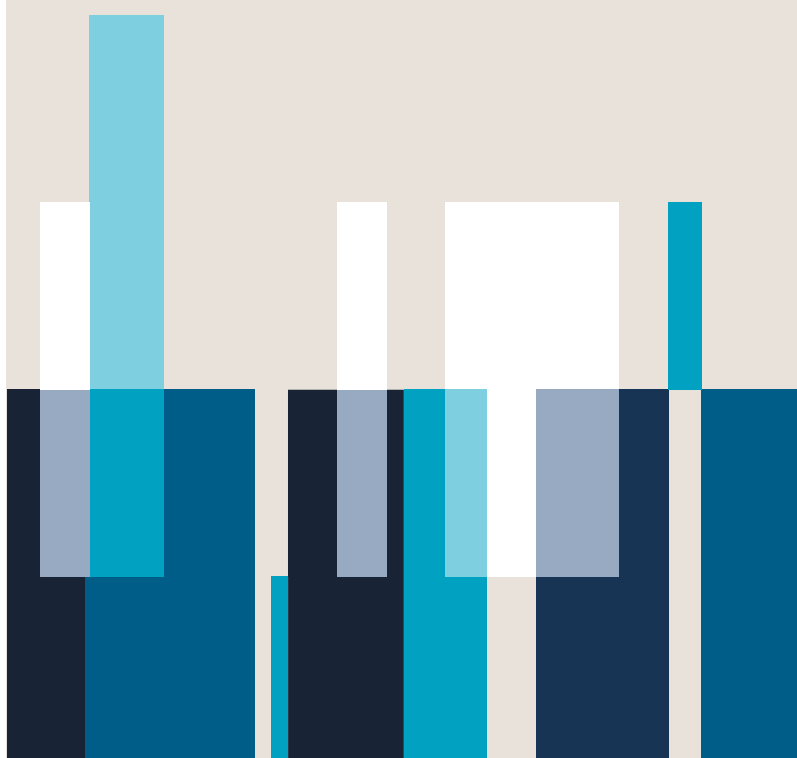# Credit systems for lifelong learning CS3L
# Country Background Report
# Denmark

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# Introduction - Structure of this report

In March 2005, it was decided to develop a National Qualification Framework in Denmark (NQF) based on the Bologna Process. As will be treated in the following, the qualification framework identifies and describes the five levels, which can be achieved within the Danish system for further education. This process is taking place and in alignment with the general European Bologna framework for further education as well as the EQF. By the middle of 2010, all public recognised degrees and education and training certificates in the Danish educational system shall be classified in a national qualification framework.

As to VET, a proposal for a qualification framework with a view of supporting categorisation and enhancing recognition of vocational education was prepared in 2006. This took part as a follow up of the launching of the Danish strategy for globalisation. Here it was recommended that further activities concerning setting up qualification levels within VET should be coordinated and integrated with the ongoing process of setting up a national (Danish) qualification framework.

The conceptual framework for the initiatives is based on the political decision that the implementation of ECVET is subject to voluntary principles and reflecting that EU countries have different approaches of defining, naming and describing their qualifications. Hence, EQF and ECVET shall be perceived and utilised as instruments to support transparency and mobility.

Denmark has chosen to set up a national qualification framework for lifelong learning parallel to the framework for further education. Consequently, all the levels of EQF 1-8 will be included in the Danish framework for Lifelong Learning.

The report has been structured according to the clusters/chapters prepared by BIBB. Hence, we will to widest possible extent elaborate on the guiding questions listed in the template.

The focus of the analyses is the VET system. Still references to Higher and adult education will emerge throughout the report. The reason for this is twofold:

1. Including brief references to higher- and adult education will add more perspective the principles of lifelong learning. One of the main objectives in the VET system is to offer learners the possibility to add to their qualifications in order to access further or higher education.
2. The whole idea of building up the national qualification system, NQF, is to create a coherent description system and support transfer of credits and qualifications. Brief comparisons to higher- and adult education can provide understanding of the national context and educational initiatives connected to credit transfers from VET to other systems.
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# 1. Background: VET system

## 1.1 Introduction

Two illustrations are presented below. The first one is a visual overview of the Danish mainstream education *system*. References will continuously be made to educational programmes and pathways and these overviews can make it easier for the reader to get the full picture and context of the Danish system.

## Illustration 1[1]:



THE MAINSTREAM EDUCATION SYSTEM

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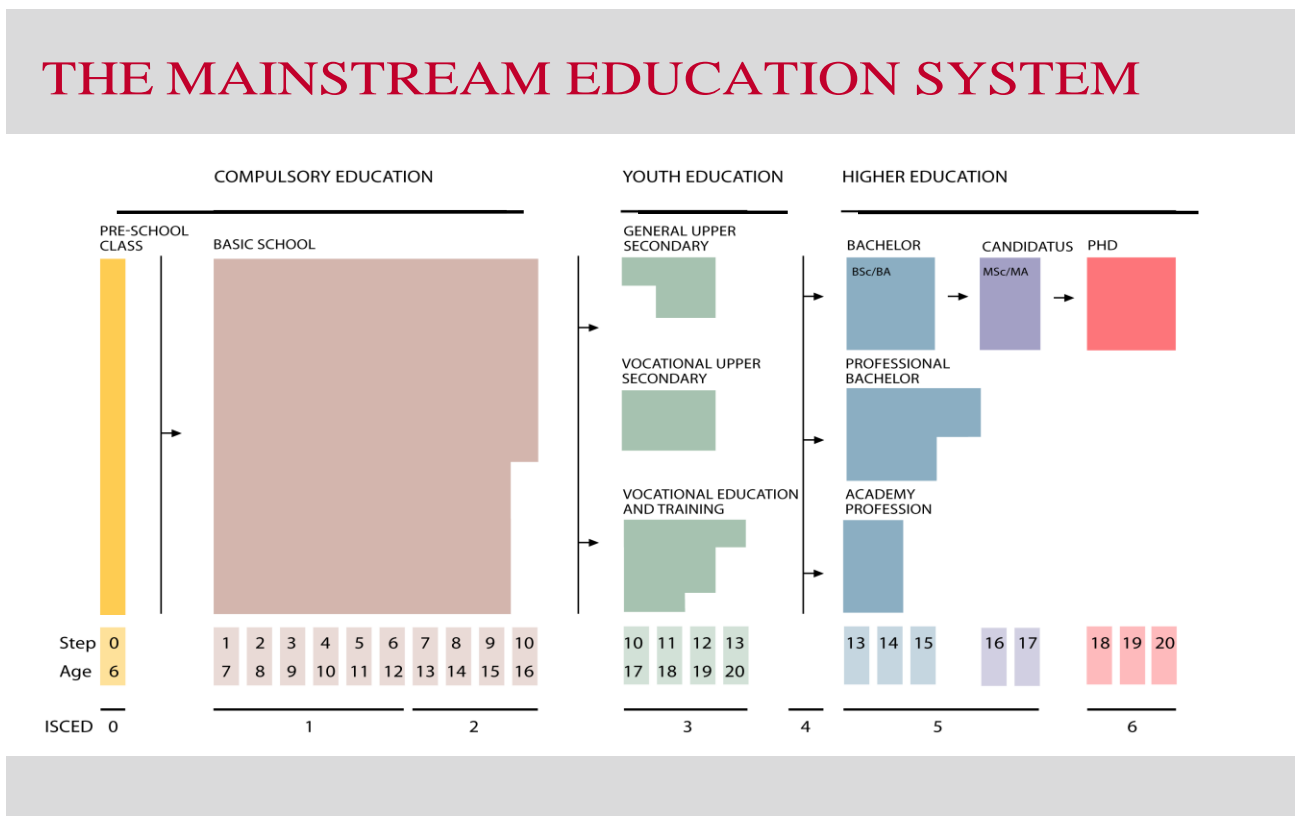
[1] www.ciriusonline.dk - Presentation of the Danish Education System

**Illustration 2[2]**



## THE DUAL TRAINING SYSTEM
### - IVET programmes alternate between school-based education and workplace training

SCHOOL PATHWAY

Basic introductory course → Training contract → Main course (VET specialisation)

COMPANY PATHWAY

Training contract → Workplace training → Basic course → Main course (VET specialisation)

■ School-based education
■ Workplace training
■ Alternation between periods of school and periods of workplace training
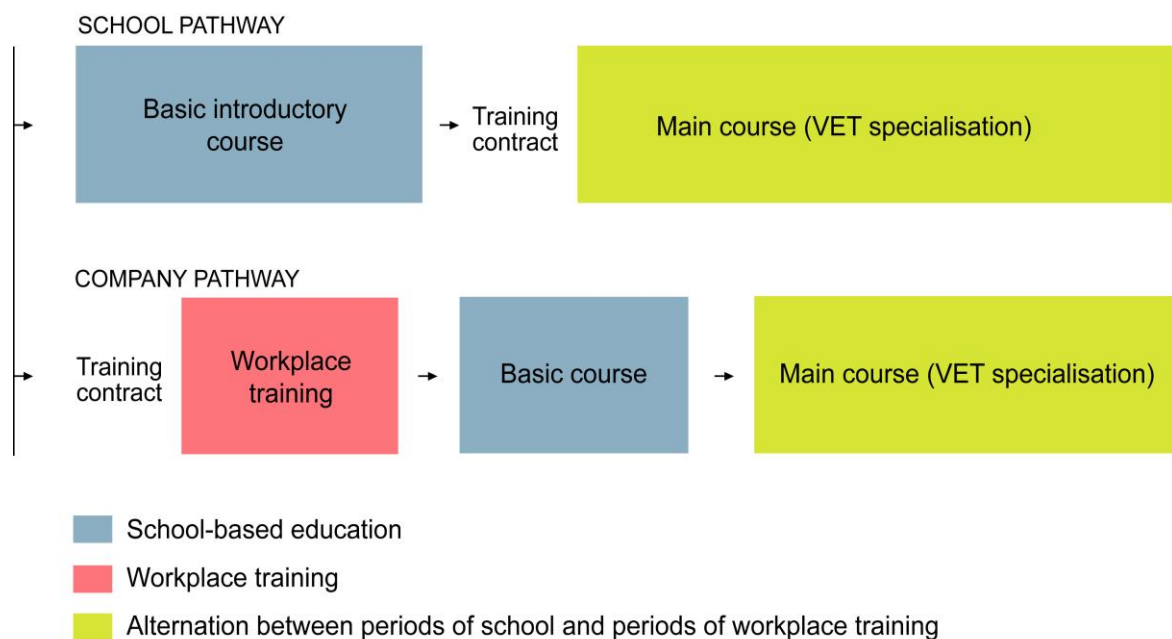
The terms VET, initial VET (IVET), and continuing VET (CVET) are often used in different ways in the various EU Member States. In this report, the term VET is used about the system and the programmes providing recognised vocational qualifications for practice within a certain trade or profession, e.g. the two illustrations above.

Furthermore, IVET and CVET in a Danish context have been integrated into one system in order to provide a transparent, flexible and attractive VET system. Additionally, this feature is also important seen in the light of the political endeavour to promote lifelong learning initiatives.

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[2] www.cirius.dk

## 1.2 Brief overview of the VET system

### 1.2.1 The dual training system

As illustration 1 indicates there are two main education pathways after primary education: Academically oriented general and vocational upper secondary education programmes and vocationally oriented education and training (VET) programmes. The distribution between the two pathways were in 2005: 55% to the VET and 45% to secondary education programmes and with the trend that more and more young student choose the secondary education pathway.

IVET programmes alternate between school-based theoretical and practical education (25%) and practical training in a company (75%). There are two main pathways: the commercial VET and the technical VET. There used to be a strong demarcation line between the technical VET (blue collar workers) and the business VET (white collar workers). This strong separation is slowly softening, a process, which is strengthened by the ongoing mergers between technical and commercial VET colleges and new combined VET programmes.

The dual training principle ensures that the student acquires theoretical, practical, general and personal skills, which are in demand at the labour market. From the moment the training contract is signed, the company has the overall responsibility for the appropriate learning of the student.

As the illustration indicates there are two pathways into the IVET programme, (1) the school pathway and (2) the company pathway. The school pathway begins with a basic introductory course at school. This is how most students enter. The company pathway begins with a training period in a company followed by a shorter basic introductory course followed by the main course.

The duration of the VET programmes varies but is typically 3 to 3,5 years for technical courses and 2 to 3 years for commercial main courses.

Since 2007[3], Basic Social and Health Care Education Programmes (SOSU) are part of the Danish VET system. The structure of the SOSU programmes is very similar to that of the technical and commercial VET system.

### 1.2.2 The syllabus

The school-based period consist of a syllabus divided into four parts:

- 1/3 basic subjects – comprise practical and theoretical subjects combining general and industry- or trade- oriented subjects. The aims of these subjects are to provide the students with broadly based subject knowledge and are normally common for several training areas.
- 1/3 area subjects – practical and theoretical education relevant to the course in question. The aim is to give the student general as well as specific vocational proficiency.
- 1/6 special subjects. The aim is to provide the student with specific vocational skills.
- 1/6 optional subjects. The aim is to cater for the student's interests. Subjects must be offered, which are important for admission to continuing and further education.

## 1.3 VET system's interface with other educational pathways

The Danish Government have very ambitious goals for youth education. These are[4]:

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[3] Law 561 – 06/06 - 2007

- All young people should have a qualifying education. At least 85 percent of all young people are to complete a youth education by 2010, and a minimum of 95 percent by 2015.
- The education programmes are to be attractive and of the highest quality.
- The general upper secondary education programmes are to provide pupils with good academic and general competences enabling more to complete higher education.
- The vocational education and training programmes are to challenge the most talented pupils and provide them with increased possibilities for higher education. At the same time, the programmes are to provide realistic educational and training possibilities for academically weaker pupils.

Education for the last residual group up to the 100% is primarily expected to take place within the VET system and for that purpose flexible and combined programmes need to be set up in order to increase the number of young people with the necessary qualifications to enter initial training (IVET programme). The following means are expected to support these goals:

- ✓ **10th grade of primary education** (not compulsory) can be organized as a combination of VET oriented subjects, inclusive practical training, and traditional primary school subjects and hence improve  the readiness and capability of the individual learner to complete an ordinary VET programme.

- ✓ **Basic Vocational Education and Training (EGU) as preparation for VET or employment**
  EGU is an individualised basic vocational education and training programme that is geared towards both employment and continued education. EGU is an alternating or sandwich-type training programme where practical training is combined with a subject-relevant school-based part in an overall 1½-3 year programme in which the school-based part lasts between 20 to 40 weeks. The school-based elements are taken from a number of existing education and training programmes.

- ✓ **Possibility to prolong the duration of the Vet programme**
  Flexibility in VET is also the possibility to make individual VET pathways that exceed the prescribed duration of a programme. This can be the case for students, who by the VET school are assessed to need more education than the average learner. All students will be assessed no later than ½ year after having started on a VET programme.

A standing discussion in VET policy is the capacity of the VET system to attract the most talented students e.g. the above-mentioned goal and at the same time cater for youngsters with learning and motivational problems. The flexible approach, e.g. the individual assessment of each student is expected to reduce problems related to this paradox. Expressed in a simplified way one can claim that the ambitious goal to attract talented students to VET may have some repercussions on the other part of the system, hence making it difficult to include all kind of student profiles.

### 1.3.1 The IVET system's entrance into initial training and access to HE
Despite the increased flexibility and cohesion between various educational pathways a young girl/boy, completing primary school,  has to make up her/his mind whether to enter the VET system or follow the so-called academic pathway, e.g. illustration 1. Several initiatives to promote transfer from one educational system to the other have been taken in order to alleviate a possible individual "dead end" caused by decisions taken in a young age. One is the possibility to obtain recognition of prior learning.

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[4] National actions for promoting recognition of prior learning – Danish Ministry of Education- December 2008

The Law of Recognition of Prior Learning will be discussed more thoroughly later in this report. Here we will only refer to it briefly. The laws makes it possible to get recognition for prior learning from qualifications acquired in all educational programmes except for the higher education area e.g. illustration 1. The implication is that an applicant for a specific study/training programme can transfer relevant credits from his/her initial education and thus obtain a possible shortening of future study programmes. In chapter 5 of this report, a practical example of a credit award procedure will be demonstrated.

As mentioned, higher education is not included in the comprehensive framework for recognition of prior learning. A person with a VET certificate, who wants to be admitted to a higher education programme, has to comply with the following conditions:

1. The  applicant has to be minimum 30 years old
2. Is assessed to possess an academic ability
3. Has passed examination in at least four general upper secondary subjects, e.g. Mathematics and English.
4. Possess a previous certificate from a VET programme or other educational programme on the same level
5. At least two years of working experience

## 1.4 Procedures implemented for crediting prior learning

As already indicated procedures for recognition of prior learning are in place. The law was passed by parliament in 2007 and is now in operation. Chapter 3 and 4 of this report will provide an in-depth presentation of the law and its extension specifically to the VET system.

## 1.5 Main challenges at the moment

The main challenge of the moment is the implementation of the EQF → NQF in the Danish context and the translation of EQF into learning outcomes in the Danish VET system. Especially the different understanding of the concept competences in the EQF and the Danish perception constitutes a challenge. We will deal with this issue in chapter 3.

The ECVET implementation in Denmark is still in an embryonic phase, e.g. chapter 6..

# 2. The origins of credit-transfer

## 2.1 What were the driving forces for the establishment of the credit-system?

Before explaining the motives for establishing credit systems it should be highlighted that the Danish VET system for several years has been operating in accordance with the basic principles for outcome based learning.

The VET systems have regularly been changed in response to changes in labour market demands. Some of the changes have involved the development and deployment of competences linked to an outcome based learning context. This has also been the case for how theory and practice can be merged in a qualification description system. This will be elaborated in chapter 3.

The political focus on setting up credit systems started in the 1990's in response to some major structural problems appearing in the labour market. These caused concerns about the VET system's limited capacity to offer low skilled workers access to qualify for more qualified jobs/professions and the small coherence between the VET and Higher Education System.

Three main motives can explain the Danish quest for establishing credit systems:

1. **Response to globalisation**

2. **Lifelong learning initiatives**

3. **Improvement of transnational mobility**

### 1. Response to globalisation

The concepts globalisation and internationalisation are often used randomly. Hence, it can be useful to separate them in order to create clarity and a common understanding of how they are applied in this paper/context.

We perceive **globalisation** as the worldwide and overall societal development mainly driven forward by the market economy. This feature has consequently established some mechanisms, that all countries around the world have to adapt to and/or try to influence. **Internationalisation** on the contrary is how the political decision makers relate to globalisation – proactively or reactively.

In Denmark, globalisation has had a huge impact on the labour market and more specifically in relation to job-opportunities for low skilled workers. New technology has during the last decades reduced the job-opportunities for this segment and increased the demand for higher educated manpower, the so called skills bias.[5]

In the period 1980 to 2002 the labour force in Denmark has grown from 2,65 millions to 2,82 million persons.[6]. The number of working persons without formal education beyond primary/mandatory

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[5] Finansministeriet:" Globalisering, skill-bias og arbejdsmarkedet – udviklingstræk og fremtidige udfordringer - 2006
[6] Based on figures from surveys in week 48 each year.

school has decreased from 1,3 million to hardly 800.00 persons. The number of skilled workers has increased from 850.00 to almost 1,1 millions, while the group of persons with a further education has been almost doubled from about 380.000 to over 700.00 persons.[7]

The change of educational requirements for a number of sectors can among other things explain the increase in the employment rate for the group with further education and skilled workers.[8]

It is of course difficult to forecast the speed of Globalisation in the coming years. Still it seems well-founded to foresee that the trends outlined above will continue and thus implicate growing demands for persons with higher education and diminishing demands for low skilled jobs. This will strengthen the need for setting up and implementing credit systems that ease the process for persons, who want to build on their existing education in order to be certified on a higher level.

## 2. Lifelong learning initiatives require solid credit transfer systems

The Danish Government and parliament has during the last 20 years initiated extensive educational reforms with the overall objective to support economic growth and a flexible development of the educational systems and the labour market.

There are nine immediate objectives in the Danish lifelong learning policy[9]. In this context we will only refer to the ones, which are related to the area of credit transfer:

- A coherent education system from preschool to higher education must provide the opportunity for everyone to acquire excellent basic skills, a qualifying education and a solid foundation for lifelong learning. There must be equal opportunities and room for all.
- Opportunities for guidance and counselling must be improved and ensure  the best possible conditions for pupils, students and adults to choose education programmes and to participate in lifelong learning
-  All forms of education and learning should be based on and build on the knowledge, skills and competences of individuals. In adult education and continuing training new and improved opportunities shall be created in order to promote the visibility and recognition of an individual's prior learning.
- Coherent education paths and transparency in the education system are to contribute to target education and lifelong skills upgrading and facilitate the best possible use of public resources.

## 3. Improvement of transnational mobility

Internationalisation of the educational system is not a new phenomenon. The present globalisation trend was apparent already in the 70's, and the international competition has for a long time been growing. Generally, the Danish educational programmes have during the last decades gone though modifications in order to be more responsive to international cooperation e.g. mobility, EU projects and common credit systems.

This has also materialised in the various educational laws and ministerial orders specifically highlighting that the educational programmes and the implementing institutions shall strengthen the

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[7] Based on figures from the Danish National Statistical Bureau
[8] Livslang opkvalificering og uddannelse for alle på arbejdsmarkedet – Rapport fra Trepartsudvalget. 2006
[9] Danmarks Strategi for livslang læring. Undervisningsministeriet. April 2007

international dimension, e.g. the VET law, the Bachelor programmes and the vocational academy programmes.

According to the Bologna implementation process the EU ministers have set up the ambitious goal that by 2020 at least 20% of the graduates from higher education shall have participated in a study or placement activity as part of their education.[10]

In 2007/08 the proportion of graduates in professional bachelor educations on study or placement visits abroad constituted 7,6% of the population. For academy graduates the equivalent figure was 3,8%. For the master graduates the corresponding figure was noticeable higher, 28,9%.

As to the VET system the proportion of students taking place in visits abroad the percentage is considerably lower compared to students from further education. Out of 70.000 apprentices in the Danish VET system only 234 had placement abroad not including figures from Leonardo mobility programmes. This should additionally be seen in the perspective that the Danish system[11] provides extensive support for mobility to VET apprentices outside Leonardo, a financial support system, which by other countries is seen as a role model for mobility support.

One of the tools to enhance the mobility is transparent and equivalent accreditation procedures between the Danish and foreign education institutions. Setting up credit-transfer system can support this process.

## 2.2 When were the credit systems developed?

### 2.2.1 Higher education area
The history of credit systems within higher education is closely linked to the introduction and implementation of ECTS – The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System in the late 1980's. Today, it is mandatory for all education programmes within higher education to deploy the ECTS system[12].

As part of the implementation of the Bologna process for Higher Education, in 1999 the ECTS was included as the basis of the system. In full compliance with the Bologna principles ECTS plays a essential role as the credit system for Danish higher education.

### 2.2.2 IVET and adult education
The Law of Recognition of Prior Learning[13], passed by the Danish parliament in 2007, is by the stakeholders seen as a milestone in the endeavours to promote and encourage individuals to enrol in continuing education courses.

As highlighted and elaborated below this specific law was one of the outcomes of the ambitious political objective to create a coherent systems and code of practices for recognition of prior learning.

Before 2007, Denmark has had a long tradition of individual competency evaluation and credit:

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[10] Goals set up at a Minister Summit in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve - spring 2009

[11] The AER system, which offers extensive support for companies which provide placement abroad for their apprentices

[12] Undervisningsministeriets Bekendtgørelse nr.356 og 867

[13] Law no. 562 - 2007

- In 1997, when political initiatives to improve short skill persons' access to acquire formal VET qualification were materialised. This was manifested by the amendments in the existing VET law and by the passing of the law of Vocational Adult Training (AMU). The laws made it possible to transfer credits from one system e.g. AMU →VET and hence a possibility to shorten the duration of a specific training programme.
- In 2001, the law on Preparatory Adult Education (FVU)[14] gave access for adult applicants (more than 18 years) to apply for award of credits in specific subjects, mathematics and language in order to improve short skill persons' entry to further education.
- In 2003, an amendment of the VET law introduced and implemented the principles of the individual competence portfolio. According to this each student (both youngsters and adults) shall be provided with a personal educational plan (portfolio). The educational plan will be prepared based on the qualifications of each student held against the educational objectives for his/her VET programme.
- In 2004, the adult vocational law was passed and implemented. According the law ICA – Individual Competence Assessment was introduced. ICA also included recognition of informal learning and work placed related competences.

## 2.3 How was the process organised?

In Denmark two Ministries bear the main responsibility for the process:
- The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation is the main responsible institution for higher education.
- The Ministry of Education is the main responsible institution for all other education programmes.

### 2.3.1 The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation15
was set up in November 2001 following that the former Ministry for IT and Research was extended to include the 8 universities, previously within the authority of The Ministry of Education.

The Bologna process is of course the pivotal point in the process of international accreditation processes. Before Bologna, Denmark was primarily administered by the Ministry of Education, involved in all the preceding international initiatives to promote good practice and improve national and international recognition and understanding of study competences, qualifications, higher education institutions and education systems, e.g. ECTS, UNESCO Recognition Convention, Europass, ENIC ( European Network of Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility) and NARIC( National Academic Recognition Information Centres)

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation has the overall authority of the Bologna process. This involves specifically the third, second and first cycle in the EHEA[16] context and corresponding to level 8, 7 and 6 in the EQF. The process is taking place in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture.

The Ministry has set up a Bologna coordination group, which is in charge of, follow and coordinate the practical implementation of Bologna projects and monitor the international work within the area.

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[14] FVU Law 2001
[15] The web-site of  The Ministry Science, Technology: www.vtu.dk
[16] EHEA – Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

The process of promoting and providing information about the Bologna Process is carried out by the Danish Agency for International Education.[17]

### 2.3.2 The Ministry of Education

As already mentioned, the Ministry of Education is the main responsible for the rest of the Danish education systems and hence the process of setting up credit award systems. This includes the following educational pathways: Basic (mandatory) school, youth education including VET, professional bachelor studies, Academy profession studies, adult education and continuing vocational training, e.g. illustration 1.

Like the area of higher education, the Ministry of Education involves relevant stakeholders in the process of credit-transfer, e.g. schools, colleges and organisations representing the actors within the field.

Specific attention should be given to the part of the credit award system that deals with the national actions for promoting recognition of prior learning. This process and the launching of the prior learning campaign were initiated in close cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs.

As to the VET system, some important characteristics about the management of the system should be highlighted. The reason is that the Danish VET system is defined by a high degree of stakeholder involvement and decentralisation and these features have an impact on how the credit award systems are being implemented.

The Ministry of Education has delegated responsibility and authority to the social partners and the vocational colleges. Specific attention shall be drawn to the authority distribution between the ministry and the social partner (the trade committees).

The Ministry/the Parliament is responsible for education policies and lays down the overall objectives for the IVET programmes and provides the framework, within which the stakeholders can adapt the curricula and methodologies to the needs of the labour market and the students.

### 2.3.3 The role of the social partners

The trade committees lay down the detailed content of the education and training programmes within the general framework. This applies to the duration and structure of the programmes, their objectives and assessment, as well as the distribution between practical training and school-based teaching.

## 2.4 What were the steps and milestones on the way?

### 2.4.1 The Higher Education Area

As already referred to, the introduction of the ECTS system and the Danish adoption of Bologna process are the major steps within the higher education area.

In addition the following two achievements should be highlighted:
1. 2003 - The first Danish qualification framework based upon the Bologna principles
2. 2007 – Revised national qualification framework for higher education based on experiences from Bologna lessons and responding to EU expectations.

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[17] www.iu.dk

### 2.4.2 IVET and adult vocational education

Reference has already been made to the Law of recognition of Prior Learning as the foundation for setting credits into a more comprehensive and transparent system. The law was the preliminary final stage of a number of steps leading to this law:

In 1999, a report on the effects of the VET policy and actions within the area of adult and continuous professional training was published. The report was a joint report from a commission consisting of civil servants from the Government and the social partners.

One of the main conclusions was the lack of credit systems to promote and motivate low skilled workers to start on an education pathway leading to a higher educational level.

In 2001, the new government in office transferred all vocational adult training and education from the Ministry of Labour to the Ministry of Education and more specifically to department for VET. The objective of this merger was to create coherence within the total VET area for skilled and unskilled workers and additionally to improve credit systems.

In 2006, a new report from a commission, also with members from the government and the social partners, was prepared. The task of the commission was to analyse and assess the policy of adult professional training and education (CVET – continuous vocational and educational training).

The objectives of the policy were to create the foundation for life long learning, skills development for all individual on the Danish labour market. Two important and concrete political outcomes of this process were (1) the Danish Policy Paper on Lifelong Learning and (2) the Law of Recognition of Prior Learning.

## 2.5 Who was involved in the development?

### 2.5.1 Higher education

As previously referred to, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation has the overall authority of the process of credit systems. In preparing and setting up the Danish National Framework for Further and Higher Education other ministries participated, e.g. the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education.

In all major policy areas, e.g. the Bologna process and the qualification framework cooperation with and inclusion of all relevant stakeholders is taking place. This is done through permanent councils/committees and/or by setting up reference groups. Stakeholders are:
- The Danish Evaluation Institute[18]
- The Danish Agency for International Education[19]
- The Universities
- Student organisations
- Labour Market Organisations
- The Danish conference of Rectors

### 2.5.2 IVET and adult education

The Danish VET system is defined by a high degree of stakeholder involvement and

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[18] www.eva.dk
[19] www.iu.dk

decentralisation and these features have considerable impact on how the credit award systems are implemented.

The Ministry of Education is the main responsible actor. In addition, the social partners are heavily involved in all levels of management and implementation of the VET system, both for initial training and for continuous vocational training for adults. Specific reference shall be made to the National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning (VPL), which was set up in 2007[20]. The objectives of the centre are to collect, produce and disseminate information and documentation of existing knowledge on VPL.

Other major stakeholders are:
- Other Ministries, e.g. Ministry of Labour
- Council for VET education
- Training  committees for VET programmes
- Training committees for continuous professional development within VET
- Labour Market organisations
- VET colleges
- Associations of VET colleges
- Association of VET schools boards
- Student organisations
- The Danish Evaluation Institute
- The Danish Agency for International Education
- Municipality Guidance centres for young people under the age of 25

## 2.6 What additional procedures and processes were necessary to put the credit system in practice?

### 2.6.1 Higher education21
For higher education, the Bologna process has had the following consequences in terms of adding procedures and processes:
- **Consequences for the curricula**:
  To describe the objective of the study programmes in outcome terms, e.g. knowledge, skills and competence.
- **Accreditation**:
  In future, all existing and new education programmes in higher education have to be assessed against predefined quality criteria as part of an accreditation process.
- **Certification of the qualification framework**
  The new qualification framework shall undergo a national self-certification process in order to document that the individual educational programme is compatible with the common European Educational Area, which was adopted in 2005 as an important component in the Bologna process. The aim is to secure genuine comparison and transparency.

### 2.6.2 IVET and adult education
Denmark has a long tradition for providing individual credit and validation to individual applicants. This was facilitated by clauses in the various educational orders e.g. Law of Vocational and Educational Training and Law of Adult Vocational Training. In that sense there was no need for additional procedures to put the credit system in place.

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[20] www.nvr.nu
[21] En ny dansk kvalifikationsramme for videregående uddannelse. Referencegruppe rapport 2007

In line with the increasing focus on Globalisation and the growing risk for marginalisation of low skilled workers more attention was concentrated on systematised credit and validation procedures as means to boost to general educational level in Denmark. Among several initiatives two should be highlighted as essential processes:

- In spring 2007 the Government drew up a report concerning Denmark's strategy for lifelong learning as part of European cooperation on education. This constitutes the Government's contribution to the realisation of the common goals in the Lisbon strategy.
- The passing of the Law of Recognition of Prior Learning.

## 2.7 For what purpose does the credit system mainly serve?[22]

Below follows the main educational and political motives for setting up credit award systems:

- Serve general labour market objectives to upgrade the skills of the labour force.
- To provide the individual wit the best possible conditions to build upon his/her knowledge, skills and competences
- To be able to document and keep record of an individual's formal qualifications and qualifications based on prior learning
- To make better use of public resources and finances in the educational sector.
- To establish a fundament for a better interface between "the world of education" and "the world of work"

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[22] Undervisningsministeriet 2007 – Danmarks strategi for livslang læring

# 3. Methodological-conceptual foundations

## 3.1 Definition and understanding of learning outcomes

As referred to above, Denmark has decided to establish a national qualification framework for lifelong learning (NQF) in parallel with the framework for higher education. Consequently, Denmark has also adopted the EU definition of learning outcomes:

> *Statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence[23]*

As one can learn from the following, Denmark will adhere to this understanding in the establishment of the NQF for lifelong learning and more specifically in the process of identifying NQF levels.

## 3.2 Is VET based on a learning outcome approach?

In the translation of the Danish VET professions into NQF, one challenge has appeared. This concerns the definition, understanding and application of the concept "competences".

The Danish NQF framework, as the EQF, has four central concepts: Learning outcome, knowledge, skills and competences. As stated above the Danish NQF has adopted the EU definition of learning outcomes.

In the EU context competence is defined as: "The proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and personal development"[24].

The overall concept **learning outcome** is defined as the status describing what the learner knows, understands and is capable of doing as an outcome of a learning process. In the Danish context this is equivalent to what is labelled "final-competences" or "competence goal" of a specific VET programme.

Hence one can make the following "translation" from the Danish VET concept framework to the NQF/EQF:

Final competence goal is equivalent to learning outcomes. Knowledge and Skills is used in the same way. Competence in the Danish NQF is applied in slightly different manner than the EU context.

The VET programme for electricians illustrates this approach. The Technical Committee for Electricians has defined the following **competence areas (objectives)** for their profession:[25]:

***The main objective of the programme is for the student though a combination of school-based instruction and practical training to acquire knowledge and skills within the following overall competence areas:***

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[23] European Commission: Get to know ECVET better – questions and answers - 2009
[24] European Commission: Get to know ECVET better – questions and answers - 2009
[25] The Danish Ministry of Education – VET programme for electricians

1. Installation, programming, initialisation, trouble-shooting, and maintenance of electrical installations in housing, enterprises, and industry.
2. Installation, programming, initialisation, trouble-shooting, and maintenance of automation systems and accompanying networks in housing, enterprises, and industry.
3. Installation, programming, initialisation, and trouble-shooting of telecommunications, data, and security systems in housing, enterprises, and industry.
4. Connection of electrical installations to the service lines.
5. Customer service and counselling.
6. Ensure the work environment and electrical safety at work and for end users.

The six main objectives have additionally been broken down into 54 competence areas (objectives) in order to cover all learning outcomes of the electrician profession.

In summary, all 109 professions in the Danish VET system use the competence area/objective as the conceptual framework for describing the combination of theory (school based training) and practice (placement in company.

As referred to above, the VET training includes both practical training and theoretical education leading towards accomplishment of the prescribed competences. As to the theoretical education in the VET colleges, the trade committees select the subjects (basic subjects, area subjects and specific vocational subjects) according to how these contribute to the achievement of the competence objectives for the specific trade.

The different application of the concept "competence" can appear academic and subtle   Still the different approach to the understanding of competences has had some implications for how the VET area will deal with NQF implementation in Denmark. This will be treated in the following chapter.


## 3.3 NQF in Denmark


In March 2005, it was decided to develop a National Qualification Framework in Denmark based on the Bologna Process. Hence, this part of the qualification framework identifies and describes the five levels, which can be achieved within the Danish system for further education. This process is taking place and in alignment with the general European Bologna framework for further education as well as the EQF.

By the middle of 2010 all public recognised degrees and education and training certificates in the Danish educational system shall be classified in a national qualification framework (NQF)

As to VET, a proposal for a qualification framework with a view of supporting categorisation and enhance recognition of vocational education was prepared in 2006. This took part as a follow up of the launching of the Danish strategy for globalisation. Here it was recommended that further activities concerning setting up qualification levels within VET should be coordinated and integrated with the ongoing process of setting up a national (Danish) qualification framework.

The EU conceptual framework for the initiatives is based on the fact that the implementation of ECVET is subject to voluntarily principles and reflecting that EU countries have different approaches of defining, naming and describing their qualifications. Hence EQF and ECVET shall be perceived and utilised as instruments to support transparency and mobility.

Denmark has chosen to set up a national qualification framework for lifelong learning parallel to the framework for further education. Consequently all the levels of EQF 1-8 will be included in the Danish framework for Lifelong Learning.

### 3.3.1 Objectives for the NQF

The Danish qualification framework for lifelong learning is meant to serve as a tool for description of both existing and new qualifications developed in the Danish educational system. Hence, the composition of the qualification framework takes the point of departure in the qualification structures, description models and pathways of the educational system. Against this background the NQF shall:

- **Include all public recognised qualifications**
  Qualifications in the framework shall be awarded pursuant to a law or a bylaw and subject to quality assurance by a public authority in the Danish educational system. Consequently, the framework will only include qualifications in the Danish educational system, that are public recognised and hence subjected to a public recognised quality assurance system.

- **Take into consideration the diversities and development of the educational system**
  The Danish educational system includes a variety of educational programmes, institutions and stakeholders. Different objectives reflect different management systems and pedagogical procedures and shall be embraced by the qualification framework. The skills demands in the labour market and the educational structure change continuously and the framework should be able to adapt to this development.

- **Describe learning outcomes and pathways to achieve this**
  The qualifications on a specific level shall be described by learning outcomes. Each level describes the grades or certificates/diplomas that can be acquired and the general or specific entry requirements for the educational programme. By this the qualification framework will draw attention to educational pathways and options for lifelong learning and additionally support assessment and recognition of prior learning.

- **Correspond to the EQF, the qualification framework for further education and description systems in other educational programmes**
  In order to strengthen the transnational mobility the NQF shall refer to the European Qualification Framework. In addition there shall be coherence with the qualification framework for Higher Education and to the description systems in other Danish educational programmes.

- **Allocate for comparison of qualifications across national educational programmes**
  The fabric of the framework shall make it possible to categorise a qualification irrespective of in which part of the educational system the qualification has been acquired. This means, that the levels of the qualification framework should be defined/described in a simple and systematic way and at the same time covering all Danish educational pathways.

### 3.3.2 Levels in the Danish Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning:

In alignment with EQF the Danish Framework uses 8 reference levels. Like in EQF, the key concept of the levels is the introduction of learning outcomes defined in terms of **knowledge, skills and competences**. This approach shifts the focus from input (lengths of a learning experience, type of institution) to the particular qualifications of a person and/or what he/she is able to do (output).

**Methodology for level descriptions**

| Knowledge | Skills | Competences |
|---|---|---|
| **Nature and complexity**<br><br>Consider if the knowledge is based upon theory or practice? Specify if it is knowledge within a subject, subject area or a trade? How complex is this knowledge? | **Nature**<br><br>Consider if the skills are practical, creative or communicative? | **Space for action**<br>In what kind of working-related or study context can knowledge and skills be activated? |
| **Understanding**<br>To what extent can the knowledge be put into a context? | **Problem solving**<br>The extent of the level's complexity in relation to the ability to assess and select knowledge? | **Cooperation and responsibility**<br>To what extent can one be responsible for both own and others' work? The complexity of working relations that one can enter into? |
| | **Communication**<br>Which target groups can be reached In terms of communication and what is the complexity of the communication and what means are applied to in the communication process? | **Learning**<br>To what extent can one take responsibility for own learning and competence development? |

### 3.3.3 The concepts of "full-fit-principle" and "best-fit-principle"

Two principles are adhered to when qualifications are categorized in the Danish Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning vis-à-vis EQF categorisations:

- o **" The full-fit-principle"**

  and

- o **"The best-fit-principle"**

### 3.3.3.1 "The full-fit principle"

The framework for lifelong learning operates with both the terms **degrees and education/training certificates**. "The full-fit-principle" refers to degrees within the area of further education and is defined in the general Danish framework for further education and the degrees included are Academy Profession Degrees, Bachelor, Master and PhD. In addition, these educations are included in the Danish system for accreditation and quality assurance and are directly transferred to levels 5-8. As to level 5 this is a kind of grey zone area between the "full-fit-principle" and "the best-fit-principle". See more below.

### 3.3.3.2 "The best-fit-principle"

**"The best-fit-principle"** refers to education/training certificates and applies to the rest of the educational system. The classifying of education/training certificates is based on the principle that full match between the outcome of the specific qualification/profession and the general principles for the level specification in the framework is not necessarily in place."The Best-fit-principle" is also used when certificates for supplementary qualifications achieved by continuing education and

training shall be classified in the framework. Supplementary qualifications can emanate from continuing vocational training (CVET) or studies to qualify for admission to further education.

### 3.3.4 The classification of the Danish Vocational System
All public recognised degrees and education and training certificates in the Danish educational system shall be classified before the end of 2010. The VET programmes are part of the implementation and the stakeholders have started the classification process of the approximately 125 programmes.

The process is taking place within the overall management framework of the Danish VET system – the dual system – which involves distribution of authority between the Ministry of Education and the social partners (trade committees). More specifically the Ministry is responsible for the general framework e.g. management, structure and objectives of the programmes and the trade committees lay down the detailed content of their specific education and training programme.

This set-up obviously calls for a close cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the trade committees, a cooperation which is deeply rooted, long lasting and effective, and thus well suited for the implementation of the NQF and the ECVET activities to come.

The trade committees for the various trades have recently started the process of classifying the VET programs with the following three tasks:

1. Classify the VET programme in the NQF framework
2. Describe the programme
3. Change the certificates for the journeyman test to assure that NQF levels are included in the description.

It is already mentioned that concept of competence is perceived and used in different ways in the NQF and in the VET programmes. This challenge is dealt with by using the **"best-fit-principle"** (as referred to above) and in accordance with the following two assumptions:

| All professions and their specialisation components are expressed as final learning outcomes achieved by the combination school education and workplace training. |
| --- |

| The NQF level shall be decided by breaking down the final learning outcomes into: knowledge, skills or competences and in way that a learning outcome can include more than one of the three specifications. |
| --- |

The approach is demonstrated below by using a few of the many competence areas/objectives (NQF) - learning outcomes (EQF) from a VET profession mentioned above – the Joiner/cabinetmaker:

| Learning outcome/competence area – joiner/cabinetmaker | NQF – level |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Set up, operate and maintain commonly used hand-tools, electrical tools and standard machines either in the workplace or on the construction site | Level 3 Skills |
| 2. Carry out measurement, assembling and erection of pre-fabricated indoor staircases in building of apartments in compliance with environmental procedures | Level 4 Skills |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3.  In cooperation with others solve problems linked to sketching, documentation and planning of production of a seat-furniture | Level 4 Competence |
| 4.  Use traditional tools and explain their origin and maintenance | Level 4 Knowledge Skills |
| 5.  Use and understand a foreign language in work and societal relations | Level 4 Skills |
| 6.  Make analyses by using electronic drawings and calculation and carry out design works taking into consideration relevant topics within the trade and including styles from craft, architecture and industrial design. | Level 5 Skills |

The above extracts document only a part of the total scheme for all competence areas/learning outcomes in the Danish VET joiner/cabinetmaker profession and by making use of the **"Best-fit-principle"**.

The expression best-fit implicates that discretion to some extent will take place when the classification takes place and that the definitions in the true sense – as defined in the EQF/NQF terms – not necessarily will be the case in the transfer of VET qualifications.

As one can see from the extract above level 3, 4 and 5 are represented. As the Trade Committees have just started the process of applying their competence framework to the NQF context, there is no general overview of the situation. Still it is expected that the VET professions in general will score high on "skills" and "competences" while "knowledge" in some cases will obtain a lower score. Additionally it is foreseen that the majority of the "scores" will be on level 4, some on level 3 and few on level 5 as indicated in the scheme above.

### 3.3.5 Changing of VET certificates and journeyman certificates
Following the classification of the VET professions, the trade committees are expected to include the NQF levels in the future certificates.

Specific attention should be paid to the journeyman's test which is the final examination for all the technical trades in Denmark. The test is designed to determine whether or not an individual possesses the knowledge, skills and competences necessary to work as a certified craftsman within the specific trade. Besides being the final test it also includes assessors from the trade itself, usually one representative from labour organisations and one from employers' organisation. This certificate shall also be labelled according to the NQF.


## 3.4 Governing principles of the credit system

In 2004, a policy paper concerning Recognition of Prior Learning within the Education System was presented to the Danish Parliament[26]. The paper was a joint product from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for science, Technology and Development, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs.

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[26] Undervisningsministeriet m.fl. 2004: "Anerkendelse af realkompetencer i uddannelserne

The paper presented new ideas for how Danish citizens can have better access and opportunity to recognition or prior – informal/non formal – leaning.

The process, discussions and preparations resulted in the passing of new rules relating to the development and recognition of prior learning in the adult and continuing education system, which became effective on 1 August 2007, Law of Recognition of prior Learning.[27]

The Danish concept for recognition of prior learning is based on the following principles[28]:

- The individual citizen is able to request an assessment of his or her prior learning based on the framework and regulations applicable
- The individual also has the responsibility for contributing to the documentation of his or her prior learning.
- A user fee may be charged for a competence assessment, except for the low skilled
- A competence assessment should always be based on the objectives and admission requirements of the education programme in question
- The individual's competences should be recognised, irrespective of where and how they were acquired, but without compromising the quality/standard of the education and training programmes
- The methods used must ensure a reliable assessment, inspiring confidence in the outcome.
- The result of the assessment should be documented by issuing a certificate.

These principles are in line with the Lisbon objectives and the Bologna and Copenhagen declarations. In addition recognition of prior learning has been a key theme in the Nordic educational cooperation.

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**A small note on the Danish concept "Realkompetence".**
It is widely known that the concept of "competence" often is the subject of lively discussions both in a national and international context, e.g. the above comments concerning the   similarity between learning outcomes and competences used in the Danish VET approach.

In Danish the term to express a person's aggregated knowledge, skills and competences is *"Realkompetence".*  It makes no sense to come with a direct translation to English. The implication of the concept is of course referring to prior learning and more specifically to experiences obtained in a very broad sense. This can be knowledge, skills and competences acquired in the world of education or in the world of work, in company courses or specific work place related training. Hence the concept "realkompetence" can also include Folk High School or e.g. IT courses in evening classes or experiences from civil society activities.

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"Realkompetence" or the approach to recognition of prior learning is expressed by the illustration below[29]:

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[27] Lov om realkompetencevurdering. Lov nr. 556. Effective from 1. of August 2007.

[28] Finansministeriet: "Livslang opkvalificering og uddannelse for alle på arbejdsmarkedet" – rapport fra trepartsudvalg - 2006

[29] Power Point Presentation accessible on the website of "the Danish Agency for International Education. www.

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

**The full range of knowledge, skills and competencies held by an individual, irrespective of where and how they have been acquired**
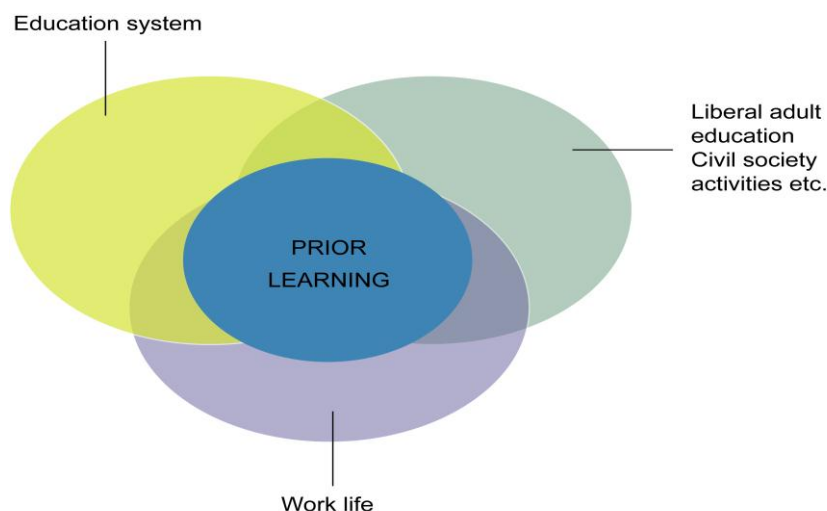


**Awarding of credits in recognition of prior learning**

Reference has been made to the challenges and opportunities linked to Globalisation and the need to strengthen education and training for all persons in society and especially for low skilled workers and persons with problems to gain foothold in the labour market.

Before the passing of the Law of Recognition of Prior Learning some educational programmes had already for some years been able to award individual credits for applicants. Especially adult learners had access to acquire exemptions for specific subjects in an educational pathway.

After August 2007 the mandate of the law has been extended to cover more educational areas. Hence all educational programmes/pathways except parts of the higher educational level are included in the law – for more details please look at the illustration 1, mainstream education.

As a rule applicants for higher education cannot get recognition for prior learning. The individual institution/university has the option and the authority to award admission to applicants with other qualifications than the normal entry requirements.

## 3.5 Units in Danish VET?

In the EU concept for lifelong learning units are defined as[30]: Component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, which can be assessed and validated.

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[30] European Commission Paper: "Get to know ECVET better" - 2009

ECVET points are defined as[31]: Numerical representation of the overall with of learning in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification.

The Danish Vocational Trade Committees under the auspices of the Ministry of Education are in process of classifying their professional programmes/professions into the NQF framework.

As described the approach is in line with the EQF matrix but with that specific challenge that the Danish "competence areas" will be dispersed in terms of skills, knowledge and competences.

The objectives for the VET programmes, both in relation to theoretical education and practical learning, are expresses in general terms as competence areas which subsequently are broken down to sub-competences. Thus the sub-competence is the smallest leaning outcome description in the Danish VET "language".

Hence units aren't applied to in the Danish system. The individual VET college can decide to describe its implementation of a specific VET programme in units to document how it intends to deliver its training provision. But these units are not part of overall qualification system.

As to ECVET the Danish experiences are limited to participation in Leonardo Projects, see more in chapter 6.

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[31] European Commission Paper: "Get to know ECVET better" - 2009

# 4. Institutional framework conditions

## 4.1 Mechanisms of coordination

The general authority of the implementation and coordination of credit systems is distributed between:

- Higher Education: Primarily the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
- VET and adult education: the Ministry of Education

In Denmark decentralisation in the management and implementation of educational programmes has for many years been prevailing, and this is certainly also the case as to validation and credit systems. The individual institution: universities, university colleges, VET colleges and adult learning centres possess the authority to decide if credits and validation from other educational programmes can lead to exemption from ordinary admission requirements or a possible shortening of an educational programme.

We have already described the comprehensive framework for recognition of prior learning. All educational programmes except the higher education area are embraced by the law of Recognition of Prior Learning. The implementation takes place in partnerships with labour and employer organisations (social partners).

The goal of the partnerships[32] is to promote recognition of life skills and prior learning in order to encourage greater use of adult and continuing education programmes geared towards the labour market. Participants in the partnership are: The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Danish Employers, the Federation of Danish Professionals and the Danish Association of Managers and Executives.

### 4.1.2 The National Centre for Validation of Prior Learning
No national coordination centre for credit and validation processes have been set up. However, a national knowledge centre has been established.  The centre is funded by The Danish Ministry of Education.

The aim of the National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) is: to collect, produce and disseminate information and documentation of existing knowledge on VPL. Furthermore the Knowledge Centre is focusing at developing methods for VPL at national level in cooperation with national authorities and relevant partners within the educational system and with partners in industry, organisations and third sector. The focus of the Knowledge Centre is primarily within the adult educational sector up to diploma level, but is also covering the implementation of VPL within Medium–cycle Higher Education Program and Short-cycle Education Program.

The Knowledge Centre is also a forum for networking and inspiration for all interested parties in the field of VPL and offers services such as consultancy, lectures, seminars, conferences, newsletters, reports and publications.

In short, the key activities of the Knowledge Centre are:

• Gathering and systematising experiences with validation of prior learning (VPL)
• Development of methods, models and criteria for VPL
• Development of courses and education within the field og VPL

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[32] Report compiled by the Danish Ministry of Education, 2008: National actions for promoting of prior learning,

• Dissemination of national and international knowledge in the field through conferences, seminars, newsletters and websites
• Dissemination and information by reports, articles and publications
• Cooperation with relevant networks

## 4.2 Binding credit regulation[33]

The fundament of the Danish credit and validation system is the law of Recognition of Prior Learning, a framework which also includes the VET system. The framework law orders all the educational programmes to offer individual competence/skills assessment. The assessment can include the following processes:

1. Issue of an admission certificate to an education programme within the area of IVET and adult vocational education.
2. Issue a skills certificate that documents that the applicant possesses the knowledge, skills and competences equivalent to part of the programme in which the applicant wants further education
3. Issue a programme certificate if the knowledge, skills, and competences are the same as those obtained by accomplishing an entire educational programme.

As a general rule, a person who wants to obtain recognition of prior learning has to pay a fee. The fees vary from programme to programme and from institution to institution. It is free to forward an application for validation of prior learning, but when the applications has been approved the applicant has to pay for costs involved in the process, typically 700 Euro. In some cases the validation process can be arranged as a labour market training course, which are financed by the state and hence no costs are involved. As to unemployed persons the assessment of skills and competences will often be part of a support scheme and thereby free of costs.

### 4.2.1 Target groups for validation and recognition procedures
The law of Recognition of Prior Learning encompasses a whole range of institutions and segments in the Danish society. Nevertheless the primary target group is workers and unemployed in the Danish labour market with low or obsolete skills and competences. This is the political and educational response to challenges that are caused by Globalisation and the technological development.

## 4.3 Legal provision

In pursuance of the law of Recognition of Prior Learning access to complain about validation and credit awarded by a educational institution is possible. A qualification board has been set up within the authority of the Danish Ministry of Education and managed by the Danish Agency for International Education. This agency also deals with recognition of foreign education programmes.

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[33] Law of Recognition of Prior Learning. August 2007

# 5. Practical use

## 5.1 Existing procedures

The objectives, legal framework and procedures for recognition of prior learning was presented in the previous sections. Below follow an example of how the law can materialise in validation and award of credits. The example is selected within the VET area.

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**The case of Søren Hansen:**

For ten years Søren Hansen has been working as a skilled plumber (VET profession certificate acquired). He wants to start his own business and for that purpose he needs to qualify as an authorized plumber, heating and sanitary engineer.

He addresses a counsellor at the local/regional VET college and receives information about a two year engineer education and specifications on how the duration of the programme can be shortened.

**Collection and documentation of prior learning outcomes**

The applicant collects:

- Education and training certificates from former schooling, education and continuous professional courses.
- Description and documentation of working experience and skills and competences within the plumbing sector
- Documentation for taking part in a management course arranged by a local sports club .

**Application for admission to the sanitary engineer education**

- Application for shortening of the education period
- Fill in skills/competence assessment scheme with documentation of qualifications and learning outcomes

**Guidance interview and skills assessment – 1 day duration**

- Examination of assessment scheme and documentation materials
- Test in quality assurance, management and calculation
- Concluding conversation between counsellor and applicant

**Recognition of Søren Hansens prior learning outcomes**

Validation and recognition of:

- IT –driver's licence  (basic IT skills)
- Completed courses in the diploma course: organisation
- Working experiences and competences within the field of tendering, quality assurance and accounting
- Completed management course in the local sports club.

**Outcome of validation process:**

 Søren Hansen will be awarded credits for specific subjects in the sanitary education equivalent to a shortening of 20 weeks of the total study period**.**

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## 5.2 Performance of the credit system

It is difficult assess the experiences and impact from the various systems for recognition of prior learning. There is no general overview of to what extent credits are awarded, e.g. no precise and

valid statistical information. Preliminary and provisional feed-back from institutions and labour market organisations indicate that the whole complex of recognition of prior has not succeeded as expected.

Taken together, the initial mapping[34] confirms that an impact can be identified in relation to better utilization of public resources and awareness of continuous professional development. A small survey conducted within the VET adult vocational training documents that persons starting on an educational programme to a great extent get credits. The credit awards result mainly in exemptions from examination and/or exemption from specific modules of education programmes.

Some statistical information is however available[35] and this concerns the IVET area and more specifically the technical colleges, where 10% of the total cohort of students attain shortening in their basic course. In conclusion there is reason to believe that the potentials of the credit systems have not been fully exploited and that it is reasonable to expect a future increase in validation and credit award processes.

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[34] VEU rapport – livslang opkvalificering og uddannelse for alle på arbejdsmarkedet - 2006
[35] VEU rapport – livslang opkvalificering og uddannelse for alle på arbejdsmarkedet - 2006

# 6. ECVET in Denmark

First of all it should be emphasized that the ECVET implementation in Denmark is still in an embryonic phase. As outlined above, the Danish Educational Trade Committees supported by the Ministry of Education are in the process of categorising and grading the learning outcomes into the NQF template.

Most likely the ECVET implementation will speed up when all the VET professions have finalised the NQF categorisation. Up till now Danish ECVET experiences have been achieved via participation in some/few of the many EU Leonardo ECVET pilot projects.

Specific reference shall be made to one of the projects "Painting skills comparison[36]". The project had partners from Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway, UK and Spain. Like in other projects the partners encountered problems and challenges in comparing and recognising the other countries' systems and approaches. In spite of this, the project succeeded in setting up common EQF descriptors for the painting trade and a proposal on how the ECVET can be integrated into the painting trade. Still the project faced some problems in using the ECVET credit points and hence invented it's own point system.

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[36] Leonardo Project -  October 2007- October 2009 – Painting skills comparison