant eligibility to specific positions meaning that decisions on employment are to be made by the individual employer or company.

For access to regulated professions, the individuals must apply for an authorization with the field-specific competent authorities.

Finland

In Finland, recognition decisions are made by competent authorities, educational establishments, higher education institutions and employers, depending on the purpose for recognition. In most cases, the employer, educational establishment or higher education institution assesses the competence and skills that a foreign qualification provides. Field-specific competent authorities decide on eligibility for the regulated professions.

The Finnish National Agency for Education (FNAE) decides on the eligibility that foreign qualifications give for civil service posts or a regulated profession, e.g., in the field of early childhood education and care and teaching as well as for positions for which a Master of Laws degree completed in Finland is required. The FNAE also issues recognition statements on upper- and post-secondary vocational qualifications completed abroad and on Finnish qualifications for international use. The FNAE functions as the National assistance centre for the Professional Qualifications Directive, ENIC-NARIC / NORRIC centre of Finland and National Co-ordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework.

Sweden

Mandate

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och högskolerådet) is the government agency responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications in Sweden. The agency was established on January 1, 2013, as a result of a merger of three previous government agencies: the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket), the Swedish Agency for Higher Education Services (Verket för högskoleservice) and the International Program Office for Education and Training (Internationella programkontoret).

The Department of Qualifications Recognition at The Swedish Council for Higher Education is the ENIC-NARIC office in Sweden. The Swedish Council for Higher Education is also the recognition centre for the Professional Qualifications Directive and provides information about work in regulated professions within the EU.

The Swedish Council for Higher Education provides individual assessment to people holding foreign qualifications at upper secondary, post-secondary vocational and higher education level. The foreign qualification must be completed and recognized in the country of origin to receive a recognition statement in Sweden.

The Swedish recognition statement (Utlåtande in Swedish) is a recognition statement which describes the foreign qualification and the closest comparable qualification in the Swedish education system. At upper secondary education level, the statement also indicates whether the foreign qualification meets the general entry requirements for Swedish higher education (undergraduate program-level).

The statement's intended purpose is to offer guidance for employers and give recommendations to educational higher education institutions. The statement is not a requirement to apply to university or to access the non-regulated Swedish labor market. For the recognition of foreign qualifications within the regulated labor market, applicants may contact the field-specific competent authorities which decide on eligibility for the regulated professions in Sweden.

Sweden's recognition statement is a digitally certified document issued in Swedish and is free of charge. Since May 2022 the recognition statement can be appealed.

The tasks of the ENIC-NARIC office are interpreted from the ENIC-NARIC Charter. The specific task to handle assessments of foreign qualifications is regulated in the Swedish Council for Higher education's statutes: *Instruktion och förordning för Universitets- och högskolerådet SFS 2012:811 §4*. The recognition procedure and the assessment criteria are developed in line with the principles of the LRC. The assessment criteria are not regulated by national legislation in Sweden. Neither tripartite cooperation nor social partners are directly involved in assessment of foreign qualification in Sweden.

The Swedish Council for Higher Education assess foreign qualification from all countries of the world.

EQF 3 and 4 (Upper secondary)

Criteria:

The foreign upper secondary qualification must be nationally recognized in the country of origin and consist of a minimum of 11 years of studies (included basic education). In the European context these qualifications are usually placed at EQF level 3 or 4.

Two types of recognition statements are issued depending on the type of vocational upper secondary education:

1) Upper secondary education that gives access to higher education

Sweden offers recognition to foreign vocational upper secondary education that prepares for the labor market but also gives access to higher education in the country of origin. In the European context these qualifications are usually placed at EQF level 4.

The assessment includes both professional recognition for the non-regulated labor market and academic recognition for admission to further studies at undergraduate level at university. The statement does not imply a binding decision but a recommendation to HEIs.

The recognition statement gives information about the qualifications' grade point average, courses relevant to specific entry requirements when applying to higher education in Sweden as well as a comment on the vocational field of study. Practical training is not required to issue the statement.

The foreign qualification is compared to a Swedish Upper Secondary Diploma (*Svensk gymnasieexamen - SeQF 4*) and, if possible, the most comparable vocational stream within the Swedish upper secondary education system will be mentioned in the evaluation.

2) Vocational upper secondary education (no access qualification)

Sweden offers recognition to foreign vocational education at the upper secondary level that prepares for the labor market but does not give access to higher education in the country of origin. In the European context these qualifications are usually placed at EQF level 3 or 4.

The assessment represents professional recognition for the non-regulated Swedish labor market, and it contains the same information as above. Practical training is not required to issue a statement.

This type of foreign education has no direct comparison with Swedish diplomas and therefore is compared to Swedish vocational education at upper secondary level (*Svensk yrkesutbildning på gymnasienivå*).

EQF 5 (Post-secondary)

Criteria:

Enic-Naric Sweden applies a flexible approach to recognition procedures of foreign post-secondary VET qualifications. Before 2017, all post-secondary VET qualifications were assessed only against Sweden's two

higher vocational diplomas (Higher Vocation Diploma and Advanced Higher Vocational Diploma). Since 2018 post-secondary VET qualifications are assessed against the Swedish higher vocational diploma, a level within the Swedish National Qualifications Framework level (SeQF) or against the Swedish post-secondary educational level.

The implementation of this flexible methodology enabled recognition of vocational qualifications obtained outside the formal education system. Consequently, foreign qualifications which are not part of the formal education system in the country of origin and, for this reason cannot be compared to a Swedish diploma, can now be assessed to a SeQF level or the Swedish post-secondary educational level.

The recognition assessment for post-secondary vocational qualifications represents professional recognition for the non-regulated labor market and its intended purpose is to facilitate the entry into the Swedish labor market and to offer guidance for employers.

Three different recognition statements are issued depending on the type of post-secondary VET education:

1. Post-secondary education that forms part of the formal education system

The Swedish office offers recognition to post-secondary vocational education that is part of the formal education system and leads to a nationally recognized diploma in the country of origin. The awarding institution must be nationally recognized/accredited in the country of origin and the nominal length of the foreign qualification should be of a minimum of one year (full-time studies). In the European context these qualifications are usually placed at EQF level 5 or 6.

The recognition statement contains information about the title of the foreign qualification, country of study, awarding institution, examination year, NQF/EQF level (if it applicable) and what qualification in Sweden the foreign qualification is comparable to. Moreover, it describes the foreign qualification's main field of study and if a program includes practical training, it will be mentioned in the evaluation.

The foreign qualification is compared to either a Swedish Higher Vocational Education Diploma (*Yrkeshögskoleexamen*) or an Advanced Higher Vocational Education Diploma (*Kvalificerad yrkeshögskoleexamen*) depending on the level, workload and learning outcomes of the foreign qualification.

2. Post-secondary, non-formal education (not referenced to the EQF)

The office offers recognition of post-secondary vocational education that is not part of the formal education system in the country of origin and that is not referenced to the EQF. The official status of the qualification should be granted by national legislation and the nominal length of the foreign qualification should be of a minimum of 6 months (full-time studies). The awarding institution can be recognized in different ways and the responsibility for the recognition or quality assurance is not necessarily linked to the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Higher Education. The recognition of the awarding institution may be assigned to other authorities or recognition bodies with the national responsibility.

Within this context, Sweden assesses non-formal post-secondary vocational qualifications which are recognized by international education organizations or the international community such the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the international Montessori organization and the Red Cross.

The statement contains the same information as the above and since this type of education has no direct comparison with Swedish diplomas, the foreign qualification is compared to a Swedish post-secondary educational level (*Svensk yrkesutbildning på eftergymnasial nivå*).

3. Non-formal qualifications at NQF/EQF level 5,6 and 7 (non-HE)

Recognition is also offered to foreign vocational qualifications at NQF/EQF level 5, 6 and 7 which are not part of the formal education system nor higher education qualifications. The qualification may, or may not be, based on a post-secondary vocational education program and thus there is no specific requirement regarding the nominal length of the qualification.

The assessment is limited to nationally recognized foreign qualifications allocated in a national qualifications framework formally referenced to the EQF. The recognition statement contains the same information as the already mentioned statements.

The foreign qualification is compared to level 5, 6 or 7 in the Swedish National Qualifications Framework (SeQF).

Norway

EQF 4 (Upper secondary VET)

Criteria:

The conditions for approval of foreign vocational training must all be met in order for an assessment towards approval can take place:

1. The Qualification must be formal and issued by a responsible authority.
2. The Qualification must be completed, be of minimum three years' duration, with at least one year of documented practical training.
3. The Qualification shall largely be based on knowledge, skills and competence equivalent to those described in the Norwegian Qualifications Framework level 4A, thus equivalent to Norwegian craft or journeyman's certificate. The professional profile of the qualification will be the decisive element in the recognition of comparable vocational education and training.

[Read more information about NOKUT's terms for recognition](#)

Countries and qualifications

Currently there are 5 countries and 22 qualifications² incorporated in the approval scheme. The scheme was last expanded in November 2021. The scheme is limited to five countries due to ongoing work with a government regulation.

As of today, this scheme does not have its own regulation in law. The scheme's terms are written by NOKUT's board upon establishment. A project group has been set up to prepare a proposal for regulations, with a subsequent plan for further expansion, which then can be presented for a public arbitration.

The recognition scheme was established to cover rising demand for skilled workers in Norway, as well as to assist in creating better job opportunities for foreign workers. In addition, the recognition scheme is one of the government's measures to counteract work-related crime. NOKUT and the Ministry of Education's plan is to gradually expand the recognition scheme to cover additional countries and qualifications

Professions regulated by law

- Professions regulated by law are not included in the scheme. This includes trades and professions in both the health professional and electrical professional sector

Precedent-based

NOKUT have applied the use of precedents as a quality assurance tool. The purpose of precedents is the principal of treating the same foreign qualification from a specific period equally, when it is assessed against a Norwegian trade / journeyman's certificate or vocational competence.

Social partners

The scheme was requested by and is anchored on both sides of the labor market (both trade – and worker unions).

The preparatory work for the Education Act § 3-4 a, Prop. 72 L (2015-2016)³ requests the Ministry of Education and Research includes professional experts with cutting-edge expertise in the respective subjects in the recognition scheme. These must be proposed by the professional councils and included connection to working life in the respective trades or professions. Cases are only sent to an expert committee if the requirements for level and scope have been met.

Stakeholders

The Master Certificate Board

It is possible, on the basis of a juxtaposition from NOKUT to apply for entrance to Master Certificate training and for recognition of a foreign master certificate. The Master Certificate Board also requires NOKUT approval of applicants with vocational education and training from abroad.

EQF 5 (Post-secondary VET)

Mandate

Recognition of foreign tertiary vocational education includes an assessment of the education in comparison to the Norwegian education system, in accordance with Act relating to Tertiary Vocational Education (fagskoleloven) section 7 (in Norwegian). The assessment provides information of the level and scope of the education, and what it usually can be used for in the country where it was completed. This recognition scheme does not assess the vocational content of the education.

The assessment is document-based. NOKUT's assessment is a decision in accordance with the Public Administration Act section 2 b.

Criteria:

- Scope (Education and practical training)

6 months–3 years

General assessment or assessment of vocational training

General assessment

- EQF/ Other Level-criteria / Official status / recognition in home country

The foreign qualification has to correspond with higher vocational education in the country of origin. It has to be placed above upper secondary education but not be part of the higher educational system, and the education must be accredited/ recognized by official authorities. EQF level is for guidance only.

Application statistics

Please note that the statistics presented are merely an overview of the quantity of recognition statements. The statistics cannot be used as a representative of the general mobility status within the Nordic region since it is not a requirement to have a recognition statement in order to apply for a job or access to studies in any of the Nordic countries.

Iceland

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total cases	1643	1366	1598	1966	2169
Denmark	50	50	61	69	73
Finland	11	8	15	19	14
Faroe Islands	2	-	1	-	2
Norway	37	32	38	35	60
Sweden	30	27	32	30	36

Denmark

Assessments comparing qualifications with levels within vocational education and training, by level and year of assessment.

Level	2018	2019	2020	2021	Sept. 2022	Total
1 year of a VET program	21	20	14	20	6	81
2 years of a VET program	37	24	26	33	40	160
3 years of a VET program	6	4	6	13	2	31
VET qualification	214	142	155	165	136	812
Short VET qualification	122	157	95	109	48	531
Above secondary, non-tertiary	1	2	19	23	13	58
Total	401	349	315	363	245	1673

Assessments comparing qualifications with levels within vocational education and training, by country of education and year of assessment.

Country	2018	2019	2020	2021	Sept. 2022	Total
Finland	0	2	0	1	1	4
Iceland	4	2	2	2	2	12
Norway	8	1	3	4	6	22
Sweden	7	8	10	10	6	41
Other countries	382	336	300	346	230	1594
Total	401	349	315	363	245	1673

Finland

Below you can find statistics on the recognition statements on foreign vocational qualifications issued by the Finnish National Agency for Education by year. The numbers include all statements issued on qualifications from all over the world and are not broken-down country-by-country due to the small number of statements issued.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	01- 09/2022
Number of advisory statements	11	14	9	2	3

Sweden

Below you can find statistics on recognition statements on foreign vocational qualifications from the Nordic Countries issued by the Swedish Council for Higher Education, presented by EQF-level and by year.

EQF 4	2018	2019	2020	2021	Jan-Sept 2022	Total
	Norway	13	15	14	18	3
Denmark	15	23	12	15	3	68
Finland	32	24	39	24	11	130
Iceland	3	3	3	1	2	12
Total Nordic countries	63	65	68	58	19	273
Total other countries	1490	1420	1382	1303	709	6304

EQF 5	2018	2019	2020	2021	Jan-Sept 2022	Total
	Norway	0	0	1	0	1
Denmark	0	1	0	0	0	1
Finland	2	2	2	6	0	12
Iceland	0	1	1	0	0	2
Total Nordic countries	2	4	4	6	1	17
Total other countries	1508	1209	1052	980	423	5172

Norway

Applications for recognition of vocational education and training (VET)

2018	2019	2020	2021	Sept. 2022
658	616	727	768	697

Applications for post vocational education and training (TVET)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	Sept. 2022
All countries	742	742	861	1424	1210
Applicants from Nordic countries	-	16	41	64	49

Feedback from relevant stakeholders in Norway

Questions addressed to the stakeholders:

National Council for Higher VET (Nasjonalt fagskoleråd)

In the maritime sector many of the education programs are based on international regulations and certificates. An employee in a Nordic country, and some other countries can apply through the Norwegian Maritime Directorate to receive an endorsement to work in Norway.

The benefit of having mutual recognition within the Nordic countries is mobility between the countries. It will reduce the bureaucracy both for regulated and non - regulated professions. There is a lack of skilled workers in Norway, and this is still an increasing problem therefore Norway is dependent on importing skilled workers. It will also be easier to complete the education in another Nordic country.

A downside to having mutual recognition is the regulated professions, it is important to keep that separate. We do not have all the information regarding the quality of the education in the Nordic countries. Not all educational programs are the same in all countries.²⁹

Vocational Councils

On a general basis, the conclusion is that everyone can agree on a systemic assessment of professional and apprentice certificates, from one Nordic country to another. It is emphasized that it is important to have trust in each other's systems. It is felt to be important that there is mutual alignment or harmonization of the Nordic qualifications. Nordic skilled workers may achieve the same salary conditions as those with a Norwegian trade- or journeyman certificate. The same applies when it comes to covering industry-specific requirements for skilled workers in tenders and assignments. But it is believed that it will not cover the requirement to be qualified for training apprentices

For the small crafts and trades, the work for mutual recognition and increased mobility is important, For the small and protected crafts, it is important to market opportunities for training, exchange and work with recognition widely throughout the countries. They furthermore raise a question about the possibilities for increased cooperation in education at the Nordic level for these trades and crafts

Different education models make cooperation more difficult, for example how apprenticeships and training in schools are organized, and how training is financed. It is the council's experience with education reforms that has made Nordic cooperation more difficult.

²⁹ <https://www.norden.org/no/node/69412>