Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

In Norway the apprenticeships [lærling][1] are usually a part of the upper secondary educational route. See figure 3.13 on Vocational Education and Training in Norway.

The premises of apprenticeships policy is crafted at national level, and implemented at county level:

1. The authorities at the national level (The Norwegian Ministry of Education[2] and the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir)[3]) are responsible for the curriculum/ subject syllabus, the VET-structure and the acts/statues.

2. The authorities at county level [fylkeskommunen] are responsible for
   - School and VET- implementation
   - Dispensing the VET financing provided by the state budget (including apprenticeships)
   - Providing apprenticeships and supervision (contractually regulated)
Apprenticeships are regulated through:


For a general description on VET in Norway, see Eurydice on ‘Teaching and Learning in Vocational Upper Secondary Education’ [8].

Figure 3.12 Stakeholders and Authorities in Norwegian VET (Udir, 2007) [9].

A traineeship [Aspirant/Trainee] is defined in Norway as a newly graduated professional who is hired in a company/business for further training (Store Norske Leksikon) [11]).

Contracts are short term – between 6 to 36 months (up to three years).

Traineeships are a training opportunity for young professionals, and aspiring future leaders. Thus, the qualification demands are usually high, and the application processes highly competitive.

Traditional professions that have most commonly used apprenticeships programmes are engineers and economists, but as of the early 2000s, legal practices, IT providers, hospitals and Human Resources have also seen an increase in traineeship programs and positions.

A trainee program is usually targeting young professionals, with a college or university degree, with no or little work experience. The program usually lasts at least 12 months, includes rotation within the company and guarantees full time employment in a junior management position decided at the end of
Trainee.no - the Norwegian trainee guide [12] is a service that lists all current Norwegian trainee programs.

Traineeships are regulated as regular work, with the same rights and responsibilities.

The social security coverage applying to participants to traineeships and apprenticeships

Norway has a universal health- and welfare provision system.

Apprentices are defined as pupils when in training at school, and as workers when doing work during their apprenticeships. The social security coverage is therefore equally applicable as to ‘regular’ workers and students.

Traineeships are regulated as regular work, with the same rights to social security coverage.

Traineeships and apprenticeships as a are requirement in education programmes

In Norway, traineeships are usually not a requirement as a part of an education programme.

The apprenticeship [lærlingepraksis [11] is a part of the upper secondary educational route in Norway (See figure 3.13).

VET programmes run through the course of 4 years, whereof either two or three years are spent in an enterprise as an apprentice. The programme awards a successful student a ‘Certificate of Upper Secondary Education’ and a ‘Journeyman’s Certificate’ or a ‘Trade Certificate.’

Alternatively, the experience-based certification scheme gives adults the right to pass the Trade or Journeyman’s examination upon proof of long and relevant practice. The scheme has played an important part in the establishment of new trades, and is an important recruitment tool for trainers and members of the Examination Board.

Figure 3.13 Vocational Education and Training in Norway (Udir, 2007 [9]).
Guidelines on cooperation among social partners in the design, implementation and governance of traineeships and apprenticeships

Norway has no official guidelines on cooperation among social partners in the design, implementation and governance of traineeships and apprenticeships.

a) The following acts/statues regulate apprenticeships:

- Act of 17 July 1999 relating to primary and secondary education [Education Act][4] Lov om grunnskolen og den vidaregåande opplæringa (opplæringslova [5])


b) Traineeships are regulated as regular work.

Specific target groups whose participation in traineeships and apprenticeships is sought

Apprentices are not specifically targeted or recruited. Applications are based on self-selection, and filed through vigo.no.

Traineeships are highly competitive and catered to students with excellent results. Applications are self-selected, but sometimes may be subject to head-hunting through informal or semi-formal networks.

General comment on the link to the youth guarantee's scheme

Norway has no public Youth Guarantee scheme equivalent to the one described in the European employment strategy. [14]

Yet, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) is the responsible authority and implementer (at the county level) of a more narrowly defined youth guarantee in Norway.

The Norwegian youth guarantee works as an organizational scheme through NAV’s follow-up services of unemployed youth between 20-24, and NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth under the age of 20.

The Youth Guarantee in Norway is not legally binding.
The guarantee involves the implementation of an activity plan [Om aktivitetsplanen – NAV [15]] no later than one month after the youth has come in contact with the labour and welfare services. It is also a goal that no less than 90 percent of youth under follow-up services are to be without an activity plan. An apprenticeship or traineeship can be a part of a young person’s activity plan.

A NAV counsellor or representative will first have to certify a NEET youth as ‘someone who needs to receive specific follow-up services’ for the youth guarantee to be valid. [A so-called ‘vedtak om behov for situasjonsbestemt innsats’ (directly translated: a certified need to receive situational efforts/support)]. This means that the youth guarantee is only valid for youth who are already within the NAV administrative system.

NAV reports that the current youth guarantee functions as an internal work document, thus little information is available online, or to the general public. See NAV’s note on the youth guarantee [in Norwegian – Ny ungdomsgaranti [16]].

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

The current government (Solberg 2017-2021) states vocational education and training (VET) as a priority.

The overall goal is to increase the attractiveness of VET, and to reduce the high dropout rates.

To succeed in obtaining these two goals, eight measures have been highlighted (CEDEFOP – ReferNet Norway [17]):

1. Increase the State grant given to training companies for each apprentice
2. Help increase apprenticeship placements in the public sector
3. Allow alternative training schemes
4. Develop provision for students who want to combine a VET programme with a general study programme, called TAF (tekniske allmennfag) [18]. These pupils will receive both a trade or journeyman’s certificate and direct admission to higher education.
5. Expand the certificate of practice pilot project (Praksisbrev [19]). Initial duration of training is two years, where students start as apprentices while attending school one day a week. Most participating students continue their training as an apprentice to complete the four-year run.
6. Encourage making common core subjects relevant to VET.
7. Increase possibilities for VET students to alternate between school-based and apprenticeship learning in training companies.
8. Reinforce the VET pathway to higher education.

An ongoing promotional campaign is called ‘Lærlingløftet’ [20] [Elevating Apprenticeships], which is initiated and administered by the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training (Udir).

The campaign is meant to facilitate an increase of VET student applications, and to secure more apprenticeship positions in businesses and enterprises. The campaign initiative is in cooperation with the 18 county administrations, offering support to county level initiatives.

Recognition of learning outcomes

a) Apprentices receive either

- A Trade Certificate.
- A Journeyman’s Certificate.
...following the end of one to two year’s of school, and two to three years of apprenticeship. A successful candidate will also obtain a Certificate of Upper Secondary Education (see image 3.13)

For synergies between national validation arrangements available and European credit systems applicable to the formal education and training system, such as

- the European Credit Transfer and accumulation System (ECTS) and
- the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) (e.g. the possibility for young participants in traineeships and apprenticeships to obtain ECTS or ECVET credits),

b) Traineeships are formalized by each enterprise or business company of profession’s standard, e.g. Junior Professional apprentices that are promoted to leadership positions, or specialized positions.

As of December 2018, Norway has no concrete mechanisms and tools available to young people for their trainee learning outcomes to be recognised (e.g. portfolios, record books, Competence Folders).

Funding

Each apprenticeship candidate position is funded by a government grant of 157 339 NOK (16 164 EUR) per year as of 1.1.2019. The Education Act § 4-5 regulates the apprenticeship grant scheme, and is managed by the county administrations (Fylkeskommunene).

And additional grant is provided to the business or enterprise that hosts the apprentice with an annual sum of 61 006 NOK [6 268 EUR] (base grant I) or 61 486 NOK [6 316 EUR] (base grant II). (The Norwegian Directorate for Education, 2018: Satser lærlinger og lærekandidater for 2019 [21]).

A ‘Stimulation grant scheme’ was introduced in 2014, to encourage businesses and enterprises to host apprentices. The grant scheme is active as a block grant at 20 mill NOK, or approx. 2.06 mill EUR.

The general amount of funding in real numbers and/or as a percentage of the overall budget is not available.

Quality assurance

a) Apprenticeships

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir) [3] implements the quality system for upper secondary VET (Kvalitet i fagopplæringen [22]). The aim of the system is to contribute to the provision of relevant training for students and apprentices. This includes creating a good learning environment where as many as possible complete the training.

The system aims to enhance the quality of VET by improving the knowledge of VET, making information more accessible to all stakeholders, presenting good examples and clarifying the training and legal responsibilities of each organisational and administrative level.

The system is not mandatory, but it is meant to provide guidance on quality issues to

- The national authorities,
- The regional county authorities (the VET providers),
- The schools,
The training companies.

The Quality management of VET in Norway’s upper secondary school [23] uses a quality circle similar to the one in the EQAVET Recommendation, illustrating how systematic work on improving quality can be undertaken.

**b) Traineeship**

Does not have any particular mechanisms of quality assurance.