Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment

Country Report for Norway

This document is the Country Report produced by Norway in the context of the EDPC activity on Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment. It is one in a series of Country Reports prepared by the countries participating in this activity. Each Report is published under the responsibility of the country that has prepared it and the views expressed in this document remain those of the country author(s) and not necessarily those of the OECD or its member countries.

September 2009
Country background report

Pathways from Education to Work for Young People with Impairments and Learning Difficulties in Norway

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PREFACE

This report was written as the Norwegian contribution to the OECD research project *Pathways for disabled students to employment and tertiary education*. The outline of the report is chosen to meet the requirements of the common guidelines for country reports agreed upon by all countries participating in the study, but the content of the report is the sole responsibility of the author.

Many thanks to Arild Steen, Kristin Reichborn Kjennerud and Knut Fossestøl for their assistance and comments in the process of writing this report. A special thanks to Ingebjørg Skarpaas and Tone Alm Andreassen for their contributions.

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Oslo, September 2009
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1. SUMMARY

Definitions

“Disability” in Norway politically follows the social model of disability, where “disability” is defined as a product of socially constructed barriers restricting individuals with impairments from participating equally in society. At an administrative level, however, the definitions of disability are often medically based or aimed at realizing certain compensatory measures for persons who cannot meet the requirements of, i.e., the schooling system.

The varying definitions mean that students and their families have to meet varying definitional criteria from several administrative units in order to receive the services they are eligible for. Many report this as a tiresome business. Administrative definitions of disability are based on an assessment of individual needs. They are therefore means-tested, not rights-based. This might lead students and their families to adopt strategies of convincing service providers by overemphasizing their disability instead of their capabilities. The definitions differ between the educational sector and the labor and welfare administration (NAV), which might make coordination difficult.

Data

Around 17% of all youth ages 16-30 with impairments were undergoing education in Norway in 2008, compared to 21% of the total population in this age group (including those with impairments). The number of students in special education in upper secondary education in Norway varies between 0,8 and 8,2% depending on the county. This might be explained by the high number of students with immigrant backgrounds in some counties, but it also shows that the practice of special education might differ from one county to another. Students receiving special educational resources in ordinary classes attain higher levels of competence and are more often employed than those attending segregated special education. However, drop-out rates among special education students are higher for those in integrated classes than for those in segregated ones.
The educational level of young persons with impairments is significantly lower than that of other youth. Whereas 38% of all young adults aged 20-35 have attained higher education, this is only the case for 30% of young adults with impairments. At the same time, the data show that higher education is more important for young adults with impairments to achieve employment than for others. Of students with impairments, 24% have chosen a different field of study than they wanted because of their impairment. More than 50% experience challenges with organizing their own everyday lives during their studies, and a quarter of students with impairments say they are in need of further adaptations of their studies.

The employment rate for young adults with impairments in Norway is around 65%. For those with higher education, the employment rate is 82%, and for those with only compulsory education, it is 53%. Of all young adults with impairments, 43% work part-time, of whom 77% combine studies and work. More than half of all employed young adults with impairments aged 20-35 work in offices, sales and services. Of employed young adults with impairments, 46% report having had adaptations made at work, and 29% want further adaptations to be made.

There has been an increase in the number of young persons on both passive disability benefits and active vocational rehabilitation benefits in Norway in the last eight years. Few young people receive higher education as part of vocational rehabilitation programs. However, we have little data on transition issues among SEN students in general, and especially on the transitions from upper secondary education to tertiary education and from tertiary education to work.

*Current policy statements and goals*

Norwegian governments base their policies in relation to persons with impairments on *mainstreaming*, meaning that each administrative sector has responsibility for creating and enforcing policies toward persons with impairments in its own area (labor, education, transportation, municipalities, etc.). Generally, policies that involve more than one authority depend on negotiations and cooperative agreements between the Ministries, counties and municipalities involved. There exists no singular policy strategy for the transition from school to work for students with impairments and learning difficulties.
In upper secondary education, policies to ensure a smooth transition from school to work or higher education have focused on reducing drop-out rates and improving the career guidance service. This involves improving adapted education for SEN students, establishing follow-up services for drop-outs, increasing the number of apprenticeships and initiating local, county-based projects to improve cooperation between schools, other support services, families and employers. In addition, the counseling service is now being divided into two separate services: a social-psychological service and a career guidance service.

In higher education, transition issues have mainly been understood as having physical access to universities and university colleges and being able to finish studies without being hampered by too many disabling barriers. Government action plans and policies to increase the number of students with impairments and learning difficulties have improved accessibility to both facilities and tuition. Still, the number of students having attained a tertiary education degree is significantly lower among young adults with impairments than others, and a large share of these report experiencing challenges in organizing their everyday student lives and participating in activities with fellow students. The Quality Reform was introduced in 2003, among other reasons, to improve completion rates of students in general. It has been a mixed experience for students with impairments. For some, closer follow-up and increased modularity has been an advantage. For others, especially those with “bad periods” and visual impairments, it has been a disadvantage.

Labor market policies in Norway have primarily been geared toward vocationally disabled people in general, not young persons with impairments in the transition from education to work. There is a broad consensus on the working line policy, which aims at giving the unemployed incentives to seek employment, providing support services to assist both employers and job seekers in accommodating the workplace, and developing policies to encourage employers to recruit employees with health problems. The recent reform of the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) also emphasizes coordinating services with educational institutions and other support services, and the new anti-discrimination legislation makes tougher demands for accessibility in enterprises.

The Agreement for a More Inclusive Working Life seems to have been successful in preventing exclusion of persons with impairments from the labor market, but it has been ineffective in recruiting more disabled individuals to private enterprises. Social security
benefits for young persons are low but do not seem to provide incentives for seeking employment. Another explanation might be that young persons receiving health-related benefits face external obstacles preventing them from either seeking or acquiring work. Since we do not have sufficient results from the implementation of the NAV reform, we do not know whether it has resulted in improved services and coordinating practices for young persons with impairments.

Specific transition policies have mainly resulted in national or local experimental schemes, like the trainee program in the Ministries and Directorates or cooperative projects between higher education institutions and NAV offices. On the other hand, the NAV reform has included agreements between national, county and municipal authorities that might be utilized for facilitating the transition from education to work for this specific target group.

**Legislation**

The main transition issues covered by legislation on upper secondary and higher education are exceptions from general admission criteria for students with impairments or learning difficulties. In addition, students in primary and secondary education have a statutory right to career guidance. This is not the case for students in higher education, where career guidance is organized by the welfare associations of the students themselves.

Legislation on primary and secondary education places strong demands on primary and secondary schools to adapt teaching and the learning environment to the needs of the students and to ensure that students with special needs are able to complete their education. Legislation on higher education is more focused on physical access to university or university college premises, but also states that the study situation should be adapted “as far as reasonable and possible” to the needs of students with special needs. Still, research indicates that students with impairments in both lower and higher education do not get their rights fulfilled as they are defined in legislation on education.

The new Act on Discrimination and Accessibility defines inaccessibility as a form of discrimination and requires educational institutions and employers to work actively to promote the universal design of schools, universities and work places. It is, however, too early to say what the effects of this act will be since it came into effect on January 1st, 2009.
The Working Environment Act requires employers to adapt the workplace to workers who become sick or lose a bodily function. It does not, however, require employers to accommodate the entry of young persons with impairments into the workplace. Other labor legislation gives unemployed individuals the right to take part in labor market programs in order to improve their ability to be employed at a later time.

Legislation on labor and education does not require different sectors or institutions to cooperate with each other, and the Education Act only makes primary and secondary schools responsible for providing career guidance. This is not the case for higher educational institutions.

**Funding**

The educational sector in Norway is funded by block grants to municipalities, counties and tertiary institutions. In this mode of funding, students with impairments or learning difficulties do not receive a specific portion of the budget. Tertiary institutions have direct economic incentives to improve the completion rates through the production of student credits by their students. This might also be an incentive to improve the completion rates of seemingly more productive student groups than those with impairments or learning difficulties. Some special subsidies exist for increasing accessibility to education, but accessibility is mainly a municipality, county or higher educational institution responsibility.

**Provisions**

Some provisions exist in upper secondary education aiming at improving the transition from school to higher education or work for students in general. These are the ability to attain a higher education certificate based on vocational skills, career guidance in school, job practice as part of the studies, apprenticeships in private companies and an opportunity to complete upper secondary education with a lower level of competence. Research does not show whether these arrangements are important for students with impairments and learning difficulties.

There also exist special provisions aiming at qualifying students with “special needs” for further studies or work. These are: special admission practices, special educational programs,
adapted learning and teaching aids, the opportunity for using extra time to finish studies (up to five years), adaptation of exams and subsidized apprenticeships. Drop-out rates are important factors in the supervision of upper secondary education, but we have not been able to identify other transitional issues in the quality assurance system. However, there is a great emphasis on providing students with special needs with equal education and reducing the use of segregated programs – hence improving the ability of these students to complete their education with qualifications equal to others’.

In higher education, there has been an increased focus on completion rates and production of study credits as a result of the Quality Reform (2003). Students now receive a closer follow-up than before, and the loans and grants provision creates incentives for students to complete their education within the prescribed time. Special provisions for students with impairments and learning difficulties in tertiary education include special admission criteria, learning aids for the vision impaired and students with reading difficulties, adaptations of exams and special rules in the loans and grants provision for students who must miss extended periods of instruction because of their impairments.

Research and documentation show that most of these special provisions work poorly or unsatisfactorily. The special admission criteria can impede the admission of students with impairments, the production of learning aids is slower than the pace of the studies, adaptations of exams are ineffective and the loans and grants provision confers a higher debt burden on students who take longer to complete their studies because of obstacles related to their impairment.

Research on labor market programs for the “vocationally disabled” is inconclusive, and we know little about the experience of young persons in the transition from education to work. There exist some examples of programs where higher education institutions and NAV cooperate to enhance the transition from higher education to work, but these experiences are few and time-limited. At the county level, cooperation between municipalities, counties and employment services seems to be more important. We do not know, however, how focused these cooperative relationships are on the transition from school to work or higher education rather than only on reducing drop-out.

Support services
There exist a host of basically free-of-charge support services for students with impairments and learning difficulties in both upper secondary education and tertiary education, including health services, assistive technology, social security benefits and extra support at the educational institution. One of the major differences between upper secondary and tertiary education is that the educational support from a university/university college is far less substantial than at an upper secondary school. Normally, a student with an impairment or learning difficulty in higher education must deal with it alone, whereas the same student would have received a close follow-up and a range of accommodations in high school.

Support services for the educational institutions also differ between upper secondary and tertiary education. In the first, the schools are potentially supported practically by an educational-psychological service and a national support system for special education. In addition, teachers in upper secondary education might cooperate with municipal habilitation services and receive in-service training at universities and university colleges. Such a support system does not exist in higher education, where the institutions are responsible for creating such support systems themselves.

Support services in employment basically involve following the individual employee/potential employee with impairment. This is the case for assistive technology, accommodation of the workplace, assistance, transportation and other practical forms of supported employment. Employers are responsible for providing work equipment and making accommodations to the physical infrastructure of the workplace, but might receive some practical advice from the NAV Center for Assistive Technology or the Working Life Centers. Incentives to employers for hiring persons with impairments normally come in the form of wage subsidies or compensation during sick leave.

Norway has an extensive network of support services, but these are spread among a range of authorities (and agencies within these authorities). This poses coordination challenges – especially in transitional phases. Increased coordination of service providers is a focus for the government, and three tools have been devised to foster this cooperation. Municipal coordinating units for health services are established in many municipalities, but it is not known how well they cooperate with other service providers. Individuals with the need for a wide range of services are entitled to an Individual Plan. The use of IPs seems to be
spreading, but research indicates that they still have not gained a secure foothold in health services. **Responsibility groups** seem to be a more widespread practice, but we know little about how well they foster coordination or transitions.

Transitional support services basically encompass career guidance and follow-up in upper secondary education and career centers in higher education. If these are not sufficient for fostering transitions to work or tertiary education, NAVs’ measures for vocational rehabilitation are put into place. Still, coordination of services is reported as a major obstacle for young adults with impairments and learning difficulties, and it is especially difficult in transitions from education to work. Habilitation/rehabilitation services, which have the task of enabling persons with disabilities, do not have a focus on adolescents entering adult life. Also, persons with impairments are highly critical of the educational and transitional services provided through vocational rehabilitation – often depicting them more as a barrier than an opportunity.

**Training**

Both initial and in-service training of teachers are focused on adapted education, and special education is a subject of choice. In-service training of teachers is a cooperative effort between the State, school owners and the teachers themselves. The latest strategy for in-service training of teachers, however, does not emphasize special education. Career guidance and counseling is emerging as a separate subject at universities/university colleges, and the participants in these courses are taught about the challenges and opportunities facing students with impairments and learning difficulties in transitional phases.

**Parental and community involvement**

Community involvement of persons with impairments in Norway is widespread on a systemic level, in cooperative meeting places between organizations and the State, municipalities and counties. Also, at school, parents and students are involved through a committee system, but there is no separate form of representation at this level for students with impairments or learning difficulties. Parents have to be involved in the special education of their children, and they may also be involved in the work of service providers through individual plans and responsibility groups. Research shows that such plans are quite widespread, but the
experiences of parents are varied and often contradictory. We do not know to what extent parents are involved in transition issues through such arrangements, but this might be the case.

*Future development*

Of the most important future developments for the transitions of young persons with impairments and learning difficulties will be the vast NAV reform that is now taking place. The reform itself has been introduced to better coordinate services for persons with extensive needs for support to enter into employment. As well, NAV is planning to reform its temporary benefits to keep recipients from becoming passive. The new youth guarantee, by guaranteeing young adults fast access to NAV services, might also have an impact for young persons with impairments and learning difficulties. However, as the economic crisis deepens (rising by 86% from May 2008 to May 2009), the employment opportunities for this group might become increasingly volatile.

We have yet to see the results of the new Discrimination and Accessibility Act. The institutions targeted so far have been shops, travel agencies, etc., and not workplaces, schools or universities. Although the new act places an active duty on enterprises to ensure accessibility, there are very few deadlines to be met for public institutions or private enterprises. Of other important developments we await is the future of the Agreement for a more inclusive working life. This agreement between the State, employer associations and trade unions is supposed to be renegotiated in 2009, but representatives from the associations have expressed worries that the agreement will not be continued.
2. DEFINITIONS OF DISABILITY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we take a look at how disability is defined on a political level, in the educational system, in the labor and welfare administration, in social security schemes and by national statistics. The chapter ends with a discussion on how these varying definitions might affect transition issues in terms of service provisions and monitoring.

Box. 1 Explanation of official terminology

White papers (NOU) are used when the Government or the Ministries want to review a specific issue. The White paper is written by a public commission, normally consisting of politicians, administrative and civil society representatives and experts.

Propositions to the Storting (St. prp) are used when the Government asks the National assembly (Storting) to make a decision that is not related to a law. These could include propositions related to the state budget or other propositions for decisions.

Propositions to the Odelsting (Ot. prp) are used when the Government proposes new laws or cancellation of or amendments to existing laws. When the Storting processes law issues, it is split into the Odelsting and the Lagting.

Reports to the Storting (St. meld.) are used when the Government wants to present issues for the Storting without proposing a decision. Reports to the Storting are often written in the form of a report of work done in a specific area or a discussion of future politics. The reports and the processing in the Storting often form the basis of a proposition.

2.2 Historical development

Current Norwegian policies toward people with health issues and learning difficulties are very much concerned with defining “disability” and monitoring those who are termed “disabled.” This has not always been the case. Before the 1960’s, the term “disability” did not exist as an official political term in Norway, and it was particular diagnoses of visible impairments that
released remedial public measures. This is, for example, evident in the first social security act in Norway. *The Act on assistance to the blind and crippled* came into effect in 1936 and made it clear that only those who had visible injuries and faults were entitled to receive social security benefits and other remedial measures.

The term “disabled” was introduced for the first time in a Report to the Storting in 1966 (St.meld. nr. 88 1966-67) and replaced the term “handicapped,” which up to then was associated with having an extra burden. With the increased influence of organizations of the disabled and the struggle for equal rights, a definition of disability developed that today is referred to as the *gap-model*. This, basically speaking, takes the view that disability occurs when there is a disparity between the individual’s own abilities and the demands of society. The rudiments of this definition are first seen in Report to the Storting no. 23 (1977-78), *Disabled in society*. The report read “disabled is he/she who, because of permanent illness, injury or defect, or because of deviation of a social nature, is substantially hampered in his/her practical conduct of life in relation to the society that surrounds him/her. This can among other things apply to education and professional, physical or cultural activity.”

A further step toward a social model of disability was made in the Government’s Action Plans for Disabled 1990-93 and 1994-97. These plans emphasized that the environment should be changed to a greater extent in order to make a society that includes people with disabilities. As the plans state: “Disability is a disparity between the individual’s preconditions and the environment’s demands to function in areas which are essential for independent living and viable living conditions” (Regjeringens handlingsplaner for funksjonshemmede 1990-97).

### 2.3 Political definitions

Today, the official political definition of disability has an even stronger emphasis on disability as a socially created phenomenon. The White Paper 2001:22 *From user to citizen* introduced for the first time the *social model* of disability into Norwegian politics, where it has remained since. This model, largely inspired by the British sociologist Michael Oliver, stresses the distinction between impairments and disability. As the White Paper of 2001 said, the term *impairment* points to a “loss of, injury to or deviation in a body part, or in one of the body’s psychological, physiological or biological functions.” *Disability*, on the other hand, points to a
“gap or disparity between preconditions of people with impairments and the demands the environment or the society makes to function in areas of essential significance to establish and maintain independent living and viable living conditions” (NOU 2001:22). Furthermore, disability is understood to be caused by disabling barriers that create obstacles in the physical and social environment to the full social participation of persons with impairments.¹

This definition of disability also implies that people might be considered as disabled even thought they do not have a recognized medical diagnosis and might, for example, include diffuse mental illnesses/problems or social problems. The Discrimination and Accessibility Act Commission (NOU 2005:8) gave several such examples. One of these was the following: “A woman who previously suffered from a mental illness has no impairments, nor any activity limitations. Nevertheless, she might experience participation problems, in the form of problems getting a job, as a result of the stigma tied to previous impairment. […] Accordingly, a person might experience participation problems tied to impairments despite the fact that the person in question does not, at the given time, possess an impairment. An earlier or assumed impairment might entail limiting – and “disabling” – consequences, because of societal attitudes, in the same ways as actual impairment” (NOU 2005:8).

One of the major consequences of the turn to a social model of disability in Norwegian politics –beginning with the gap-model in the late 1970s – has been an increased focus on accessibility and universal design. Instead of equipping the individual with impairments with ever more powerful assistive technologies (i.e., better wheelchairs), an emphasis has been put on changing physical structures that prevent the movement-impaired from using buildings and outdoor areas, such as schools or playgrounds. An illustration of this point is that a recent Report to the Storting was entitled Dismantling disabling barriers (St. meld. nr. 40 2002-2003).

In the area of education, this has resulted in legislation demanding physical accessibility of upper secondary schools, universities and university colleges, universal design of teaching aids and even universal design of the “learning environment.” In the area of work, the social model of disability has, most notably, resulted in a Discrimination and Accessibility Act, which states that physical or social barriers that prevent persons with impairments from being

¹ In this text, I will use this distinction between impairment and disability unless otherwise specified.
employed are a form of punishable discrimination. In general, as disabling barriers can be more easily detected as physical phenomena, the main efforts of recent governments in terms of accessibility to society have been concentrated on making accessible buildings, installations, outdoor facilities and means of transportation intended for use by the general public. A recent estimate of the costs connected to such an effort varied between 34 and 85 billion Norwegian kroner (NOK) (Medby, Christophersen, Denizou, & Edvardsen 2007).

2.4 Administrative definitions

This official political definition of disability, however, has not fully taken hold in all existing provisions for students or job-seekers with impairments. Most social security, health benefits and assistive technologies for persons with impairments are provided on the basis of certain medical diagnoses, and not based on the experience of some socially constructed barriers. In addition, many of the provisions for students with learning difficulties or impairments in education are designed as compensatory measures to remedy certain negative aspects of a health condition or an encounter with a disabling barrier (i.e., a special transport service for students because public transport is not accessible).

2.4.1 Education

Unlike central White papers on disability policy, the Norwegian educational system does not base itself on the social model. In fact, Norwegian acts on lower and higher education rarely mention the word “disability,” unless describing very specific provisions, such as the right to free transport services for pupils with “disabilities or temporary injury or sickness” (Act on Primary and Secondary Education, section 7-3).

The Act on Primary and Secondary Education uses the term special needs to decide whether a student should receive special education or not. Students with special needs might include those with impairments, like wheelchair users and the blind or hearing impaired (CNC A students), but also pupils with learning difficulties, behavioral issues (CNC B students) or a minority language background.

There are, however, some specific provisions tied to specific diagnosis. According to the Act on Primary and Secondary Education, being visually impaired gives a student the right to
instruction in Braille, and having a hearing impairment gives a student the right to instruction or interpretation in sign language. In itself, however, being physically or mentally impaired does not release any additional resources in the educational system.

In the Act on Universities and University Colleges, the word “disability” is only mentioned once. In the section on the learning environment, the law demands that premises, access roads, sanitary facilities and technical devices be designed in such a way that disabled students can study at the institution (section 4-3, letter g).

The distinction between disability and impairment as drawn in the central policy documents is not made in the regulatory framework for higher and lower education. When the word “disability” is explicitly used, it is mainly based on a medical understanding of disability –as a physical condition restricting the individual from transporting him- or herself to school or from being able to utilize the physical installations of the educational institutions.

The term “special needs” in lower education is based on what can be called a gap-model of disability, where disability is understood as a phenomenon arising in the gap between the preconditions of the individual and the demands of society. The idea that some pupils have special needs is based on the assumption that there is a normal pupil to whom the school curriculum, teaching methods and learning aids are adapted. Special needs arise when an individual entering school cannot live up to the standards of physical, mental or social capability set up by the educational system and therefore must be met by special provisions to be able to reach the educational level of his or her peers through special education.

The social model of disability, however, can be said to have an influence on some regulations in higher and lower education. All pupils in primary and secondary schools have, for example, the right to a good physical and psycho-social environment that promotes health, well-being and learning (Act on Primary and Secondary Education, section 9a-1). This means that schools have to be planned, built and adapted to the needs of all pupils, and that they actively and systematically have to work with the psycho-social environment at the institution to ensure that every individual is included (sections 9a-2 and 9a-3). The underlying assumption of these sections is not that there are some students who do not fit the picture of the average student and therefore need special provisions, but rather that the schools have to adapt themselves to the whole variety of physical, mental and social functionality among the
students. Likewise, the Act on Universities and University Colleges states that the learning environment should be modeled on the principle of universal design (section 4-3). Although the notion of disability is not explicitly mentioned in this section, it bases itself on the idea that impairment is not a disability as long as teaching aids, auditoriums and literature are constructed in such a way that they can be utilized by everyone.

### 2.4.2 Support services and benefits

Next to school, a series of support, social and health services are provided to students with impairments and their families. Whereas assistive technologies to be used in the educational process normally have to be provided by the school, other assistive technologies to improve the functional ability of the students or to be used at home and in spare time are distributed by the NAV Center for Assistive Technology (NAV Hjelpemiddelsentralen) and financed by the National Insurance Scheme (Folketrygd). In such cases, it is no longer special educational needs that release the support, but rather an assessment of a physician and occupational therapist on whether a person has a permanent “illness, injury or defect” and therefore needs technical assistance to function better in everyday life. It is, however, a local officer in a local Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) who decides whether the individual fulfills the requirements of the National Insurance Scheme.

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**Box. 2 The Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)**

The Norwegian labor and welfare services are undergoing transformation. In 2006, the labor market service conjoined with the welfare service, resulting in the new Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV). This reform means that two state-run services has fused and entered into a partnership with local municipalities.

The shared responsibility between the state and the municipalities is not affected by this reform. The State is still responsible for the social security and labor market policies and the municipalities for social services. The Directorate of Labour and Welfare governs the NAV administration and is also professionally responsible for the social services. This professional responsibility is taken care of via the County Governors, i.e., the regional representatives of the state.

The first 25 NAV offices opened in the autumn of 2006. Another 121 new offices were established in 2007. An additional 140 new offices were planned for 2008 and a further 160 offices in 2009. By 2010, all of the inhabitants of Norway will have access to a NAV office in their municipality. The aim has been to establish a “one-stop-shop” where users of the services can find an integrated office where staff of what was formerly the
labor market service and the national insurance service and the relevant municipality’s social welfare service are supposed to work together to find sound solutions for their users.

Municipalities and the NAV have engaged in a cooperative agreement that describes what services the NAV office will offer. This is the first time that central government and local authorities/municipalities have worked so closely to provide a common service. The local cooperative agreement defines what kind of services the individual office will provide in addition to the minimum requirement. The range of services will therefore vary from municipality to municipality. The minimum requirement for a NAV office is to offer financial social assistance from the local authority and the whole spectrum of government services earlier provided by the former national insurance and labor market service.

The aim of the NAV reform is to:
- Get more people into work and useful activity and fewer on benefits.
- Make things easier for the users of the service and adjust the administration to the needs of the users.
- Attain a uniform and efficient labor and welfare administration.

The NAV also administers the health benefits of the National Insurance Scheme, which might be relevant for students with impairments and their families. Among these are basic and auxiliary benefits for persons who incur extra costs for health services (both private and public) due to permanent “illness, injury or defect.” The procedures for acquiring these benefits are the same as for assistive technologies.

In addition, the student or his/her family might receive support services from the municipality, such as personal assistance or a life assistant for spare-time activities, practical assistance for shopping or cleaning the home, or relief measures for families who have especially heavy care loads. These services, in turn, are based on more flexible definitions of disability and rely heavily on the judgment of municipal officers. Personal assistance, for example, can be given to persons with “special care needs” due to “illness, disability, age or other causes” (Act on Social Services section 4-2) – which leaves open the discussion of what “special care needs” actually means.

2.4.3 Labor market programs
Young adults with impairments who are neither studying nor working might receive employment services from the NAV. Previously, to attain rights to rehabilitation (health-related program) or vocational rehabilitation (active labor market program) benefits, one had to be regarded as occupationally handicapped (yrkeshemmet) or have a so-called vocational disability (yrkeshemning). Nowadays, these definitions are gradually being replaced by the more generic term “reduced capability to work” (redusert arbeidsevne), and rehabilitation and vocational rehabilitation benefits (as well as temporary disability benefits) will be replaced by “clarification of work benefits” (arbeidsavklaringspenger) (Ot.prp. nr. 4 2008-2009), but the full transition is not yet complete.

The occupationally handicapped include job seekers who, for reasons of physical, mental or social disability, have trouble finding work. This group thus includes both persons entitled to national insurance benefits during rehabilitation and other vocational rehabilitation programs. In the regulation on labor market measures, the occupationally handicapped are defined as “persons who have had their ability to execute income-yielding work reduced, or have had their possibilities to choose a profession or place of work significantly reduced. The reason for this can be illness, injury or defect, or social maladjustments” (Forskrift om arbeidsmarkedstiltak).

2.5 Statistical definitions

Statistics Norway (SSB) is responsible for Norwegian official statistics and conducts frequent surveys that, among other things, measure civic participation and living conditions for people with impairments. SSB mainly uses two different ways of classifying disabilities, and this often leads to different results concerning the total number of disabled Norwegians and their economic situation.

2.5.1 Living condition surveys

SSB’s Living Condition Survey is carried out every fourth year and is the most comprehensive mapping of quality of life and living standards of the Norwegian population. Disabled persons in this survey are classified by what one may call a functional definition. The Living Condition Survey poses questions about the respondents’ ability to perform
certain tasks, such as reading the paper or ascending a staircase. In this way, the criteria include both physically and mentally disabled individuals.

In 2007, a special Living Conditions Survey (LCS 07) among persons with impairments was conducted by SSB, and the first results were published in 2009. The selection of persons with impairments/disabled to the LCS 07 was based on both the self-reporting of impairments and the reception of basic and auxiliary benefits through the National Insurance Scheme. The respondents were asked whether they themselves identified as having permanent impairments or permanent illnesses and whether they suffered specific afflictions (pain in the body, trouble breathing, anxiety, depression, etc.) or troubles (walking up stairs, reading the newspaper, conducting a phone call, etc.) causing limitations in everyday life to some or a large extent (Bjørshol 2008).

2.5.2 Labour Force Survey

In addition, SSB has the ad hoc module on disability of the Labour Force Survey, conducted every second quarter of the year since 2002. This is based on a subjective definition of disability. The module starts from an overall sample of people aged 16-66 with the following question:

By disability is meant physical or psychological health problems of a more permanent nature that may entail restriction in everyday life. For instance, such problems may be strongly diminished eyesight or hearing, reading or writing problems, movement impairments, heart or lung problems, learning difficulties, mental ailments or suffering. In your own view, do you have a disability?

The interviewer then goes on to ask about the nature of this disability and later how this affects this person in the labor market. In other words, respondents in the Labour Force Survey self-report their own disabilities. According to Statistics Norway, this definition is in line with what is normal in the European Union (EU) and as such can serve as a source of international comparison (Olsen & Van 2007, p. 11).

2.5.3 Definitions and data reliability
The varying definitions of disability in Norwegian policies and provisions show how difficult it is to encircle a social group with a wide range of physical and mental health issues who often experience completely different obstacles and challenges in their everyday lives. The number of persons with impairments in Norway’s population – and hence in education or in the labor market – will always vary according to the definition one applies. As an example, the number of employed individuals among persons with impairments is 50% by the definition of LCS 07, while it is 42% in the Labour Force Survey (Tossebro 2009). It is, however, difficult to see whether these differences can be avoided in a scientific and administrative community debating the meaning of “disability”, and it emphasizes the importance of being conscious of these definitions when interpreting the data at hand.

2.6 Definitions and transitions from education to work

The variety of definitions of disability in Norway shows that the official social model of disability coexists with a range of administrative definitions that are medically based or implemented as compensatory measures to ensure that young persons with learning difficulties or impairments can benefit from education and have access to work. Whether that is the case or not is a subject for later chapters, but what can be said for now is that these definitions vary between administrative sectors. This means that a student who receives additional educational resources in school will not necessarily meet the requirements for receiving assistive technologies from NAV. Nor does it mean that a student receiving basic or auxiliary benefits from the National Insurance Scheme through a NAV office will receive additional educational resources in school.

We can imagine that this in many cases will not be a problem, but for many students with impairments and their families, it might represent an extra burden if they have to apply for services from the school (special education, teaching aids), NAV (national security benefits and assistive technologies), and the municipality (social services, health-related services), which all have different definitions of disability – although the difference in definitions between NAV and the municipality might be small – and hence different requirements to be met before services are released. The research on children/adolescents and their families also shows that it is a major concern of parents that they feel they have to struggle with a vast array of agencies in order to release the services they believe they are entitled to. It is also an
experience of parents that they to a large extent have to coordinate services from these providers themselves (Tøssebro & Lundeby 2002). The picture painted by qualitative studies of the situation of young adults with impairments is also very similar to the experience of the parents. As summed up by a research report based on in-depth interviews with impaired youth:

First of all, the bureaucracy surrounding the different services was viewed as inflexible and difficult to relate to. One is often forced to re-tell one’s own “life-story” over and over again. The reason is that an officer in one place does not have contact with an officer at another place. In addition, the need for assistance is continuously reviewed, often by completely new officers. Secondly, it is also frustrating to live a life where one continuously experiences insecurity as to whether one might keep the service at the present level at a later time. The need for multiple services, which many disabled individuals have, also makes it a work- and time-consuming effort to administer all of the assistance one receives. (Grue 2001, p. 132)

Grue then goes on to say that many youth apply the strategy of appearing as disabled as possible to qualify for and keep assistance. A problem with this is that it might conflict with one’s own self-image, and not least the image one has to portray to the outside world if one wishes to be able to achieve employment or participate in a higher education student community. Grue attributes this problem to services that in reality are means-tested (i.e., that the definitions of disability opens for means-bias) and therefore will be based on the judgment of public officials in municipalities and NAV offices. In addition, Grue points to the fact that these services, organizationally, administratively and economically, are located in different administrative sectors, with few protocols for multidisciplinary cooperation. It should be noted that this report was written before the introduction of the “one-stop-shop” NAV reform – which is trying to equate its definition of disability with the term “impaired work capability” – and that some of these experiences might be different today. To relate to these different services, with all of their different definitions and requirements, seems to be extra difficult in the various transitional phases from school to work. We will, however, return in greater detail to the issue of coordination of services in a later chapter.

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2 An ongoing research project at the Work Research Institute will specifically look at the situation for young adults with multiple service needs in the NAV reform, but the results of this project will not be published until the end of 2009/beginning of 2010.
The difference in definitions of disability in between the educational and labor and welfare sectors also makes coordination between educational institutions and the NAV difficult. Several of the services provided by NAV might not necessarily fit students in special education since many of them are not “occupationally handicapped” in a traditional sense. Students with impairments who may need assistance from NAV in an employment situation might also be difficult to target for coordinating services since they are not registered or easily detected inside a system of inclusive education.

Lastly, it should be mentioned from an administrative point of view that the difference in definitions makes it very difficult to monitor vulnerable student groups from one educational level to another and through the transition into work. A special needs student in an upper secondary school will not necessarily be registered or contacted at a higher educational level where the focus is more on physical impairments and universal design. Nor is it easy to detect special needs students inside the NAV apparatus, since they will not necessarily be embraced by the definitions of being occupationally handicapped or having a reduced work ability.

2.7 Summary

- On the political level, disability is defined in Norway as a result of disabling barriers that restrict individuals with impairments from participating equally in society.
- At an administrative level, definitions of disability are medically based or are intended to realize compensatory measures/provisions for persons who cannot meet the requirements of, i.e., the schooling system.
- The varying definitions mean that students and their families have to meet varying definitional criteria from several administrative units in order to release the services they are eligible for. Many report this as a tiresome business.
- Administrative definitions of disability are based on an assessment of individual needs and are de facto means-tested, not rights-based. This leads students and their families into adopting strategies of convincing service providers by overstressing their own disability.
- Definitions of disability in the educational sector and the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) are different, which might make coordination issues difficult.
• Monitoring students throughout the transitions in education and to work is difficult since definitions vary among upper secondary and higher education and between schools and the NAV.
3. DATA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides data on the situations of persons with impairments in upper secondary education, higher education and employment. We also discuss what these data imply in terms of system performance, disabling barriers in education and at work, as well as issues such as monitoring and planning.

3.2 Impairments among youth

According to the latest ad hoc module on disability in the Labour Force Survey (LFS), there are today approximately 555,000 persons with impairments in Norway between 16-66 years of age. This accounts for 17.2% of the total of 3,234,000 in this age group. The total number of persons with impairments between the ages of 16-30 is 80,000, which counts for 8.3% of the total of 961,000.3

The Living Conditions Survey among persons with impairments conducted in 2007 (LCS 07) gave a slightly different result due to different definitions of disability (see chapter 2). From a random selection of 10,920 persons between 20-67 years of age, 26% were identified as a target group for a study of the living conditions of disabled individuals. The number of young adults (20-35 years of age) with impairments who responded to the survey is 322. According to this selection, 26% of all persons between 20-67 and 11% of all young adults between 20-35 were identified as being impaired (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008, p. 158).

The difficulties that these respondents reported having experienced were classified into seven categories of impairments: movement impairment, cognitive impairment, psychic health impairment, respiratory impairment, pain, communicative impairment and others. This categorization was based on a range of questions on the health conditions and functional abilities of the respondents. The pain category, for example, included questions on whether the respondents had chronic or recurrent pain in their bodies, and the various communication categories included questions on whether the respondents had problems reading a newspaper,

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difficulties in hearing a telephone conversation, other problems with hearing or speech, etc. The others category included respondents with epileptic seizures, head injuries, visible impairments, those experiencing difficulties in physical activities, etc.

In Table 1, the extent of these impairments is shown for different age groups, including the group of young adults between 20-35 years of age. Note that one person in the survey might report more than one impairment or suffering and might therefore end up in more than one of the categories of impairments. On average, young adults between 20-35 years of age reported 3.5 health problems, compared to 4 in the older age groups (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008, p. 162).

Table 1 shows that young adults have movement impairments or communicative impairments to a lesser extent than older persons, but to a larger extent report having psychic health problems. Young adults also report having better health than older persons, and fewer identify as being “disabled” when asked whether they have a permanent impairment or illness.
Table 1. Types of impairments according to age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>20-35 years</th>
<th></th>
<th>35-60 years</th>
<th></th>
<th>51-67 years</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement impairment</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>42 %</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>53 %</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>44 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive impairment</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>36 %</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>36 %</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>29 %</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric health impairment</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>58 %</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>50 %</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>45 %</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>49 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory impairment</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>33 %</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>76 %</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>89 %</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>85 %</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>84 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative impairment</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>35 %</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>35 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual impairment</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>23 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking impairment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessment of health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad or very bad</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good or very good</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>56 %</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>47 %</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>37 %</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>44 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>62 %</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>48 %</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>43 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>52 %</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>68 %</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have disability or long-lasting illness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>56 %</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>71 %</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>1197</td>
<td>73 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>44 %</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>29 %</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>27 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)

3.3 Lack of data

3.3.1 No registration

Registration of the medical conditions, impairments or learning difficulties of students in primary, secondary and tertiary education is prohibited in Norway by legislation on privacy protection. We have, therefore, very few indications of the number of pupils and students with impairments and learning difficulties in upper secondary education, nor do we have data on completion of courses or persistence in education for this group. We have some indicators of access to higher education and employment after both secondary and tertiary studies, as well as success or failure for those who access special education. The educational data for this
project are therefore highly restricted, although some newly released data from the LCS 07 shed some more light on the situations of persons with impairments in higher education.

3.3.2 Education among adolescents and young adults ages 16-30

Around 20% of the population between ages 16-30 is undergoing education and training in either upper secondary schools or higher educational institutions. There are some differences between adults and adolescents with and without impairments in terms of participation in education, but the size of this difference is difficult to measure due to the small number of respondents with impairments in the survey4.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Persons in total</th>
<th>Persons with impairments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>20,4</td>
<td>18,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>24,9</td>
<td>24,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>21,3</td>
<td>17,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Norway, ad hoc module to Labour Force Survey

3.4 Upper secondary education

3.4.1 Number of students in special education

One indicator of the number of pupils with impairments in upper secondary education is the percentage of pupils receiving special education. As already mentioned in the chapter on definitions, pupils receiving special education might not only be students with impairments or

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4 The number of respondents in the Labour Force Survey is too small to separate young persons with impairments according to diagnosis. The sample of persons with impairments ages 16-30 consists of 230 persons. This sample is representative of the total population of persons with impairments in this age group. As the sample is small, there are significant margins of error. In analyzing differences between groups and years, these margins of error must be taken into consideration. With 95% probability, a 50/50 distribution of the sample would be between 43,5% and 56,5% if we examined the total population. The margins of error are +/- 6,5%. The margins of error are smaller in more uneven distributions. As a general rule, for the data on persons with impairments between ages 16-30, we will recommend that differences smaller than +/- 5% should not be taken into consideration.

5 Persons in total here refers to all persons between 16-30, including those with impairments. If the group of persons with impairments was deducted from this category, the difference in educational attendance and between the impaired and others would be greater.
learning difficulties, but also behavioral problems in general or minority language backgrounds.

Table 3 shows the percentage of students in upper secondary schools receiving special education. This includes both students in specially facilitated courses, planned competence on lower levels and special teaching pursuant to individual decisions. Special teaching is also given to language minorities. The differences in percentage of students between counties vary greatly. One explanation for this might be that students with immigrant backgrounds receive special education in subjects other than language training (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Excluding minorities</th>
<th>Including language minorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sogn og Fjordane</td>
<td>0,75</td>
<td>0,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Østfold</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>1,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troms</td>
<td>1,4</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vestfold</td>
<td>1,7</td>
<td>1,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nord-Trøndelag</td>
<td>2,1</td>
<td>2,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppland</td>
<td>2,2</td>
<td>3,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hordaland</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnmark</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>3,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Møre og Romsdal</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>3,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sør-Trøndelag</td>
<td>3,6</td>
<td>4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogaland</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>4,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordland</td>
<td>3,9</td>
<td>5,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedmark</td>
<td>4,9</td>
<td>5,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemark</td>
<td>4,9</td>
<td>6,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akershus</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>6,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aust-Agder</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>5,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oslo</td>
<td>5,5</td>
<td>6,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vest-Agder</td>
<td>6,5</td>
<td>6,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buskerud</td>
<td>7,0</td>
<td>8,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2008)
3.4.2 Educational attainment

There are no existing data on completion rates and educational attainment for students with impairments in general, but there have been several studies of the results of special education in upper secondary education. These results are much discussed, but research seems to conclude that special education has not had its desired effects in terms of educational attainment.

About one third of all special education in Norway is conducted in special classes for SEN students. Of those SEN students who participate in ordinary classes, two thirds get special education in the form of small separate student groups or 1:1 lessons outside their classes (Markussen, Strømstad, Carlsten, Hausstätter, & Nordahl 2007, p. 30). Receiving special education inside ordinary classes, however, is more beneficial for the learning of SEN students. Special education inside ordinary classes has a positive effect on the attainment of general studies or vocational qualifications, but SEN students receiving education outside the ordinary student groups have a smaller chance of dropping out of school. SEN students with social problems or general/multiple learning difficulties have the smallest probability of achieving general studies or vocational qualifications, no matter whether they get their education in ordinary or special classes. The strategy that seems to yield the best outcome of special education, then, is to include SEN students in ordinary classes combined with extra resources. On average, this leads to better results for all students (including non-SEN students) (Markussen et al. 2007, pp. 30-32).

On the other hand, other qualitative studies have indicated that some adolescents, beginning in upper secondary education, would not have been able to benefit from tuition in an ordinary class since they have been accustomed to segregated special education since childhood. Markussen et al.’s literature review of special education in upper secondary schools therefore concludes that: “[A lot] of the special education being conducted in upper secondary education does not have the desired effect. Segregated solutions with assistance in single subjects in small groups and 1:1 lessons do not necessarily contribute to increased development and learning for the youth. At the same time, we see that not all 16-year-olds are ready to be in a class with their peers since they have learnt so well that they are supposed to be outsiders. For many, it can be too late to offer inclusive solutions when they begin upper secondary education; it has to start a lot earlier” (Markussen et al. 2007, p. 33).
3.4.3 Special education and employment

Although we have fewer studies of the relation between special education and employment, there are indicators that education in ordinary classes is more beneficial in terms of later employment. A longitudinal study of 500 youths (2001-2002) with different types of impairments concluded that class placement has an effect on the transition to work:

[Surprisingly] […] class placement has an independent effect on occupational attainment, in addition to its previously documented effect on competence attainment. It should be noted that this independent effect does not apply to those having attained formal competence. However, class placement has a decisive effect on adolescents who do not attain competence. This effect is especially strong among those leaving school without formal qualifications. Those adolescents dropping out of a regular class have far better vocational prospects than those staying the allotted time in upper secondary school but without achieving formal competence. This relationship remains even when the analysis controls for the effects of several other covariates – e.g. the functional level of the young people (Myklebust & Båtevik 2005, p. 283).

3.5 Higher education

3.5.1 Students with impairments

In higher education, we have a few indicators of the number of students with impairments or learning difficulties. A national student survey from 2005 shows that 24% of the students claim to have a long-lasting health problem of some sort (Table 4).

Not all students who responded reported that this illness or suffering limited their daily study activities. Forty-two percent responded that the illness or suffering led to limitations. In other words, approximately one fourth of the students reported having serious illnesses, whereas less than half of these students reported this health issue to be a disability in their studies.
Table 4. Students with long-lasting illnesses or suffering by gender, age, semesters and educational institution. 2005. Percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With long-lasting illness or suffering</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 and over</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of semesters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 semesters</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 semesters</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 semesters</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational institution</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian School of Management (BI)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Universities</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics Norway*

3.5.2 Educational attainment

The data on impairment and attained educational level show a significant difference in the highest educational level attained when comparing disabled to non-disabled individuals. Figure 1 shows that the proportion of persons who have only completed compulsory school (lower secondary education) is much higher among people who are classified as disabled than those who are classified as non-disabled. In 2001, the differences among people who were disabled, partially disabled and not disabled were small in terms of only having attained upper secondary education, and this difference seemed to level off in 2004.
The same cannot be said of differences in higher education. In 2001, twice as many of the non-disabled had attained a higher education degree as the disabled, and the attainment level of the partially disabled was 11 percentage points lower. By 2004, this difference had decreased. Still, only 22% of the disabled had completed higher education, as opposed to 33% of all non-disabled. Figure 1 does not tell us whether the differences in educational level have decreased among adolescents and young persons since the survey is based on all age groups.

Figure 1. Educational attainment by degree of disability. Ages 16-67. 2001-2004 Percent.

As described in chapter 2, the regular Living Conditions Surveys (LCS) that Figure 1 is based on primarily ask questions about the functional ability of the respondents. The LCS 07, on the other hand, asked questions on both whether the respondents view themselves as impaired and whether this causes serious limitations of everyday life. Table 5 shows that young adults (20-35 years) with impairments according to these criteria generally have lower levels of education. Thirty percent of young adults with impairments have completed higher education, as opposed to 38% of young adults without impairments.

Source: (Borg 2008)
Table 5. Highest attained education among young adults (20-35 years of age). Percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>With impairments</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bjerkan, Veenstra, & Eriksen 2009)

3.5.3 Background information on students with impairments

The LCS 07 also provides hitherto unknown information about students with impairments. In total, 18% of the respondents ages 20-35 with impairments reported studying at least 10 hours per week and can therefore be considered as students. Half of the students had been working in the last week, and one quarter of all of the students reported work as their main activity. A total of 61% reported being full-time students, and 75% are involved with higher education (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008, p. 166).

Table 6 shows that parents’ education is important for students with impairments in education, as it is for all students, but since the LCS 07 does not include young adults without impairments, we do not know whether this connection is stronger for persons with impairments than for others. The table also shows that there is a tendency that women decide to study more often than men, but the difference is not systematic or large enough to be statistically significant.
Table 6. Background information on young persons with impairments. Students and non-students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Non-students</th>
<th>All young</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 59</td>
<td>n = 263</td>
<td>n = 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18 31 %</td>
<td>109 49 %</td>
<td>127 40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41 70 %</td>
<td>151 58 %</td>
<td>192 60 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26 44 %</td>
<td>29 46 %</td>
<td>28 45 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country background</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>48 81 %</td>
<td>215 83 %</td>
<td>263 82 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11 19 %</td>
<td>45 17 %</td>
<td>56 18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living alone</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36 61 %</td>
<td>209 80 %</td>
<td>245 77 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23 39 %</td>
<td>51 20 %</td>
<td>74 23 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest completed education for mother</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>7 13 %</td>
<td>67 29 %</td>
<td>74 26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>18 34 %</td>
<td>113 50 %</td>
<td>131 47 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>28 53 %</td>
<td>48 21 %</td>
<td>76 27 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest completed education for father</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>2 4 %</td>
<td>59 26 %</td>
<td>61 22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>22 43 %</td>
<td>118 52 %</td>
<td>140 51 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>28 53 %</td>
<td>48 21 %</td>
<td>76 27 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Married or common law partner</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40 68 %</td>
<td>100 39 %</td>
<td>140 44 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19 32 %</td>
<td>160 62 %</td>
<td>179 56 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)*

Table 7 shows that the distribution of impairments is similar among students as well as non-students, although a larger portion of the students report having psychological problems. These results are, on the other hand, not statistically significant.
Table 7. Type of impairment among young adults. Students and non-students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Non-students</th>
<th>All young</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 59</td>
<td>n = 263</td>
<td>n = 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement impairment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive impairment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychic health impairment</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory impairment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative impairment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision impairment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)

3.5.4 Challenges and difficulties in higher education

A total of 24% of young students in the LCS 07 survey reported having chosen a different field of study than desired due to illness or impairment. The most common reason was lack of adapted studies (53%), followed by a feeling of tiredness and lack of energy (31%). Of difficulties, more than half of the students experienced challenges in terms of organizing their own everyday lives, followed by student activities and night-time activities, housing and transport (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008, p. 169). Table 8 shows how these challenges are experienced according to type of impairment.

Table 8. Share of young persons who experienced different challenges with studies, by type of impairment. (n = 58)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impairment</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Student housing</th>
<th>Organizing everyday life</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Student activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movement impairment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>75 %</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>69 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive impairment</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>68 %</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>47 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychic health impairment</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td>45 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory impairment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46 %</td>
<td>54 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>54 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>55 %</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative impairment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31 %</td>
<td>50 %</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>31 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)
Around 40% of all young persons in the LCS 07 survey reported needing or having needed adaptations during their previous or present education. The main reasons for adaptation needs were tuition (more than 45%), followed by exams (more than 30%), curriculum and others (30%) (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008, p. 170). Table 9 shows how the need for adaptation is distributed according to type of impairment. Note that many of these correlations are not statistically significant and that a number of young people with only compulsory education are not included in this table. This might mean that many students with the greatest need for adaptations were unable to pass through upper secondary education or enter higher education.

Table 9. Share of young persons who have or had needs for adaptations of studies, by type of impairment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n = 40</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n = 141</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movement impairment</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive impairment</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychic health impairment</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory impairment</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative impairment</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)

3.5.5 Education and employment

The inequality in educational attainment is of seminal importance for the level of employment among persons with impairments. The length of the education is important for the probability of finding work for all groups in society, but even more so for people with impairments. As shown in Table 10, the difference in level of employment when comparing upper secondary education and higher education is much higher for persons with impairments (14.5 percentage points) than for all persons (7.1 percentage points).

Table 14, with data from LCS 07, also confirms that higher education increases the probability of being employed for young persons with impairments. According to that survey, 37% of all employed young adults with impairments have completed higher education. Table 14 provides a more correct picture of the importance of higher education in the transition from school to work since many of the employed with only compulsory or upper secondary
education between 16-66 years (Table 10) have developed impairments with age and were already in an employment relationship.

Still, as can be seen from Table 10, education far from outweighs the significance of impairment for the level of employment. Whereas 92,2% of persons with more than four years of higher education are employed, this is only the case for 63,6% of impaired individuals with higher education. Paradoxically, as Figure 2 shows, the level of employment for impaired individuals with higher education does not increase when employment for people with higher education in general increases. Quite to the contrary, the level of employment among highly educated persons with impairments declined between 2005-2008, whereas it rose for highly educated persons in general.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Employed in all</th>
<th>Employed with impairments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education (1-4 years)</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education (more than 4 years)</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics Norway, ad hoc module to Labour Force Survey*

The differences between non-impaired and impaired individuals in terms of employment are smaller for the group of adolescents and young adults (see Table 11). But also in this group, the difference in level of employment when comparing upper secondary education and higher education is higher for persons with impairments than for persons in all.

Gender also plays a role when measuring the level of employment between groups with different levels of education. Women with impairments are generally less employed than their male counterparts, and this is true at all levels of education (Table 12). This, however, changes according to the age span one uses for analysis. Table 14 shows that the share of women 20-35 years with impairments who are employed (58,3%) is larger than the share of their male counterparts (41,7%). These results, however, are not statistically significant and should be interpreted with this in mind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Employed in all</th>
<th>Employed with impairments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education (1-4 years)</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education (more than 4 years)</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Norway, ad hoc module to Labour Force Survey


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education (1-4 years)</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education (more than 4 years)</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Norway, ad hoc module to Labour Force Survey

Figure 2. Rates of employed individuals and employed individuals with impairments with higher education. Ages 16-66. Percent.

Source: Statistics Norway, ad hoc module to Labour Force Survey
3.6. Data on employment

3.6.1 Employment rate

The employment rate among people with impairments in Norway is low compared to the population in general. Whereas 77.3% of all persons between 16-66 were employed in the second quarter of 2008, this was only the case for 45.3% of all persons with impairments (Table 13). The employment rate among persons with impairments has been low in the whole period of conducting ad hoc modules on disability as part of the Labour Force Survey (2002-2008) and has not fluctuated very much with the state of the market. Even in the last few years, as the Norwegian economy experienced a historically exceptional period of growth, the employment rate of persons with impairments did not increase accordingly.

The differences in employment between impaired and non-impaired individuals aged 16-30 is smaller than in the population at large, but the employment level is still much lower for adolescents and young adults with impairments (Table 13). The LCS 07, which covers young adults with impairments from 20-35 years, shows that the employment rate for this group is 65%. It also shows that the employment rate is clearly higher for those with higher education – 82% versus 53% for those with only compulsory education (Bjerkan et al. 2009).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 16-66</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed in all</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed with impairments</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 16-30</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed in all</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed with impairments</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics Norway, ad hoc module to Labour Force Survey*
Table 14 provides background information on employed and non-employed young adults with impairments from LCS 07. Note that most of these correlations are not statistically significant.

Table 14. Background information on young adults with impairments. Employed and non-employed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-employed</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 110</td>
<td>n = 204</td>
<td>n = 314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sig</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41 37,3 %</td>
<td>85 41,7 %</td>
<td>126 40,1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>69 62,7 %</td>
<td>119 58,3 %</td>
<td>188 59,9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>87 79,1 %</td>
<td>172 84,3 %</td>
<td>259 82,5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western countries</td>
<td>5 4,5 %</td>
<td>13 6,4 %</td>
<td>18 5,7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Western countries</td>
<td>18 16,4 %</td>
<td>19 9,3 %</td>
<td>37 11,8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>46 42 %</td>
<td>51 25 %</td>
<td>97 31 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>47 43 %</td>
<td>77 38 %</td>
<td>124 40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>17 16 %</td>
<td>76 37 %</td>
<td>93 30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married or common law partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>59 53,6 %</td>
<td>79 38,7 %</td>
<td>138 43,9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51 46,4 %</td>
<td>125 61,3 %</td>
<td>176 56,1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 16 living at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>49 56 %</td>
<td>95 47 %</td>
<td>144 46 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>61 45 %</td>
<td>109 53 %</td>
<td>170 54 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents in the household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14 13 %</td>
<td>19 9 %</td>
<td>33 11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>96 87,3 %</td>
<td>185 90,7 %</td>
<td>281 89,5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)

In general, the employment rate is higher for all types of impairments covered in LCS 07 (Table 15). One very important factor influencing whether or not young adults are employed is the self-assessment of their own health condition. Whereas 78% of all young adults with good or very good health reported being employed, only 30% of those with bad or very bad health did.
Table 15. Type of impairments among young adults. Employed and non-employed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-employed</th>
<th>Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 110</td>
<td>n = 204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement impairment</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive impairment</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychic health impairment</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory impairment</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative impairment</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision impairment</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have disability or long lasting illness</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessment of health</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good or very good</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad or very bad</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)

3.6.2 Working hours

Data from the Labour Force Survey show that the type of employment also varies between employed individuals with and without impairments. Nearly half of all employed individuals with impairments work part time, whereas this is only the case for almost one third of employed individuals in general (16-66 years of age). Like in the population at large, women with impairments make up the biggest fraction of part-timer workers among employees with impairments.

LCS 07 data show that 43% of all young adults with impairments work less than 38 hours per week. The share of young adults with impairments doing so-called “short part-time work” – meaning less than 20 hours per week – is 14%. Of the young adults working part-time, 77% also report that they study (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008, p. 178).

3.6.3 Vocations and industry
As shown in Table 16, persons with impairments can be found in different vocations than other employed individuals. Most significantly, employed individuals with impairments are over-represented in lower skilled and unskilled vocations, such as sales, services, farming, fishing and assisting positions in services and industry. We do not have comparable data for young adults with impairments.

Table 17 shows employment by industry and shows that the greatest number of employed individuals with impairments work in health and social services.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocation</th>
<th>Employed total</th>
<th>Employed with impairments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management vocations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management, large firms and public adm.</td>
<td>6,2</td>
<td>5,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management, small firms</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>1,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic vocations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realists, civil engineers</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>3,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological and medical vocations</td>
<td>1,8</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors, upper secondary teachers</td>
<td>2,1</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher officer in public administration</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>1,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other academic vocations</td>
<td>2,6</td>
<td>3,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College and university vocations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers, technicians, etc.</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College vocations in medicine, etc.</td>
<td>3,7</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers, etc.</td>
<td>4,9</td>
<td>4,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower officers in public administration</td>
<td>10,1</td>
<td>10,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercantile vocations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office vocations</td>
<td>6,8</td>
<td>5,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service vocations</td>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>1,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and service vocations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and service vocations</td>
<td>22,0</td>
<td>23,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal service, security</td>
<td>14,4</td>
<td>15,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Employed in all</td>
<td>Employed with impairments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry, agriculture and fishery</td>
<td>2,7</td>
<td>4,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and gas</td>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>0,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry and mining</td>
<td>11,5</td>
<td>9,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity and water</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>0,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and construction</td>
<td>7,2</td>
<td>7,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade, hotel and restaurant</td>
<td>17,0</td>
<td>17,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and communication</td>
<td>6,2</td>
<td>5,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial services</td>
<td>2,2</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business services</td>
<td>11,8</td>
<td>7,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services:</td>
<td>39,5</td>
<td>44,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and defense</td>
<td>6,4</td>
<td>5,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8,7</td>
<td>9,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social services</td>
<td>19,8</td>
<td>27,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics Norway, ad hoc module to Labour Force Survey*
Figure 3 shows what kinds of industries young adults with impairments are employed in. Employment in health care seems to be less prevalent among youth than it is for older persons with impairments.

![Figure 3. Industries among young adults with impairments (n=205), percent](image)

Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)

### 3.6.4 Adaptations at work

Of the young in LCS 07 who are employed, 46% report that they have received accommodations at work in the form of tasks, working hours, assistive technologies or an assistant. Twenty-nine percent think that they need more adaptations than they have today. Out of this group, two thirds say they need adaptations of tasks, whereas 50% would like adaptations of the working hours, and 45% report a wish for more and better assistive technologies. Table 18 shows the need for adaptations according to impairment. It seems like persons with cognitive impairments have the greatest need for adaptations.
Table 18. Need for adaptation of work according to type of impairment among young employed adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Impairment</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No need</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movement impairment</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive impairment</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychic health impairment</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory impairment</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative impairment</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008)

3.7 National Insurance benefits

3.7.1 Benefit recipients

Another indicator of the number of “disabled” individuals in Norway is the number of recipients of benefits from the National Insurance Scheme in Norway. Table 19 shows recipients of all ages of central benefits administered by NAV from 2000-2008.
## Table 19. Recipients of selected benefits from National Insurance Scheme administered by NAV, 2000-2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation benefit</td>
<td>39,696</td>
<td>45,856</td>
<td>52,471</td>
<td>60,874</td>
<td>50,374</td>
<td>47,305</td>
<td>46,478</td>
<td>47,056</td>
<td>47,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational rehabilitation</td>
<td>31,971</td>
<td>35,434</td>
<td>37,983</td>
<td>52,013</td>
<td>67,234</td>
<td>68,413</td>
<td>64,272</td>
<td>57,469</td>
<td>54,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-limited disability benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8,515</td>
<td>18,814</td>
<td>30,333</td>
<td>38,694</td>
<td>43,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary disability benefit</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>2,099</td>
<td>2,210</td>
<td>1,878</td>
<td>2,078</td>
<td>1,414</td>
<td>1,337</td>
<td>1,409</td>
<td>808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability pension</td>
<td>279,573</td>
<td>285,364</td>
<td>292,224</td>
<td>301,214</td>
<td>302,369</td>
<td>300,877</td>
<td>297,485</td>
<td>294,850</td>
<td>295,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic benefits</td>
<td>131,231</td>
<td>132,161</td>
<td>132,937</td>
<td>133,752</td>
<td>133,732</td>
<td>133,015</td>
<td>131,922</td>
<td>130,897</td>
<td>130,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary benefits</td>
<td>89,538</td>
<td>89,794</td>
<td>89,671</td>
<td>89,532</td>
<td>87,128</td>
<td>86,692</td>
<td>86,524</td>
<td>85,765</td>
<td>85,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted technology</td>
<td>149,047</td>
<td>154,067</td>
<td>161,817</td>
<td>158,827</td>
<td>163,330</td>
<td>152,840</td>
<td>150,875</td>
<td>152,416</td>
<td>152,844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)*

### Box. 3 Explanation of benefits

**Rehabilitation benefits:** Rehabilitation benefits may be granted to persons who, because of “illness, injury or defect,” are not capable of doing paid labor. The benefit can be given after one year of sick leave or to persons who are not entitled to sickness benefits. Students who have been unable to study for at least 20 weeks because of a serious disease are also entitled to receive the benefit. The benefit can be given for one year (with a possible extension to two years), and the aim is to get back to work as fast as possible. Rehabilitation benefits can be given to persons between 18-67 years of age.

**Vocational rehabilitation:** Vocational rehabilitation benefits are provided for persons who have a reduced capability to perform paid labor or who have a limited range of vocational choices due to “illness, injury or defect.” The benefit is given while the person is undergoing specific labor market measures (i.e., supported employment or education), seeking a job after the measure is completed or waiting for other benefits if the measure(s) was not successful in providing paid work. Vocational rehabilitation benefits can be given to persons between 19-67 years of age, but if the labor market measure is education, the lower age limit is raised to 26. Benefits can be given for up to three years, depending on the labor market measure(s).

**Time-limited disability benefit:** A time-limited disability benefit is a benefit for a person who fulfills the
requirements of a disability pension, but it is still uncertain whether the person can return to work or enter work at a later date. In cooperation with the local NAV office, efforts are made to increase the work capability of the individual, and it is also possible to combine this benefit with part-time or full-time work without losing the right to the benefit.

Temporary disability benefit: Temporary disability benefits can be given to persons with no or very little former income who are therefore dependent on social security benefits provided by the municipality. The temporary disability benefit can only be granted in cases where the person has no other means of subsistence and where it is likely that the person fulfills the criteria for a permanent disability benefit.

Disability pension: To receive a permanent disability benefit (pension), a person has to have a reduced ability to perform paid work due to “illness, injury or defect.” The person have to have undergone medical treatment and rehabilitation before being granted a disability pension, and after these efforts the income capability must still be reduced by at least 50%. Young persons who are either born with an impairment or have acquired it before 26 years of age can receive a disability pension without having undergone these measures. Otherwise, persons who receive a disability pension have to be between 18-67 years old.

Basic benefits: A person is entitled to a basic benefit if he/she has extra costs due to a long-lasting “illness, injury or defect.” Extra costs are defined as costs of a permanent character that healthy persons do not have (assisted technology, transport, guide dog, prosthesis, etc.).

Auxiliary benefits: Auxiliary benefits can be given to persons who have a special need for care and nursing due to an illness, injury or congenital impairment. A precondition is that this caretaking has to be of a private character, for example by a private enterprise, spouse/partner, relatives, neighbors or others.

Assistive technology: Assisted technology can be granted to all persons who, because of permanent “illness, injury or defect,” need technical assistance to better function in the labor market or everyday life. This encompasses people of all ages, from children at home and in kindergarten to pensioners in a nursing home.

3.7.2 Disability benefits

As we can see from Table 19, the number of recipients of many of these benefits has been more or less stable or fluctuated with economic changes or other events. One serious concern of Norwegian disability policies, however, has been the increase of persons, especially young adults, on disability benefits (Table 20), which are normally received by older people. Young adults between 18-34 years of age comprise no more than 6,1% of all recipients of disability benefits.
Table 20. Recipients of disability benefits in Norway according to age, 2000-2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>279.573</td>
<td>285.364</td>
<td>292.224</td>
<td>301.214</td>
<td>310.884</td>
<td>319.691</td>
<td>327.818</td>
<td>333.544</td>
<td>339.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>2439</td>
<td>2429</td>
<td>2461</td>
<td>2531</td>
<td>2633</td>
<td>2921</td>
<td>3224</td>
<td>3510</td>
<td>3761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>5248</td>
<td>5016</td>
<td>4900</td>
<td>4856</td>
<td>4990</td>
<td>5173</td>
<td>5644</td>
<td>5886</td>
<td>6141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>9506</td>
<td>9323</td>
<td>9119</td>
<td>8978</td>
<td>9196</td>
<td>9467</td>
<td>9664</td>
<td>9703</td>
<td>9717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

A recent analysis has shown that half of all new recipients of disability benefits between the ages of 16 and 24 from 1977-2006 suffered from severe psychic health impairments, such as mental impairments, chromosome deviations or schizophrenia/autism. One fourth of new recipients have other psychic health problems, such as behavior and personality disorders or anxiety and depressive conditions. This group in particular has grown since 1993. The rest of the young persons on disability benefits have somatic illnesses, the most common of which are cerebral palsy and epilepsy (Brage & Thune 2008).

Similarly, in the age group between 25-39 years, half of all new recipients of disability benefits had a psychic illness. This share decreased somewhat with increased age. The most common conditions in this group were depression, anxiety and behavior and personality disorders. The young men had a large share of schizophrenia/autism. For women between 30-39 years of age, muscle and skeleton illnesses such as fibromyalgia or back problems were significant contributors to the increase in new disability benefits (Brage & Thune 2009).

3.8 Vocationally disabled

In chapter 2, we saw that one definition of being disabled in the NAV system is “vocationally disabled” – a person who, because of “illness, injury or defect,” has a problem finding work in the normal labor market (a term to be replaced by “impaired work capability”). Table 21 shows the distribution of people classified as vocationally disabled from 2002-2008. In all age groups, there has been an increase in vocationally disabled individuals in the last five years; this is mirrored in the youngest age groups, who, in 2007, consisted of 22.7% of all vocationally disabled individuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20 years</td>
<td>1 264</td>
<td>1 356</td>
<td>1 492</td>
<td>1 551</td>
<td>1 508</td>
<td>1 509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 years</td>
<td>6 804</td>
<td>7 488</td>
<td>8 115</td>
<td>8 409</td>
<td>7 990</td>
<td>7 550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29 years</td>
<td>9 741</td>
<td>10 112</td>
<td>10 897</td>
<td>11 321</td>
<td>10 683</td>
<td>9 863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>24 250</td>
<td>26 106</td>
<td>28 835</td>
<td>30 291</td>
<td>28 052</td>
<td>25 282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>18 857</td>
<td>20 245</td>
<td>22 990</td>
<td>25 263</td>
<td>24 642</td>
<td>22 934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>10 153</td>
<td>10 826</td>
<td>12 631</td>
<td>14 364</td>
<td>14 155</td>
<td>13 494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years and over</td>
<td>1 376</td>
<td>1 511</td>
<td>1 714</td>
<td>2 105</td>
<td>2 437</td>
<td>2 663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

Table 22 shows that most of these vocationally disabled individuals were participating in a labor market program. By far, the largest portion was in some kind of state-sponsored traineeship or in training or education.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocationally disabled in action-plan</td>
<td>21 799</td>
<td>20 593</td>
<td>29 403</td>
<td>32 118</td>
<td>29 603</td>
<td>25 898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and waiting phases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage subsidies</td>
<td>1 526</td>
<td>1 689</td>
<td>1 569</td>
<td>1 899</td>
<td>1 828</td>
<td>2 052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored traineeship and training/</td>
<td>34 893</td>
<td>39 856</td>
<td>37 605</td>
<td>41 311</td>
<td>39 016</td>
<td>35 789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary employment programs</td>
<td>1 059</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported employment</td>
<td>1 797</td>
<td>2 510</td>
<td>2 992</td>
<td>3 680</td>
<td>4 704</td>
<td>5 405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental schemes and other</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>2 488</td>
<td>1 906</td>
<td>1 568</td>
<td>1 158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and vocational rehabilitation (partly in VRE*)</td>
<td>3 775</td>
<td>3 981</td>
<td>3 636</td>
<td>3 436</td>
<td>3 609</td>
<td>3 630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered employment in VRE</td>
<td>1 552</td>
<td>1 592</td>
<td>1 547</td>
<td>1 502</td>
<td>1 452</td>
<td>1 431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered employment</td>
<td>5 670</td>
<td>6 315</td>
<td>6 761</td>
<td>7 220</td>
<td>7 522</td>
<td>7 821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of persons in programs</td>
<td>50 644</td>
<td>57 053</td>
<td>57 000</td>
<td>61 187</td>
<td>59 864</td>
<td>57 395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

* Vocational rehabilitation enterprise
Training and education in Table 22 should not be mistaken with upper secondary or higher education, since training and education offered through vocational rehabilitation are often shorter courses at labor market enterprises or adult education institutions. The goal of training and education in vocational rehabilitation is “proper work” and not education _per se_, and the lower age limit to be able to attain an upper secondary or higher education through vocational rehabilitation is 26 years, unless special exceptions are made (Rundskriv om yrkesrettet attføring 22.02.2005). As can be seen from Table 23, relatively few of the vocationally disabled receive higher education financed with a vocational rehabilitation benefit and extra financial support for their education.

**Table 23. Vocationally disabled individuals who receive education financed through vocational rehabilitation as of October 2007.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Higher education up to 4 years</th>
<th>Higher education above 4 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 years</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29 years</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>2,675</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>1,830</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years and over</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,963</strong></td>
<td><strong>669</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonssenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007)*

### 3.8 Data on disability and transitions

The data on young persons with impairments in Norway is scarce, and it was not until recently that a broader Living Conditions Survey posed questions to young adults in the transition phase between education and work. Still, the data on transition issues are very poor. Since registration of medical conditions, impairments or learning difficulties of students in primary, secondary and tertiary education is prohibited by legislation on privacy protection, it has been difficult to conduct studies with this group as a whole. Longitudinal studies on the pathways of students with special education in upper secondary education have been conducted, but these do not represent the whole population of students with learning difficulties or impairments in the Norwegian school system. Although we know that higher education has a significant effect on employment of persons with impairments, no research on
the pathways of students in higher education similar to that on pupils in upper secondary schools has been conducted.

This impacts the opportunity to monitor the situations of students with impairments in upper secondary education and especially higher education and not least their transitions into the labor market. On the other hand, this would have been possible within normal research and evaluation programs. A publicly financed longitudinal study (part of the evaluation of the competence reform) of students in upper secondary education in the southeast of Norway was conducted recently without focusing on the situation of students with impairments and learning difficulties (Markussen, Sandberg, Lødding, & Frøseth 2008).

Surveys of students in tertiary education are also conducted on a regular basis. Normally, these have not included questions that could identify students with impairments or learning difficulties and therefore monitor their pathways to work. Principally, these surveys are:

- Stud. Mag.: Yearly survey of satisfaction and well-being among students in tertiary institutions.
- StudData: Continuous studies of the enrollment and qualification of students in professional courses (ISCED 5B).
- Candidate Survey: Bi-annual survey of the labor market careers of graduates (ISCED 5A).

There exist a few qualitative studies of the transition from education to work for young persons with impairments (Anvik 2006; Berge 2007), to which we will return in later chapters. The quantitative data on transition issues for students with impairments in Norway are very limited, which affects our ability to understand the issue.
3.9 Summary

- Of all youth with impairments between 16-30, 17.6% were undergoing education in Norway in 2008, compared to 21.3% of the total population in this age group (i.e., including those with impairments).
- The number of students in special education in upper secondary education in Norway varies between 0.8 and 8.2 per cent depending on the county. This might be explained by the high number of students with immigrant backgrounds in some counties, but it also shows that the practices of special education might differ from one county to another. Students in special education are not the same as SEN students in general.
- Students who receive special education resources and are integrated into ordinary classes have a higher competence attainment and are more often employed than those attending segregated special education. However, drop-out rates among these students are higher from integrated classes than from segregated ones.
- The educational level of young persons with impairments is significantly lower than that of other youth. Whereas 38% of all young adults aged 20-35 have attained higher education, this is only the case of 30% of young adults with impairments. At the same time, the data show that higher education is more important for young adults with impairments to achieve employment than for others.
- Twenty-four percent of students with impairments have chosen a different area of study than they wanted because of their impairment. More than 50% experience challenges with organizing their own everyday lives. One quarter of students with impairments say they are in need of further adaptations of their studies.
- The employment rate for young adults with impairments in Norway is around 65%. For those with higher education, the employment rate is 82%, and for those with only compulsory education it is 53%.
- Among young adults with impairments, 43% work part-time. Of the part-timers, 77% combine studies and work. More than half of all employed individuals with impairments aged 20-35 work in offices, sales and services.
- Of employed young adults with impairments, 46% report having had accommodations made at work, and 29% want further accommodations.
• There has been an increase of young persons on both passive disability benefits and active vocational rehabilitation benefits in Norway in the last eight years. Few young people receive higher education as part of vocational rehabilitation programs.
• We have little data on transition issues among SEN students in general, and especially on the transitions from upper secondary education to tertiary education and from tertiary education to work.
4. CURRENT GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENTS AND GOALS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of current government policy statements and goals for persons with impairments in general and transition issues for students with impairments in particular. It discusses to what extent these policies have been successful at facilitating better transitions from education to work and whether they have resulted in increased coordination across different policy sectors.

Box 4. Mainstreaming and coordination

Norwegian governments base their policies and work in relation to people with impairments on the principle of mainstreaming (sektoransvarsprinsippet). This makes every authority responsible for all social groups within their jurisdiction (i.e., the Ministry of Education is responsible for the education of persons with impairments, immigrant backgrounds, etc.). All authorities are to evaluate and monitor the situation for persons with impairments within their area and assess the need for measures to secure equal access to their provisions. In other words, there is no single authority with responsibility for disability.

In order to ensure that government policies are coordinated and coherent and that the disability perspective is part of the work of all authorities, the Ministry of Children and Equality has been given the responsibility to coordinate the politics toward persons with impairments. Among other things, this means having responsibility for:

- Secretary function for the State Secretary committee on disability issues and for the coordinating group on disability issues on a lower administrative level.
- Coordinating tasks such as the Government Action Plan for Universal Design and Increased Accessibility and the UN Convention on Equal Rights for Persons with Disability.
- Some organs in the Directorate of Health, such as the Norwegian Council on Disability and the State Center of Competence on Accessibility and Participation.
Other forms of coordination are also taking place when specific policies crossing sectors are implemented. These forms of cooperation normally vary with the type of policy implemented. The Government’s Action Plan for Universal Design and Increased Accessibility for Persons with Impairments is, for example, coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of the Environment.

*Source: Ministry of Children and Equality and Ministry of the Environment*

### 4.2 General policy goals

The main aim for persons with impairments in Norway is full participation and equality in all spheres of society. This is the same aim as the foundation of the UN’s standard rules for equal opportunities for disabled individuals established in 1993 and adopted by Norway as the foundation of its policies (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonsenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007). Since then, there has been broad political consensus on this goal. The previous Center-Right government formulated this goal in a Report to the Storting (St. meld. nr. 40 2002-2003) in the following way: “The government’s vision is that persons with impairments shall have opportunities for personal development and participation on the same level as any other member of society.” The platform of the present Center-Left government developed three central goals for its period in power: “The first being that the government wants to lay the principle of equity and universal design as the foundation of its work, the second being that a law against discrimination [on the basis of impairments] must be implemented, and the third being that a binding schedule for accessibility must be made” (Plattform for regjeringssamarbeidet mellom Arbeiderpartiet, Sosialistisk Venstreparti og Senterpartiet 2005-09).

For both of these governments, universal design was singled out as the most seminal strategy in achieving the aim of equality and participation. As written in the introduction to the *Action plan for increased accessibility for people with impairments*, tabled by the former Center-Right government and continued by the present government and 15 of its 17 ministries:

> Socially constructed barriers can lead to worse terms for education, work and an active social life for persons with impairments. The plan of action for increased accessibility shall be an active plan to remedy this. […] The government has chosen to put the strategy of universal design as the foundation of this work. This strategy is the right way to go to find solutions
that can be used by all regardless of their capabilities. This is also the road to a more sustainable society. A sustainable society takes care of both the environment and the people. Such an approach to societal development is high on the political agenda both internationally and nationally (Regjeringens handlingsplan for økt tilgjengelighet for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2004).

In terms of implementation, it is difficult to assess whether or not broad policy goals such as full participation and equality are on their way to being realized. The recent Living Conditions Survey among persons with impairments showed that in every social area there is a long way to go before these goals are a living reality (Molden, Wendelborg, & Tøssebro 2009). However, the present Center-Left government has continued the practice of former governments of making these goals part – and at times a central part – of its strategies and policy documents. The Act on Discrimination and Accessibility for persons with impairments was passed in parliament in 2008 after several years of preparation. The Act has, on the other hand, not been amended by a binding schedule for accessibility.

4.3 Upper secondary education

4.3.1 Inclusive and adaptive education

For several decades, Norway has had a unitary school system where students with impairments – with the exceptions of a few special schools for the hearing-impaired, students with multiple impairments and severe learning difficulties – attend the same schools as their peers. All students are expected to be educated in the same curriculum, achieve the same vocational skills, and to participate in the same school community.

Every major school reform since the early 1990s has stressed equality and inclusion as the superior principles of Norwegian educational policy. According to a central policy document of the most recent educational reform, the Knowledge Promotion Reform, “tuition must be accessible for all, and everyone shall have good opportunities for learning, development and being able to surmount the challenges of life. The pupils and apprentices are heterogeneous, and thus have different needs and preconditions. An identical educational provision for all students would therefore become an equal provision. To achieve an equal provision, the
school has to provide varied and differentiated education and training” (St. meld. nr. 30 2003-04).

To achieve this, the school system is based on what is called *adapted education*. Adapted education basically means that the individual pupil is to be taught and trained in the same groups as his or her fellow pupils – with the learning aids, assistive technology, human assistants or extra teaching resources necessary to achieve adequate benefits of the education within the framework of ordinary tuition and school budget. In the words of the Report to the Storting, adapted education “implies that all sides of the learning environment attend to the discrepancy between the needs and preconditions of the pupils. An inclusive education also means that students with needs for special adaptations shall belong to an inclusive community and confront challenges that are adjusted to their needs and preconditions. This is a demanding task which in turn demands good cooperative relationships with the parents of the pupils, cooperation and coordination with several instances within primary and lower secondary education, as well as an active use of resources outside the school” (St. meld. nr. 30 2003-04).

In cases where this is not deemed adequate, *special education* might be allocated. According to the Act on Primary and Secondary Education, every student that does not benefit from adapted learning has the right to special education. Special education is released after an expert assessment (normally by the Educational Psychological Service, see chapter 8) of what the pupil might realistically achieve with respect to the goals set in national curricula (primary and lower secondary education) for vocational skills or an academic certificate (upper secondary education). Special education can both be given in ordinary classes – taking the form of extra teaching resources or an assistant – and organized individually or in special groups. Special education should normally be provided at the closest school, but the pupil might in extraordinary instances be redirected to other schools in the municipality (primary and lower secondary education) or county (upper secondary education).

Whereas there is a broad political consensus on the importance of adaptive education, there has been more disagreement on the right to, and role of, special education. The White Paper of the *Quality Commission* in 2003 (NOU 2003:16) proposed the abolition of the right to special education altogether, but this was later disputed and not adopted by the parliament. The *Culture for learning* report also warned against the lack of adapted education in primary
and secondary schools and the extensive and almost arbitrary use of special education (St. meld. nr. 30 2003-04). Still, the Ministry behind the report concluded that special education – understood as a version of adapted education – is necessary to achieve equality in education.

4.3.2 Recent reforms

All three major educational reforms of the primary and secondary educational sectors since the beginning of the 1990s have also related themselves to the situations of students with impairments and learning difficulties. Even though not all of these reforms necessarily reflect the current government goals and statements, it is worthwhile to explain them here to better understand the current condition of the school system and the transition from school to work or tertiary education.

Reform 94

The educational reform initiated in 1994 – simply called reform 94 – secured for adolescents between 16 and 19 years of age a statutory right to five years of upper secondary education leading to a concluding certificate: a university admission certificate, a vocational/craft certificate or other formalized vocational skills. The numbers of basic courses were also drastically reduced from more than 100 to only 13, introducing specialization at the second and third levels of upper secondary education. In addition, reform 94 made it easier to convert a vocational certificate into a university admission certificate by spending an additional year in school to complete subjects not (sufficiently) taught in vocational education and training.

In the report to the Storting where the reform was described, it was also stressed that new educational reform would speed up the process of deconstructing the system of special schools for students with impairments and learning difficulties and secure them adequate training as part of ordinary schools (St. meld. nr. 33 1991-92).

One important concern before introducing reform 94 was the lack of an arrangement to take care of adolescents who did not apply for admission to upper secondary education, had dropped out of upper secondary school or were in danger of doing so. Thus, the County-wide Follow-up Service was created to help address this problem that was affecting, among other
groups, pupils with physical and psychological impairments as well as learning difficulties and behavioral problems.

Reform 97

In the spring of 1993, the parliament decided to introduce mandatory schooling beginning in the calendar year in which a child becomes six years old. The 10-year compulsory (primary and lower secondary) education was further consolidated in reform 97. The reform consisted of a core curriculum for primary, secondary and adult education, a set of principles and guidelines for compulsory education and a set of syllabi. The reform continued the trend of integrating every pupil in the same schools by declaring equal access to education regardless of residence, gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity or functional ability. Importantly, individual learning plans were introduced to make possible coherent planning of the education of pupils with special needs (St. meld. nr. 29 1994-95).

Knowledge promotion reform

Knowledge Promotion was introduced in 2006 and is the most recent reform of primary and secondary education in Norway. The reform introduced certain changes in the substance, structure and organization from the first grade in the 10-year compulsory school to the last grade in upper secondary education and training. One important political concern behind this reform was the relatively poor results of Norwegian students in the PISA surveys, especially in subjects such as reading, mathematics and science. With the institution of the Knowledge Promotion reform, schools are to prioritize the cultivation of basic skills in all subjects. These are the abilities to express oneself orally, to read, to do arithmetic, to express oneself in writing and to make use of information and communication technology.

Furthermore, elective program subjects are introduced at the lower secondary level to give the 10-year compulsory school pupils a foretaste of subjects in upper secondary school. New subject syllabi have also been worked out for all subjects in the 10-year compulsory school and for common subjects in upper secondary education and training.

The Knowledge Promotion Reform materialized provisions that addressed the claims by some critics that primary and secondary education was too rigid to adapt to a rapidly changing society and to practice a real adapted education. The reform allowed greater local freedom of
choice with regard to working methods, teaching aids and the organization of education. Each school, for example, is now allowed to deviate up to 25% from the national standard of hours per subject and to redistribute these to other subjects when deemed necessary.

In the groundwork for the reform, the varying quality of adaptive education and the huge differences in the application of special education were highlighted (St. meld. nr. 30 2003-04, NOU 2003:16) again, as so many times before. A series of proposals were introduced to “equip schools to meet a greater diversity amongst pupils and parents/guardians” (Cleemet 2004). Among these were increasing the resources devoted to research, developing methods and diffusion of experiences on adapted education, facilitating cooperation among units working with adapted education, increasing funding to the development of skills for handling problematic behavior, prioritizing universal design of teaching and learning aids, and improving the supervision of primary and secondary education and training.

A central administrative tool for The Directorate of Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet) has been the project “Knowledge promotion reform – from words to deeds” which aims at empowering schools in becoming learning organizations. Through the program, funds are allocated to development projects that are based on a tripartite cooperation model between schools, school owners and external competence partners. How well the proposals in the Knowledge Promotion Reform and the project “… from words to deeds” have been implemented is the subject of an ongoing research-based evaluation of the reform itself issued and financed by the Directorate of Education and Training, and it is still too early to draw conclusions on the results of the evaluation.6

4.3.3 Transition issues

Completion and drop-out of upper secondary education

Several important transition issues for students in general and students with impairments and learning difficulties in particular can be identified in Norwegian policies. The first has been what kind of effects the ongoing integration of SEN students in ordinary student groups and

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6 http://www.udir.no/Artikler/Fra-ord-til-handling/ (last accessed 20.07.2009)
adaptive education have had for the performance of SEN students, and hence their ability to obtain vocational or academic skills and continue into work or tertiary education.

As we saw in chapter 3, research shows that special education inside ordinary classes has a positive effect on the attainment of general studies or vocational qualifications. The best effect of special education seems to be attained when SEN students participate in ordinary classes combined with extra resources. On average, this leads to better results for all students (including non-SEN students) (Markussen et al. 2007, pp. 30-32).

Behind the establishment of the Follow-up Service in 1994 was a concern about the drop-out rate among students in upper secondary education (including students with learning difficulties and impairments). This was also the case for the Plan of Action against Dropout in Upper Secondary School, initiated in 2003 by the former Center-Right government.

According to the OECD Education Data Base, Norway has a comparatively high drop-out rate from upper secondary education. With a drop-out rate of 20.7%, it both exceeds the OECD average and is more than twice as high as in other Nordic countries: Sweden (8.6 %), Finland (10.8 %) and Denmark (11.8%) (OECD 2008).

However, a large portion of pupils dropping out of school later return to finish their upper secondary education. Longitudinal data on young persons in Norway from 2001 to 2006 show that more than 50% of 16-19 year olds stopping their education in 2001 had finished their upper secondary education by 2005. Many drop-outs are also merely “switchers” who take a year of absence to work or think about their future career and then continue in other courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational attainment in 2005</th>
<th>Drop-outs at the age of 16-19 in 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than ISCED 3 (still a drop-out)</td>
<td>45,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 3</td>
<td>53,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than ISCED 3</td>
<td>0,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (OECD 2008, p. 71)

A study by the Norwegian research institute NIFU-Step showed that 65.8% of 9,749 young adults in the southeast of Norway followed from 2002-2007 achieved the standards required
for higher education or a vocational qualification, and 34.2% achieved a level of competence lower than this. Of the 34.2% who achieved a lower level of competence, 19.4% were non-dropouts who did not pass, while 14.8% dropped out before finishing their upper secondary education (Høst 2008).

The drop-out rate, on the other hand, is far higher in some programs than in others. In Technical and Industrial Productions, Building and Construction, Health and Social Care and Service and Transport, the drop-out rate reaches around 20%, whereas Restaurant and Food Processing have a drop-out rate of 33% (Markussen & Sandberg 2005).

The study of NIFU-Step also analyzed the transition from school to apprenticeship between the second and third years of upper secondary education. They found that 16% of the cohort followed applied for an apprenticeship. The analysis showed that two out of three received the apprenticeship they wanted. The remaining third, who did not receive an apprenticeship, chose between two different strategies: they either started something else within upper secondary education or they dropped out. Those who dropped out constituted 17.5% of all applicants for an apprenticeship. They made up half of those who dropped out between their second and third years, and they made up one fifth of the total share of those who dropped out.

An important aspect of Reform 94 was to increase the number of apprentices as the number of students entering and completing apprenticeships had been declining. The reform maintained that one third of each cohort should receive company-based apprenticeship training (Høst 2008). The actual numbers have been much smaller, and data show that the percentage of 16-19 year olds in apprenticeships has ranged between 10-15. Politically, working together with the private sector to provide more apprenticeship places has been one of the main strategies to counter this particular drop-out problem (Høst 2008). Some researchers have questioned whether an increased volume of apprenticeship would lead to a lesser drop-out rate:

In order to examine this, we conducted an analysis of the factors that influenced the likelihood of getting an apprenticeship from not getting one. This analysis showed that the probability of getting an apprenticeship increased according to the following factors: achieving high grades in the first year; when they had passed all exams the second year; when their rate of absenteeism during the second year of upper secondary education was low; and when the father’s education
was vocational education on upper secondary level. This illustrates that the employers chose the most qualified apprentices; it was not accidental who got to become apprentices. The solution to the problem that not all of those who apply for an apprenticeship get one is not necessarily to increase the number of apprenticeships. Judging from the characteristics of those who were successful in applying for an apprenticeship, we may assume that a greater volume of apprenticeships would not necessarily help those applicants who were unsuccessful.

We observe, then, a structural hindrance in upper secondary education, a hindrance that keeps some young people from continuing the education they started. Although the counties are the ‘owners’ of upper secondary education, they do not have control over the second half of vocational education, when the students work as apprentices in training companies. This control rests with the labor market. The labor market decides on the number of apprenticeships in each vocational area and who will be accepted. This gives reason to raise the question of whether the statutory right to three years of upper secondary education is in reality a right available to all young people, or if a small proportion of 1-2% of each cohort is excluded from this right. (Høst 2008, pp. 37-38)

As already mentioned, the drop-out and qualification study did not specifically include questions to identify students or apprentices with impairments or learning difficulties. As part of the project, however, interviews were conducted with 29 youth who had dropped out of their apprenticeships, and a number of these persons attributed this to health problems like injury, allergies or sickness. In cases where the apprenticeship was too simple or too difficult, there was also a greater risk for drop-out. All in all, these indicators are not sufficient to conclude that persons with illnesses or impairments more often drop out of apprenticeship schemes than others (Høst 2008, p. 42).

Due to the general lack of data on students with impairments in basic and higher education in Norway, we know little on the relation between disability and drop-out rates. Although most drop-outs later return to school or find jobs, a minority of Norway’s youth remain outside of both the educational system as well as the labor market for three years or more. Between 2001-2003, this was the case of 2% of all 16-19 year olds and 8% of all persons between 20-30 years. This groups reports having worse health conditions compared to students or employees, and they reported psychic problems 2-3 times more often than youth in general (Statistisk Sentralbyrå 2007).
The research on the Follow-up Service is unclear as to what extent it has managed to remedy the drop-out rate from upper secondary education. Several of the studies of the service are qualitative and focus on describing the local variations of the organization. A study following Reform 94 documented large geographical variations in the organization of the service and a difference in coordination with other sectors, such as local employment offices and schools (Grøgaard, Midtsundstad, & Egge 1999). This picture is also confirmed by newer research (Buland & Havn 2004). The 1990s studies showed that the Follow-up Service was quite successful in getting in touch with its target group – principally students with less educated parents and problems in the family – which counted for about 7% of the cohort in 1995. The service was successful in getting a little more than half of drop-outs with a statutory right to upper secondary education back into school or into a labor market program, and a small but significant portion of the drop-outs refused to receive assistance with the service. Importantly, the study also showed that students were often recruited in the transition from lower secondary to upper secondary school or in the first few months after starting upper secondary education (Grøgaard et al. 1999).

An evaluation of the Plan of Action Against Dropout in Upper Secondary School also showed varying effects of different county-based projects, but still identified certain success factors for reducing drop-out (Havn, Buland, Finbak, & Dahl 2007):

- One size does not fit all: A clear result from the action plan was that the projects had to be rooted in local realities and not imported from one county to another. In addition, the results stressed that no single tool was shown to be the best solution for the drop-out problem, but rather a range of tools is needed to embrace the diversity of students.
- Increased focus on transition issues: The increased attention to transition issues was in itself a factor contributing to reduced drop-out. This made it possible for authorities and service providers to strengthen already existing networks and provisions, such as career counseling, improvement of the learning environment, systems of early warning, learning arenas outside school and greater parental involvement.
- Better statistics: A central problem for the Follow-up Service has been a lack of oversight of the target group. Better systems for recording, registration and construction of statistics are vital to improve their work to counter drop-outs.
- System planning: Single individuals or institutions cannot counter the drop-out problem themselves; the work must be coordinated on a system level. Especially important is
cooperation with municipalities and local industry.

- Focusing on transitions: Preventive work focusing on the transition from lower to upper secondary school seems to be very important since this is a particularly vulnerable phase for many.
- Schools in the center: Having the headmaster centrally involved in the process also seems to be crucial.

**Career guidance**

The increased drop-out rate has also generated concern about the quality of career guidance in lower and upper secondary schools. Research has shown that most career counselors were 40-60 years old, and one quarter of school counselors overall and 20% in upper secondary education had no relevant formal education. Of those with formal education, 11% reported having completed “smaller courses” in counseling, 8% had completed “100 hour courses”, 20% had a half a year unit, 19% a year-long unit and 5% higher education. Note that formal education here does not mean education in counseling, but rather a social science subject such as political science or anthropology. The very same study also showed that counselors spent most of their time on the social-pedagogical side of counseling, assisting a few individuals with social and psychological challenges (Teig 2000).

On a political level, a 2002 OECD study of career guidance and counseling in Norway also contributed to an increased focus on the issue. As well, business circles and the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO) have expressed critical views on the correlation between business demands and the educational choices of youth. This led to two experimental schemes, out of which the most important for transition issues was to divide the counseling service in lower and upper secondary education into one social-psychological counseling service (focusing primarily on special needs of students in education) and a separate career guidance service (focusing on the transition from lower to upper secondary education and into work). The project was recognized as a success, and as a consequence, more and more schools have applied the divided counseling service-model (Buland 2008). Recent changes of the Education Act have further enforced this development.
4.4 Higher education

4.4.1 Dismantling barriers in higher education

Disability has been an issue in policies of higher education since the early 1980s. In a Report to the Storting in the mid-1980s (St.meld. nr. 19 1984-95), it was stated that developments within higher education over the past 10 years had led to broader recruitment of students, but that this growth had been beneficial to persons with impairments only to a small degree. In a report to the Storting in the early 1990s (St.meld. nr. 40 1990-91), the Ministry of Education pointed out the institutions’ responsibility to survey various barriers and prioritize giving students with impairments a good learning environment. The Ministry claimed that the visually impaired, hearing impaired, individuals with severe allergies, learning impaired and movement impaired often encountered so many practical problems that this, in reality, could undermine their right to access higher education (Reindal 1995).

The government’s three action plans in the 1990s gave attention to disparities in access to universities and college universities between students with impairments and those without. The last governmental action for the disabled proposed the continuation of a provision where five percent of all maintenance subsidies from the State went to adaptations for students with impairments. As well, the government requested an evaluation of the student grant provision to see if it negatively affected students who were delayed because of disability.

The former Center-Right government issued the Dismantling disabling barriers report that formulated a set of goals for the policy aimed at students with impairments (St. meld. nr. 40 2002-03). No new policy documents on the situation of students with impairments in higher education have been issued since. The government said it wanted real equal access to higher education for students with impairments as long as they fulfilled the admission criteria, an increase of students with impairments to the same relative level as non-disabled students, and an easier transition between higher education and work. The goals were to be met by the following efforts:

- Improvement of the routines of reporting of results and status in the sector of higher education.
• Every institution shall have a local action plan to improve accessibility to higher education for students with impairments.
• Funding for a special unit at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology to speed up the process of making higher education accessible for all.
• The educational institutions shall make individual education plans a useful tool for students with impairments.
• Checking in on the demand that each institution have a contact person or counseling service for students with impairments.
• Establishment of a user forum for higher education, including disabled representatives.
• A new grant and loan provision for students, making it easier for persons receiving national insurance benefits to study.

The parliament added a few resolutions when treating the proposal of the government, asking it to ensure that the Quality reform being initiated at the same time would also provide quality and equal access for students with impairments and asking the government to ensure that the grant and loan provision would not induce extra costs related to impairments.7

4.4.2 The Quality Reform

The Quality Reform was introduced in 2003 to improve the quality of higher education and align the tertiary educational system in Norway to the Bologna process. The reform involved changes in governance, funding, quality assurance, degree structures, support of students and internationalization. The reform significantly changed the assessment procedures of the students from having a few large exams at the end of each semester to frequently handing in papers and completing smaller exams. It also led a much higher degree of student follow-up to ensure that their studies were completed in time. This has improved the completion rate of all students, but we do not have data on students with impairments and learning difficulties (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2009).

The central policy document of the Quality Reform (St.meld. nr. 27 2000-01), Do your duty – demand your rights, emphasized that the question of access to higher education is a question

7 Deliberations in the National Assembly (Stortinget) 22.04.2004
of social justice: “[…] [Special] needs or disabilities demand adaptations to achieve justice.”

The report further reads:

Disabled people have the same right to education as others. The educational institutions have a special responsibility to adapt the circumstances around admission to, and completion of, the studies. The adaptation of the actual studies is important, but other aspects of the learning environment should also be emphasized. The institutions must develop action plans for the disabled in higher education. […] The Ministry also wishes to underline that adaptations to the largest possible extent should be based on the principle of universal design, hence facilitating the satisfaction of the needs of this particular group of students [disabled] as much as possible in a normal study situation. (St.meld. nr. 27 2000-01)

4.4.3 Access to tertiary education

In the current Norwegian policy for students with impairments and learning difficulties in higher education, transition issues are basically understood in terms of having physical access to higher education and being able to carry a study through without being hampered by disabling barriers. Transitions from upper secondary schools to tertiary education or from tertiary education to employment have been a concern, but there have been few concrete policy proposals.

In terms of improvements of physical access to universities and university colleges, we have little data on to what extent the situation has improved with policies like 5% of the maintenance subsidies or increased political focus on the issue. A survey conducted by Statsbygg (the public construction and property management company of the state) has shown that many of its university colleges satisfy basic demands for accessibility (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonscenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007). There are few studies of the accessibility of universities, but a survey of university buildings and facilities in major Norwegian cities in 2000 concluded that the accessibility level was low in most places despite efforts at improving the physical structures (Medby et al. 2007). However, these data are getting old and do not provide an updated picture of the situation.

As local action plans for disabled students were included as a demand in the allotment letters to higher education institutions, these have been introduced at most institutions. The contents
of these action plans are different at each institution, but an evaluation of the implementation of these plans in 2003 concluded that they had been successful in shedding light on the situation of students with impairments and, in many instances, improved the work of the institutions vis-à-vis this group. On the other hand, the evaluation also concluded that some institutions had not yet implemented plans and that involvement of students with impairments was missing (Båtevik, Vartdal, & Veddegjærde 2003).

All higher education institutions today have a special counseling service unit for students with impairments, but the size and practice of these services often vary with the size of the educational institution. In an assessment of the accessibility measures in higher education, Synnøve Brandt claims that many of these counseling units often work as centers for information, and they do not assist their students with the many practical tasks associated with having an impairment (Brandt 2005). This is evidently a crucial obstacle since most students with impairments report that the greatest challenge with higher education is the organization of everyday life. Anecdotal evidence suggests that individual study plans are not used to simplify tasks demanded of students with impairments, as expressed in Dismantling disabling barriers, but only used as an instrument for keeping an overview of the present and future courses of individual students (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonssenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007).

Other policy measures have been implemented, such as the User Forum for Higher Education, in which representatives from disability NGOs, student organizations and the Ministry of Education meet 3-4 times a year to discuss relevant issues for the situation of students with impairments in higher education. Also, in 2003 the National Coordinator for Accessibility in Higher Education was founded, and it has already established itself as a center of competence on universal design and accessibility, advising both higher education institutions and government authorities on policy and developing information for students.

Although the grant and loan provision regulations have been modified to make it possible to combine disability benefits and support from the State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen), there have been no revisions of regulations that might give students with impairments a higher debt burden than other students (we will return to this in chapter 7).
According to Synnøve Brandt’s assessment of The Quality Reform, it seems to have been working in favor of students with certain types of impairments and in disfavor of students with others (Brandt 2005). Some of the students Brandt interviewed experienced the reform as positive because closer follow-up, teamwork and less extensive assignments made progression through studies easier. Some of the students also felt that the teamwork gave them a feeling of being included in a student community and provided extra motivation to complete their studies according to the schedule.

The main problem for students with visual impairments, however, is that the increased modularity made it difficult to receive adapted literature in time for the courses. Smaller and faster-paced courses were also experienced as a problem for students with so-called “bad periods,” or health conditions that made them incapacitated for short or longer periods at a time. These students felt they had to push themselves to meet deadlines and were exhausted for longer time periods thereafter. The increased use of teamwork was also a problem for them since they did not have the chance to ask for extensions for assignments due to illness.

The Quality Reform encourages higher education institutions to make use of alternative forms of assessment and examinations and to give students more frequent feedback. This, however, was not the experience of the students in Brandt’s study, and the experience was especially difficult for students with dyslexia. The electronic platforms of the learning management systems introduced after the Quality Reform were also impossible to use for students with visual impairments. Another difficulty experienced by some students was that courses with integrated job practice for students made adaptations difficult since the NAV Center for Assisted Technology does not assist for short job practices, but only for employment of a lasting kind. However, none of the students in Brandt’s study wanted to reverse the reform itself.

4.5 Labor market policies

Norwegian labor market politics are recognizable by a public, national and nation-wide job center system providing the possibility for governance over the labor market across regions. Private actors play a relatively small role, primarily in relation to short-term positions (temporary employment agencies). In accordance with the principle of mainstreaming, the
Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) is also responsible for employment for persons with impairments.

Furthermore, the labor market policies are recognizable by a public, national income safeguarding system for people outside the labor market. This system takes care of persons who are unemployed both as a result of regular unemployment and as a result of having so-called impaired work capabilities (redusert arbeidsevne) by a set of labor market measures geared toward strengthening the chances of both the regular unemployed and persons with impaired work capability regarding their position in the labor market. The measures are mainly geared toward vocational training, career review assistance and education. Norway has had a certain amount of sheltered employment, but has for the last two decades relied on restructuring policies regarding these sheltered workplaces, the aim of which is to, to a higher degree than previously, function as labor market measures and achieve a greater rate of transfer to the ordinary workforce for the people receiving their services (Widding 1995).

4.5.1 Working line policy

The post war vocational rehabilitation policies have had as their main focus various measures to help persons with impaired work capability fulfill the demands of the labor market. In the Vocational Rehabilitation report of 1992, the working line policy was made clear: work and activity must be the main priorities, rather than benefits and a resulting passive existence. Economic support is to be given in a manner that will increase the recipients’ chances of entering the labor market. The working line policy revitalizes a principle that has been incorporated in the political sphere since the National Insurance System was established, but has had only a small impact on practical policies – the principle that the possibilities of work and vocational rehabilitation must be explored before any passive benefit is given.

The working lines in welfare policies are implemented for two reasons. Through participating in the labor market, members of society gain social inclusion, and it is necessary from a socio-economic point of view to get more members of society to be self-supporting through paid work rather than getting their income from various forms of social securities (public safeguarding of income). In recent years another reason has been added, tied up to a lack of manpower. The working line policy has existed within a discourse on societal costs of impairment, a discourse where one lately, in view of the increased shortfall of manpower, has
also turned attention toward the non-utilized work capacity of persons with impairments. As stated in the Report to the Storting, which led up to the latest work and welfare reform (the reform of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, the NAV reform):

To safeguard young persons with impaired work capability access to the labor market contributes to putting a stop to the fact that some individuals end up with various disability pensions when other solutions could be found. A stronger recruitment of persons with impaired work capability also contributes to safeguarding an increased supply of manpower in coming years. (St.meld. nr. 9 2006-07)

The working line policy is directing efforts toward three fronts – the individuals, the support system and the employers. Two of these have existed for a while. Efforts towards the employers represent a change of direction.

4.5.2 Individual incentives for employment

Individuals are to be motivated to choose work over social security benefits through economic incentives in the social security system. It is chiefly those with long-term problems in regard to the labor market that shall be motivated by rehabilitation benefits. Vocational rehabilitation benefits and disability pensions result in lower income than regular paid work. The policy of wages paid in full during illness, short-term absence and absence lasting up to a full year has been kept unchanged, and the labor movement strongly supports this policy.

**Box. 5 Sizes of some benefits relevant for young persons with impairment**

Unemployment benefits in Norway are reserved for people with labor market experience. In 2009, receiving an unemployment benefit required having earned a minimum salary of NOK 105,384 for at least one year or at least NOK 210,768 in the previous three years. Therefore, young persons with impairments in the transition from school to work normally do not have access to unemployment benefits. Other benefits relevant for young persons with impairments are:

- **Rehabilitation benefits** are given with a compensation rate of 66% of former income (either last year or average for last three years) or a minimum of NOK 138,404 per year (2008). If the impaired work ability occurred before 26 years of age because of documented injury or illness, the minimum benefit is NOK 171,424.
- **Time-limited disability benefits** are given at a minimum of NOK 138,404 per year (2008) or a
maximum of NOK 264,576. Disability benefits for young persons are NOK 171,425.

- *Vocational rehabilitation benefits* depend on the type of labor market program one is involved in, based on former income, pension points, etc. Vocational training benefits are normally at a minimum NOK 138,404 per year (2008).

*Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)*

### 4.5.3 Support services for activation

The motivation is also supposed to build into the way the individual claimants are served by the *support services*. Those on sick leave, for example, are to be monitored more closely and the support services, both the medical profession and the National Insurance Service, are to take action earlier in the sick leave period to stop the sick from entering a role dominated by illness and thus becoming passive. In the Report to the Storting called *Labour, welfare and social inclusion* (St.meld. nr. 9 2006-07), the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion presents the new measures in the labor and welfare administration aimed at providing a stronger work orientation. The main proposals in the report are:

- A principle of welfare contracts will be used consistently and systematically to specify mutual expectations, requirements and obligations between the public administration and the user of the services.
- More work-oriented measures and services will be introduced in order to lower the barriers to entering employment and raise the barriers to leaving employment, including specially adapted measures for persons with impaired work capacity and for immigrants.
- More flexible and better coordinated use of policy instruments so that such instruments can be used on the basis of the individual’s need to find employment.
- A new temporary income guarantee in the National Insurance scheme that replaces medical and vocational rehabilitation benefits and the temporary disability benefit. The reorganization is intended to contribute to switching the use of resources from administering benefits to active measures and follow-up.
- A new qualification program with pertaining qualification benefits for persons with significantly impaired work capacity and earning ability and with little or very limited rights to subsistence benefits from the National Insurance scheme.
Central in the NAV reform have also been new measures targeting young job seekers. The Follow-up guarantee was introduced in the state budget in 2007 and involves strengthened assistance and guidance for young persons aged 20-24. The guarantee implies that NAV will contact and summon all job seekers in this age group who have been unemployed for the last three months. In an interview with the job seekers, the NAV officer will first and foremost focus on ordinary job search. If this is not successful, further assistance from NAV will be adapted to the needs and qualifications of the individual and aim at a quick transfer to education or work (OECD 2008).

4.5.4 Encouraging employers

Employers are given a greater responsibility to integrate, include, and put a stop to exclusion from the labor market. The support services offer assistance to employers in achieving this aim. Taking as its starting point an understanding that it is not ill will, but ignorance that makes employers too passive, employers are offered guidance and advice and are encouraged to have prevention of absence and exclusion as their main goal (Andreassen 1996). The enterprises are motivated to follow up on sick leave, provide in-house vocational rehabilitation and have a more caring attitude toward the staff.

The Agreement for a More Inclusive Working Life (the IA-agreement) was finalized on October 1st, 2001. The agreement’s first period lasted from 2001-2004. Today’s agreement stems from 14th December, 2005, and is effective from 2006-2009. Figures from NAV for the second quarter of 2008 show that 42.100 enterprises are IA-agreement enterprises (of a total of 192.177 enterprises). A total of 1.139.476 employees are working in IA-agreement enterprises, of a total 2.056.611 employees. The percentage of IA-agreement enterprises is higher in the public sector than in the private sector.

One of three partial goals of the agreement is aimed directly at improving the situation for people with impairments in the labor market (Partial goal no. 2: To keep and recruit employees with impairments). The government was concerned that too many disabled people had marginal positions in relation to the labor market: they had a lower degree of employment than the rest of the population and a higher risk of being excluded (Anvik, Olsen, Lien, Sollund, & Hansen 2007).
Box. 6 The Agreement for a More Inclusive Working Life (the IA-agreement)

On 14th December, 2005, on behalf of the Government, the Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion signed a new letter of intent on a more inclusive working life with the social partners: The Agreement for a More Inclusive Working Life (IA-agreement). The new agreement is for the period lasting from 2006 to 2009. The IA-agreement is an instrument aimed at preventing sick leave, increasing focus on job presence and preventing “expulsion,” as well as increasing recruitment to the work force of persons who do not have established employment. Through the agreement, focus has been placed on reducing sickness absence and the use of disability pensions, increasing the retirement age and ensuring the recruitment of people with impairments and other vulnerable groups to the employment market.

Officially, the IA-agreement shall contribute to:

- achieving a more inclusive working life for the benefit of each employee, place of work and society as a whole
- reduced need for sick leave and disability pensions
- the development of the ability to work and other resources of each individual and the use of said ability and resources in the workforce

The primary national goals of the agreement are:

- to prevent sick leave, increase the focus on job presence and prevent ”expulsion” from the labor market
- to increase the recruiting of persons who are unemployed to the labor market

The aims of the previous agreement of intent are maintained:

- sick leave must be reduced by at least 20%
- more people with impairments are to join the active work force
- the real pension age must be increased

In June 2006, the parties in the agreement hammered out an addition to the intentional agreement, putting in concrete terms the aims on the national level and introducing means to be used to achieve this. The national goals are:

- reduce the share of people leaving work to end up on passive benefits.
- increase the share of workers on long term sick-leave starting vocational (external) vocational rehabilitation during the period of sick-leave.
- increase the share of persons with impairments ending benefits and entering work.
- increase the expected pension age for persons over 50 years of age, with a minimum of 6 months for the period 2006-2009.

IA-enterprises will open trainee positions for persons with impairments. Beginning in 2007, the parties suggested a host of other means, among other things extended use of adaptation subsidies and purchase of
health services for less severe mental and complex illnesses.

Employees with impaired work capacities are, according to the agreement, to be understood as occupationally handicapped employees, employees included in rehabilitation measures and reactivated disability pensioners. According to the agreement, this concerns not only persons outside the labor market, but also persons in the enterprise who have, or are going to develop, impairments (Anvik et. al. 2007).

The enterprises signed an agreement with NAV (Inclusive Workplace Support Center), engaged themselves in relation to one of the three partial aims, and have a regular contact person in NAV, as well as various advantages, such as tax reduction for enterprise health care and extended self-reported sick leave.

The agreement has been entered into between the Government represented by the Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion and the following employers’ associations: the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO), the Federation of Norwegian Commercial and Service Enterprises (HSH), Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), Norwegian employers’ association for enterprises affiliated with the public sector (SPEKTTER) and the state as an employer represented by the Minister of Government Administration and Reform; and the employee unions: the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the Confederation of Unions for Professionals, Norway (Unio), the Confederation of Vocational Unions (YS) and the Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations (Akademikerne).

Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

In a Norwegian (and in parts also Nordic) welfare model, recognizable by cooperation between the parties of the working life and strong organizations of both the employers and employees, the will to challenge the interests of the trade and industry sector seems small – economic compensation, persuasion and voluntary measures have been the hallmarks of politics toward employers (Hvinden 2004).

4.5.5 Anti-discrimination policies

A more recent discourse on equal rights and possibilities came out of the disability movement and has also gained entry into Norwegian policies (Hvinden 2003). The focus is on barriers hampering the participation of persons with impairments in the labor market and on discrimination because of impairments. This thinking is inspired by the anti-discrimination legislation in the US and England and policy development in the EU. It is expressed in the report Dismantling disabling barriers (St. meld. nr. 40 2002-03), but it was first included in
the Working Environment Act in 2005 and, from January 1st, 2009, in the new Act on Discrimination and Accessibility – both of which we will return to in the next chapter.

4.5.6 Labor market policies and transitions

Norwegian labor market policies are mainly geared toward vocationally disabled persons in general, and no strategy has been developed for young persons with impairments or learning difficulties in transitional situations. Many central policies have been developed to prevent the exclusion of employees from the labor market due to acquired health problems or impairments. The IA-agreement is a case in point. Although its partial goal no. 2 is intended to facilitate keeping and recruiting persons with impairments, the research shows that there are few differences between IA-companies and other companies when it comes to numbers of employees with impairments. IA-companies seem to be more interested in keeping their own employees who are on long-term sick leave instead of employing new persons they believe might risk being absent because of illness. The agreement, therefore, does not seem successful in improving the transition from education to work for young persons with impairments (Anvik et al. 2007, pp. 42-43).

In accordance with the working line policy, social security benefits for persons outside the labor market are also smaller than the lowest salaries in the market. It is disputable whether the sizes of these benefits in themselves are incentives to seek employment. Analysis of longitudinal register data on a youth cohort followed from 2001-2006 showed that the likelihood of being employed is reduced with the receipt of health-related benefits after leaving upper secondary education. T in Figure 4 stands for the time of leaving upper secondary education, and the numbers 1-6 stand for years after completing one’s education (hence, t+1 means one year after leaving school). Employment here also includes being self-employed or being part of an active labor market program (ALMP).

For those receiving disability benefits one year after leaving school, only 5.2% were employed 6 years later, and for recipients of rehabilitation benefits, 33.8% were employed 6 years later. This does not necessarily imply that these benefits are too generous; there might be other explanations for lower employment rates, such as ineffective rehabilitation programs or external barriers for accessing work.
One such external barrier might be the attitude of employers toward persons with impairments. The data on this issue in Norway are mixed. Some surveys indicate clearly discriminatory attitudes toward persons with visible impairments (such as blind individuals with guide dogs) (Dalen 2006). Others indicate that although some degree of skepticism might exist among Norwegian employers for hiring disabled individuals, the attitudes change when employers already have employees with impairments (Widding 2007). In the recent LCS 07 survey, only a minority of young employees with impairments reported that employers and colleges showed little consideration for their impairments (14 %) or reported having been discriminated against in the labor market (11%) (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008). In the few existing (qualitative) studies of the transition from education to work, it was not employers’ attitudes that were singled out by the interviewees as the greatest obstacle to employment but rather the public employment offices themselves. These results also have to be interpreted with caution as many of the interviewees had more contact with support services than with employers in the labor market and often experienced sending application after application without being called for an interview (Anvik 2006; Berge 2007).
There is an ongoing political and academic discussion in Norway as to what extent the “soft” support-oriented politics towards the employers – and the consequent focus on improving the capacity of impaired individuals for work – is successful or not. Norway is one of the countries in Europe using the most resources on employment policies without achieving the desired results (Bergeskog 2001). Still, it is too early to say whether the more hard-line stance towards employers reflected in the Act in Discrimination and Accessibility will be more effective in securing young persons with disabilities access to work.

It is also too early to report results from the ongoing research and documentation on the NAV reform and whether new measures – and especially the Follow-up guarantee – have been successful in securing a better transition from education to work for young persons with impairments or learning difficulties.

4.6 Specific policies on the transition from education to work

The transition from education to work has primarily been a policy issue in relation to completion of upper secondary education, access to higher education and the effectiveness of labor market programs. The issue of transitions for students with impairments has, however, also been reviewed separately in several White Papers and public commission reports since the early 1990s. This has, despite several calls for specific policies to cope with the problem, not materialized into large-scale programmatic efforts. Some concrete measures have been proposed in subsequent Reports to the Storting to ease this transition. These have been:

- Early intervention by labor market authorities in schools to achieve a smooth transition from education to work. This includes a clarification of the responsibilities among authorities concerning young persons with impairments (St.meld. nr. 40 2002-2003).
- Improve the lower secondary counseling service to improve the transition from lower to upper secondary school (St.meld. nr. 40 2002-2003).
- Implement a trainee program in the Ministries for young persons with higher education (St.meld. nr. 2006-2007).
- Establish job practice projects for young persons with impairments to counterbalance disadvantages due to difficulties in combining studies with extra jobs (St.meld. nr. 2006-2007).
These measures have been implemented to varying degrees. One of the most successful of these measures has been the trainee-program in the Ministries, which recruited 18 trainees with impairments in 2006\textsuperscript{8}. The program had a huge number of applicants and was seen by many of the participants as a significant opportunity for work experience and employment that matched their educational level. The program did not only involve younger students in the transition from education to work, as more than 50\% of the applicants were over 40 years old (Hansen & Reegård 2008). Nevertheless, a similar trainee program is now being implemented in the state Directorates.

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the counseling and career guidance services in both lower and upper secondary education have been modified since 2000, and Elective program subjects have been introduced in lower secondary school to help students avoid choosing the “wrong” programs in upper secondary schools. It is unclear whether this has affected the situation for students with impairments or learning difficulties. It is also unclear to what extent labor market services (now NAV) have been intervening earlier in schools to ensure smoother transitions. As part of the NAV reform, the Directorate of Labor and Social Inclusion made an agreement with the municipalities and counties agreeing on a closer collaboration with educational authorities, but we do not know as of yet whether this has strengthened cooperation between schools and NAV offices. The \textit{Plan of Action Against Dropout in Upper Secondary Schools} identified several cooperative arrangements between labor market offices and schools in the counties involved in the project (see chapter 7), but it is unclear whether these arrangements have been improved in recent years.

Lastly, we have not been able to identify any job practice projects for young persons with impairments to counterbalance disadvantages due to difficulties in combining studies with extra jobs, but a few cooperative programs between NAV offices and higher education institutions in Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø have recently been initiated (see chapter 7 for further description).

\textbf{4.7 Summary}

\textsuperscript{8} This program was evaluated by the Work Research Institute (AFI), but the report has still not been released, and we therefore do not have the opportunity to discuss the results in this report.
Norwegian governments base their policies and work in relation to persons with impairments on mainstreaming. The Ministry of Children and Equality is responsible for coordination of policies toward these groups. Generally, policies that involve more than one authority depend on negotiations and cooperative agreements between the Ministries involved counties and municipalities.

No singular policy strategy has been identified for the transition from school to work for students with impairments and learning difficulties.

In upper secondary education, policies to smooth transitions from school to work or higher education have been focused on reducing drop-out and improving the career guidance service.

This involves improving adapted education for SEN students, establishing follow-up services for drop-outs, increasing the number of apprenticeships and initiating local, county-based projects to improve cooperation between schools, other support services, families and employers. As well, the counseling service is now divided into two separate services: a social-psychological service and a career guidance service.

In higher education, transition issues have mainly been understood as having physical access to universities and university colleges and being able to finish studies without being hampered by too many disabling barriers. Government action plans and policies to increase the number of students with impairments and learning difficulties have improved accessibility to both facilities and tuition. Still, the number of students having attained a tertiary education degree is significantly lower among young adults with impairments than others, and a large share report experiencing challenges in organizing their everyday student lives and participating in activities with fellow students.

The Quality Reform was introduced, among other reasons, to improve completion rates of students in general. It has been a mixed experience for students with impairments. For some, closer follow-up and increased modularity have been an advantage. For others, especially those with “bad periods” and visual impairments, they have been a disadvantage. Students with impairments, on the other hand, do not wish to discontinue the reform.

Labor market policies in Norway have primarily been geared toward vocationally disabled people in general and not young persons with impairments in the transition from education to work. There is a broad consensus on the working line policy, which
aims at giving the unemployed incentives to seek employment, support services to assist both employers and job seekers in accommodating the workplace, and policies to encourage employers to recruit employees with health problems. The recent reform of the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) also has an emphasis on coordinating services with educational institutions and other support services, and the new anti-discrimination legislation makes tougher demands for accessibility in enterprises.

- The Agreement for a More Inclusive Working Life seems to have been successful in preventing exclusion of persons with impairments from the labor market, but has been ineffective in recruiting more disabled individuals to private enterprises.

- Social security benefits for young persons are low, but do not seem to provide incentives for seeking employment. Another explanation might be that young persons on health-related benefits face external obstacles preventing them from either seeking or acquiring work.

- Since we do not have sufficient results from the implementation of the NAV reform, we do not know whether it has resulted in improved services and coordinating practices for young persons with impairments.

- Specific transition policies have mainly resulted in national or local experimental schemes, like the trainee program in the Ministries and Directorates or cooperative projects between higher education institutions and NAV offices. On the other hand, the NAV reform has included agreements between national, county and municipal authorities that might be utilized to facilitate the transition from education to work for this specific target group.
5. LEGISLATION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we look at Norwegian legislation on primary, lower and tertiary education, labor market regulations as well as anti-discrimination legislation. The chapter discusses the effect of this legislation on opportunities and equity in education and work for persons with impairments and to what extent this legislation contributes to coordination between different sectors and improving transitions from school to work.

5.2 Legislation on education

5.2.1 Primary and secondary education

The Education Act regulates both primary and secondary education in Norway. It both entitles pupils to certain rights connected to their impairments or learning difficulties and creates obligations for the school owners to ensure that the physical, social and educational environment is suited to all children and adolescents.

Following the political goals of an inclusive education, the act states that all pupils have the right to education and training according to their abilities and aptitudes (section 1-2). All pupils also have the right to a workplace that is adjusted to their needs. This means that the school has to have access to all of the equipment, inventory and teaching aids necessary to ensure an adapted education for all. The regulation, which is often called the working environment act of the students, specifies that the schools have to give special attention to pupils with impairments (section 9a-2).

Pupils who do not or cannot receive adequate benefits from ordinary adapted education or training are entitled to special education (section 5-1). Special education is allocated on the basis of an expert evaluation, and the pupil receiving this type of tuition will have to have an individual educational plan establishing learning goals, describing the content of the
educational program and the form of tuition. The individual educational plan is to be evaluated twice a year by the school (section 5-5).

The Education Act specifies that disabled or temporarily ill pupils in both primary and secondary education can get free transportation back and forth from school, regardless of the distance between the home and school (section 7-3). The Act also includes preambles on organs of user-participation by pupils and parents, such as user councils and cooperative organs where school owners, school personnel and parents participate (chapter 11). Whereas parental participation is normal in primary and lower secondary education, it is replaced by student participation at the upper secondary level.

Students with impairments are more often than others in need of health services of longer duration at hospitals and rehabilitation institutions. According to the Education Act (section 2-1), the Patient Rights Act (section 6-4) and a Regulation on Children in Health Care Institutions (Forskrift om barns opphold i helseinstitusjon), pupils who are frequently absent from school due to illness have the right to tuition in hospitals, at home or at other institutions.

Pupils in primary and lower secondary education are entitled to attend the school in closest geographical proximity to their home address (section 8-1). Formerly, every child also used to have the right to attend the same class as their peers, but with the Knowledge Promotion Reform, the organization of classes at school was abolished. Instead, pupils today have the right to be organized in groups with the same contact teacher. Pupils cannot be allocated to these groups according to their gender, ethnicity or skills (section 8-2).

Pupils with sign language as their first language or pupils who, after an expert assessment, are considered to be in need of training in sign language are entitled to receive their primary and lower secondary education in that language. Still, they do not have the right to professional interpretation before attending upper secondary education (section 2-6). Visually impaired students are entitled to the necessary training in Braille and other assistive technology to ensure adequate benefits of the education. They also have the right to be trained by the school in moving around in their community and at home (section 2-14).
All pupils in primary education have the right to attend a municipally subsidized day care facility for children in 1st-4th grades. For pupils with special needs, however, this right is extended to 7th grade (section 13-7).

Adolescents who have graduated from the compulsory primary and lower secondary education are entitled to three years of upper secondary education and training (section 3-1). Normally, this right should be exercised within five years after admission. Students with special educational needs, as formulated in chapter 5 of the Education Act, can attend upper secondary education for two more years in order to fulfill their individual education plan. This extension is automatically given to pupils using sign language or being taught in Braille (sections 3-9 and 3-10).

Vocational training encompasses two years of training in school, followed by two years in an enterprise. According to the Education Act, however, the Ministry of Education can make regulatory exceptions from this rule for apprentices and trainees. The Regulation, pursuant to the Education Act, states that the county vocational training committees can make exceptions from the standard apprentice contracts for pupils with “impaired work capability” (section 11-7).

5.2.2 Legislation on transitions in upper secondary education

The same regulation also specifies some transitional rights and obligations, of which the most important ones are the provisions on admissions. Students who, after an expert assessment (by the Educational-Psychological Service), have been classified as having “sensatory or movement defects, strong learning difficulties, emotional or social problems, strong multiple disabilities or other disabilities” have the right to admission to specially prioritized programs in the first level (Vg 1) in upper secondary education (section 6-18 to 6-21). This might be a special education program or an ordinary program if the student cannot attend other programs. The same students have the right to be admitted to levels 2 and 3 (Vg 2 and Vg 3) without having achieved the same grades as their fellow students. The admission is then based on an individual assessment (section 6-22 to 6-24).

Section 9-2 in the Education Act also gives students the legal right to counseling on education, vocational opportunities, vocational choices and social issues. This is further
specified in the Regulation on the Education Act as a right to both social-pedagogical counseling and career guidance (section 22).

5.2.3 Higher education

In 1995, a section on physical access to universities and university colleges was amended to the Act on Universities and University Colleges. Today, the act says in section 4-3:

• that premises, access roads, sanitary facilities and technical devices, as far as is possible and reasonable, must be designed in such a way that disabled students can study at the institution.
• that the learning environment must be, as far as possible and reasonable, designed according to the principle of universal design.
• that the institution shall adapt the study situation, as far as possible and reasonable, for students with special needs. The adjustments cannot, however, lead to a reduction of the professional demands of each study/subject.

The same section specifies that the board of directors of the educational institution is fully responsible for the learning environment of the students. The university or university college has to establish a committee for the promotion of the learning environment, who will help implement the standards set in section 4-3. This committee will consist of an equal number of student- and staff-appointed representatives. The efforts of the institution to create a healthy learning environment for everyone have to be an integral part of the system of quality-assurance at the institution.

5.2.4 Other legislation on access to school buildings, universities and university colleges

The Planning and Building Act states that “[by] means of planning, and through special requirements concerning individual building project, the Act shall promote a situation where the use of land and the buildings thereon will be of greatest possible benefit to the individual and to society” (section 2). The purpose implies that planning and building should ensure accessibility for all citizens, with or without impairments. This purpose is valid for all new construction, as well as in cases where major renovations take place in already existing constructions (sections 77 and 87). The Technical Regulation pursuant to the Planning and
Building Act specifies the demands of constructions to ensure accessibility. This regulation contains detailed measurements for doors, elevators, height of toilets and the like.

The Planning and Building Act was amended in 2008 to meet standards of universal design and other requirements in the new Accessibility and Discrimination Act (approved by parliament in 2008 and entered into effect January 1st 2009). This anti-discrimination act contains several provisions that ban direct or indirect discrimination against persons with impairments due to lack of accessibility. Of particular importance for pupils and students is the duty put on public institutions/enterprises for general as well as individual adaptations.

Section 9, on the duty for making general adaptations (universal design), says that “[public] institutions have to work actively and purposely to promote universal design in the institution. This is also the case for private enterprises directed towards the public.” By universal design, one here means design or adaptation of the main physical solutions of the institution/enterprise, ensuring that the normal functions can be utilized by everyone. According to section 11 of the act, the information and communication technologies of the institution/enterprise should be universally designed by July 1st 2011.

The duty to make individual adaptations has specific implications for pupils and students as it states that the “[school] and educational institutions are to make reasonable individual adaptations of the facility and the tuition, to ensure that pupils and students with impairments have equal opportunities to education and training” (section 12).

5.2.5 Legislation on transitions in higher education

Transition issues in legislation on higher education basically concern admission to studies. In principle, persons with a university admission certificate compete on equal grounds in being admitted to a higher education institution. However, the regulation on admission to universities and university colleges provides some exceptions for students with impairments to this rule. These exceptions are as follows:

- Exemptions in special cases (valid for applicants under 25 years of age), like persistent illness, disability and the like (section 3-2).
- Conditional admission for applicants who have not concluded upper secondary education, but have to do so during the first semester of their studies (chapter 5).
The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service also practices a provision of early admission for students who are in need of special adaptations at the educational premises. This is supposed to give students with impairments (not dyslexia) the opportunity to plan ahead of their studies so as not to let practical matters interfere once the studies commence.

5.2.6 Effects of legislation on education

Despite the strong emphasis in the Education Act, Act in Universities and Discrimination and Accessibility Act, many Norwegian schools and universities do not live up to the technical standards for accessibility. A survey conducted by the Norwegian Handicap Association (Norges Handikapforbund) in 2005 on 160 upper secondary schools concluded that only 4% did not violate any laws or regulations, and only 7.5% had only one violation of laws and regulations. The Association also did a survey of 16 newly built (primary and secondary) schools in 2005, which showed that they did not meet the standard of universal design. It seems like universal design of school buildings in Norway is still on an experimental level (Wendelborg 2006, p. 217). As mentioned in an earlier chapter, we do not have available an overview of the accessibility of all universities and university colleges.

Another central aspect of legislation in primary and secondary education is to ensure that students have access to learning aids adapted to their needs. A survey by Oxford Research concluded that 8.3% of all students in upper secondary schools need specially adapted teaching aids. Table 25 shows that these students have needs for adaptations of teaching aids that are not yet satisfied (Oxford Research 2008).
Research also indicates that the competence of teachers using sign language is low. A survey among 87 teachers involved in the education of students with hearing impairments showed that 10 study points (a quarter of a semester in tertiary education) was the most normal duration of training in sign language. Only one teacher had the highest formal qualification in Norway, and four others had an education in sign language (Wendelborg 2006, p. 211).

All of these three indicators – and also the research we reviewed in chapter 4 on the experience of students in higher education – point to a discrepancy between the legal rights of students in primary, secondary and tertiary education and the realities at schools or universities. A different issue is to what extent the legal documents are clear enough to produce the desired effects. The term “reasonable adaptations” in both the Act on Universities and University Colleges and the Discrimination and Accessibility Act might be interpreted in such a way to provide accommodations that are reasonable from the point of view of the economy of the educational institution. “Reasonable” (rimelig) also has the same significance as “cheap,” which also creates room for interpretations to provide accommodations in the most cost-effective way.

Unfortunately, we have not managed to obtain data on the number of students admitted to upper secondary schools on special conditions, nor data on their transitions within the educational system. These students, however, correspond to a large degree with students in special education, and we know from before that their ability to achieve upper secondary competence and employment increases with participation in mixed classes/student groups (see chapter 3).
Data on the number of people being admitted to higher education with exceptions from the ordinary criteria cannot be obtained as students admitted on such basis are not stored in a register (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonscenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007). We also have very little information on the practice of early admissions. A study of admission on the basis of impairment in the mid-1990s concluded that this provision could have a negative effect for potential students with impairments. First of all, the admission process was not coordinated, and students had to apply separately for admission on the basis of impairment to every higher education institution they wanted to attend. Secondly, the admission process was conducted during summer, when administrative personnel normally went on holidays, and third, the admission process was highly dependent on the judgment of individual officials, who often were picked for the task on arbitrary grounds (Kessel 1998). We have no indicators on whether this situation has changed or not since that time.

5.3 Legislation on labor

5.3.1 Prohibition against discrimination

According to the Working Environment Act, discrimination is prohibited (section 13-1). This provision reads as follows: “Direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of political views, membership in a labor union, sexual orientation, disability or age is prohibited.” The act also stipulates that harassment and instructions to discriminate against persons for reasons mentioned in the first subsection are to be regarded as discrimination. These provisions also include employees working part-time or in temporary employment.

The purpose of the Discrimination and Accessibility Act is “to work towards equality, to ensure equal possibilities and rights to participation in civil society for all, regardless of impairment, and prevent discrimination based on impaired work capability. The Act shall contribute to the reduction of disabling barriers made by society, and prevent that new are erected” (section 1).

The central aspect of the new law is the introduction of an activity and reporting duty to ensure that public authorities will work actively, with a definite aim, and systematically to promote the purpose of the act.
For public employers and employers in the private sector with more than 50 employees, the law introduces a duty to “work actively, with a definite aim, and systematically, to promote the purpose of the law within their enterprise. The activity-duty includes amongst other things recruitment, wage- and working conditions, promotions, career opportunities and protection against harassment. The organizations of the labor market have a corresponding activity-duty within their fields” (section 3). The enterprises must give an account of efforts in place and efforts planned to be put in place to forward the goals of the law in their annual reports. Public authorities must do the same in their annual budgets.

Under this law, employers are obliged to provide an individually adapted working environment and working tasks (section 12): “The employer must provide adequately individually adapted working environment and tasks, to ensure that an employee or a jobseeker with impaired work capability, can obtain or remain in employment, have access to training and also have the possibility to progress in work in the same way as others.”

The Discrimination and Accessibility Act also includes requirements of universal design of buildings and technical equipment. The demand for universal design is tied up to “the regular function” of the enterprise, i.e., functions serving the general public. According to the committee that reviewed the act, this does not include enterprises in general. The Ministry points to requirements written into the Planning and Construction Act and requirements for individually adapted working environments for employees with impairments in the Working Environment Act.

5.3.2 Obligation to provide an individually adapted working environment

The Working Environment Act gives employers duties in relation to adapting the work situation in cases of impairment. Section 4-6 of the Act says the following (excerpt from the act):

If an employee suffers reduced capacity for work as a result of an accident, sickness, fatigue or the like, the employer shall, as far as possible, implement the necessary measures to enable the employee to retain or be given suitable work. The employee shall preferably be
given the opportunity to continue his normal work, possibly after special adaptation of the work or working hours, alteration of work equipment, rehabilitation or the like.

If, pursuant to the first paragraph, it is appropriate to transfer an employee to other tasks, the employee and the employees’ elected representatives shall be consulted before deciding the matter.

Unless regarded as evidently unnecessary, the employer shall in consultation with the employee prepare a follow-up plan for return to work following an accident, sickness, fatigue or the like. Work on the follow-up plan shall commence as soon as possible and the plan shall be prepared at the latest, when the employee has been wholly or partly absent from work for a period of six weeks. The follow-up plan shall contain a review of the employee’s responsibilities and capacity for work. The plan shall also contain appropriate measures by the employer, appropriate measures involving the assistance of the authorities and plans for further follow-up.

The employer shall summon the employee to a dialogue meeting concerning the contents of the follow-up plan at the latest within twelve weeks after the employee has been wholly absent from work owing to accident, sickness, fatigue or the like unless this is clearly unnecessary. The occupational health service shall be represented at the meeting. If both the employer and the employee, or the employee alone, so wishes, the medical practitioner or other health professional responsible for granting sick leave shall take part in the meeting, cf. section 25-5, first paragraph, second sentence, of the National Insurance Act. The employer shall give written notification of the dialogue meeting to the Labour and Welfare Service.

The Working Environment Act also states that ”Access roads, sanitary facilities, work equipment, etc. must, as far as possible and reasonable, be shaped and arranged so that employees with impaired work capability are able to work in the enterprise” (section 4-1).

5.3.3 Rights for the non-employed

In addition to acts and agreements regulating the access to the labor market for persons with impairments, there are also a number of regulations for those who are outside the labor force. Everyone who resides legally in Norway, is engaged in lawful enterprise there, and is registered with NAV according to their procedures can, according to the Labour Market Act,
be included in the labor and welfare services. These services are regulated by the Regulation on Labour Market Services.

The National Insurance Act regulates the benefits to people who are outside the labor market, whether this is because of illness, unemployment, rehabilitation or participation in a labor market measure. The rights to benefits during rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation or because of disability (time-limited disability pension and disability pension) are all dependent on whether a person, because of her/his “illness, injury or defect,” has had their earning power or capacity for work reduced.

5.3.4 Effects of labor legislation

As the new Discrimination and Accessibility Act came into effect January 1\textsuperscript{st} 2009, it is difficult to say what effects it will have on workplaces in Norway. The large number of young adults with impairments who have been accommodated by their workplaces in terms of tasks, working hours, assistive technology or assistance (46\%) might indicate that the provisions of the Working Environment Act have had an influence on the actions of employers. On the other hand, as many as 29\% of young adults with impairments say they need more adaptations at the workplace (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008), and from the LCS 07 and previous research, we know that the most important reason for the disabled to quit a job is health problems or impairment (Hansen & Svalund 2007). This indicates that accommodations are not made often enough.

5.4 Legislation and transitions

With the exception of special provisions for admission of students with impairments or learning difficulties in upper secondary and higher education, the current legislation on education and work contains few provisions on transitional issues – nor does it place specific demands on educational institutions to cooperate with each other to ensure a smooth transition from school to work. Students in primary and secondary education, however, have a statutory right for counseling on educational and vocational choices. No such demands are put on higher educational institutions. Still, most higher education institutions have established some
form of career guidance in a joint effort with the Student Welfare Organizations (Studentsamskipnadene).

The Working Environment Act makes it clear that employers have a responsibility for accommodating the workplace for their own employees. However, this is basically a regulation to prevent exits from the labor market, and not to enhance the entry for young persons with impairments. This gap might be filled by the new Discrimination and Accessibility Act, but it is too soon to say. On the other hand, non-employed persons with impairments (both young and old) are encompassed by the Labour Market Act and therefore are entitled to receive training or other programs to be able to enter or re-enter the labor market.

5.5 Summary

- The main transition issues covered by legislation on upper secondary and higher education are exceptions from general admission criteria for students with impairments or learning difficulties. In addition, students in primary and secondary education have a statutory right to career guidance. This is not the case for students in higher education, where career guidance is organized by the welfare associations of the students themselves.

- Legislation on primary and secondary education places strong claims on primary and secondary schools to adapt teaching and the learning environment to the needs of the students and to ensure that students with special needs are able to complete their education as others are.

- Legislation on higher education is more focused on physical access to university or university college premises but also states that the study situation should be adapted “as far as reasonable and possible” to the needs of students with special needs.

- Still, research indicates that students with impairments in both lower and higher education do not get their rights fulfilled as they are defined in legislation on education.

- A weak point in some of the legislation may be its use of the term “reasonable” accommodations. This term is interchangeable with “cheap” in Norwegian and might encourage institutions to make accommodations suited to limited budgets.
• The new Act on Discrimination and Accessibility defines inaccessibility as a form of *discrimination* and puts claims on educational institutions and employers to work actively to promote the universal design of schools, universities and workplaces. It is, however, too early to say what the effects of this act will be since it came into effect January 1\textsuperscript{st} 2009.

• The Working Environment Act puts the responsibility on employers to adapt the workplace to workers who become sick or acquire an impairment. It does not, however, require employers to accommodate the *entry* of young persons with impairments. Other labor legislation gives the non-employed the right to be part of labor market programs to improve their ability to be employed at a later time.

• Legislation on labor and education does not put claims on different sectors or institutions to cooperate with each other, and only the Education Act makes primary and secondary schools responsible for providing career guidance. This is not the case for higher educational institutions.
6. FUNDING

6.1 Introduction

This chapter takes a look at how the educational sector is funded in Norway and how these modes of funding affect transition issues. It also investigates what types of special spending are intended to increase accessibility to education and shows some figures regarding spending on education and labor market measures.

6.2 Total spending on education in Norway

The total spending for education in Norway in the state budget of 2009 amounts to NOK 771 400 000 000. Including kindergartens, this spending amounts to 7% of the total state budget. Without kindergartens, the share of education is around 4%. Higher education institutions received approximately 24 billion NOK in 2009 – around 3,1% of the total spending on education (St. prp. nr. 1 2008-2009). It is not only the state that contributes to funding of the educational sector, but also municipalities and counties through their own tax income. A better measurement of spending is therefore the share of education of the total amount of public spending (GNP). This has been steady at around 12-14% since the 1990s and dropped from 14,1 to 13,5% from 2005 to 2007 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå 2009).

6.3 Upper secondary education

The National Assembly (Storting) and the Government establish the budgetary frameworks for the education sector. Funding for primary and secondary education in Norway comes in the form of a general block grant to municipalities and counties. The block grant, combined with the municipalities’ tax income, constitutes the funding of the tasks of municipalities and counties, including primary and secondary education and training. The grant is distributed to the municipalities and counties according a host of criteria, like the number of inhabitants, number of school children, municipal tax incomes, geographical location, etc. The intention
behind the income system of the municipalities and counties is to redistribute wealth from richer to poorer areas and to sustain settlements in district areas.

Since municipalities and counties to a large extent can decide how to spend their finances on their different tasks, the costs per pupil in primary and secondary education vary greatly. The block grants do not specify how much should go to special education or other types of efforts toward students with impairments or learning difficulties, so county authorities have to decide how to allocate funding between schools. In some counties, this calculation is made on the basis of the number of ordinary students plus the number of students entitled to special education in the previous year. If an upper secondary school gets more students with “special needs” than initially planned, they will have to apply for additional resources, and extra funding for accommodations of the ordinary training should be covered by the school budget for inclusive education.

There are some posts for special education in the national budget. One is a subsidy for private schools for disabled students that amounts to NOK 148 049 000 in 2009, and another gives subsidies for training companies who hire apprentices with special needs that amounts to NOK 8 698 000 in 2009. Expenses of the National Support System for Special Education amount to NOK 618 546 000 (St. prp. nr. 1 2008-2009).

6.4 Tertiary education

The financial system and allocation of funds to institutions of higher education have over time changed from a system where the budget was based on the number of students and specified with much detail on expense categories to a new system where the institutions are free to decide for themselves on how to allocate their total block grant between types of costs. Along with the Quality Reform, block grants to the institutions are calculated according to the following formula (St.meld. nr. 7 2007-08):

- *basic component*, which on average is around 60% of the total allocation
- *educational component*, covering on average around 25% of the total allocation based on number of student credits obtained, number of graduates and number of international exchange students
- *research component*, covering on average 15% of the total allocation.
Attending public higher educational institutions is *free of charge*. Students must finance the learning aids they need (literature, computers, etc.), as well as their own subsistence during the course of the studies. State financial support to students is allocated through the State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen), which was established in 1947. The Fund provides financial support for educational purposes in the form of loans and grants. Subsidies and loans to the Loan Fund in 2009 amount to NOK 30 176 394 000 (St. prp. nr. 1 2008-2009).

### 6.5 Special funding for increased accessibility in education

Next to the general block grants to primary, secondary and tertiary education, some special funding exists for increased accessibility to education. One is the compensation subsidy for rents on loans to municipalities that maintain school buildings and build new ones. The subsidy should generally improve the learning environment and partly provide access for students with impairments. A total of NOK 15 billion is set aside for this purpose between 2009-2016. Another subsidy with special requirements for students with impairments in the student housing subsidy. In 2009, 220.8 million NOK was allocated to new student housing, and it is required that the need for accessible housing for the students in the area has to be met when funds are allocated.⁹

### 6.6 NAV benefits and support services

Benefits to persons with impairments from the National Insurance Scheme are administered by the NAV, and Tables 26 and 27 show the growth in actual expenses in these benefits from 2000-2007. As we see in Table 26, spending on both vocational rehabilitation and disability pensions have increased, whereas spending on unemployment has gone down. Table 27 shows how much is spent on assistive technology through NAV. The post on assistive technology for educational and employment purposes is lower than the others. This might also correlate with the relatively old age of many of the recipients of such technical aids.

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<td>72 685 408</td>
<td>77 338 893</td>
<td>81 655 320</td>
<td>85 972 654</td>
<td>90 680 229</td>
<td>97 310 396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor’s benefits</td>
<td>2 177 927</td>
<td>2 216 214</td>
<td>2 265 262</td>
<td>2 294 981</td>
<td>2 327 665</td>
<td>2 338 611</td>
<td>2 365 794</td>
<td>2 416 679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits for health services</td>
<td>15 509 688</td>
<td>17 353 099</td>
<td>19 780 300</td>
<td>21 052 164</td>
<td>19 239 270</td>
<td>19 730 198</td>
<td>18 934 361</td>
<td>19 510 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other objectives</td>
<td>401 377</td>
<td>350 542</td>
<td>440 282</td>
<td>258 307</td>
<td>259 540</td>
<td>366 562</td>
<td>262 490</td>
<td>357 490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>3 483 369</td>
<td>4 043 036</td>
<td>4 430 589</td>
<td>4 707 168</td>
<td>5 120 892</td>
<td>5 372 840</td>
<td>2 793 730</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)
Table 27. Expenses related to assistive technology through National Insurance Scheme. 2000-2007. Values in 1 000 Norwegian kroner (NOK)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4 030 709</td>
<td>4 046 042</td>
<td>4 272 413</td>
<td>4 307 755</td>
<td>4 460 453</td>
<td>4 514 996</td>
<td>4 579 219</td>
<td>4 927 591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of</td>
<td>2 453 536</td>
<td>2 330 644</td>
<td>2 452 901</td>
<td>2 407 090</td>
<td>2 523 455</td>
<td>2 489 471</td>
<td>2 571 968</td>
<td>2 717 024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functional abilities,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assisted technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of</td>
<td>36 587</td>
<td>43 121</td>
<td>47 551</td>
<td>54 419</td>
<td>65 413</td>
<td>76 081</td>
<td>85 683</td>
<td>97 491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>functional abilities,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted</td>
<td>64 492</td>
<td>81 065</td>
<td>81 885</td>
<td>112 462</td>
<td>131 713</td>
<td>142 389</td>
<td>112 703</td>
<td>94 687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technology, etc., in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work and education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car benefits</td>
<td>762 063</td>
<td>830 047</td>
<td>797 072</td>
<td>821 504</td>
<td>706 641</td>
<td>730 479</td>
<td>708 225</td>
<td>823 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic aids</td>
<td>434 650</td>
<td>479 254</td>
<td>562 702</td>
<td>563 947</td>
<td>644 088</td>
<td>665 380</td>
<td>693 525</td>
<td>737 584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing aids</td>
<td>279 382</td>
<td>281 911</td>
<td>330 302</td>
<td>348 333</td>
<td>389 142</td>
<td>411 196</td>
<td>407 114</td>
<td>457 467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

6.7 Transition issues

In itself, the mode of funding of upper secondary education in Norway does not foster transition issues. Counties are supported through rent compensation to make their schools more accessible, and training companies are compensated for recruiting apprentices with “special needs,” but otherwise the mode of funding does not place any special incentives on the counties or schools to improve the transition to work or tertiary education for students with impairments or learning difficulties. However, keeping students in upper secondary education longer than necessary will bind up educational and administrative resources at the expense of students to come, and is as such incentive to ensure that students pass through upper secondary education within 3 years.

A tertiary institution, on the other hand, has a direct economic interest in producing as many student credits as possible as fast as possible as this will increase its state funding through the “educational component.” Such an incentive might also discourage institutions from focusing on the situation for students with impairments or learning difficulties since this group
constitutes a minority of all students. It would be economically more rational to increase the production of student credits of the majority of students without impairments or learning difficulties than for those who might be thought to slow down this production process.

6.8 Summary

- The educational sector in Norway is funded by block grants to municipalities, counties and tertiary institutions. In this mode of funding, students with impairments or learning difficulties do not appear as specific posts in the budget.

- Tertiary institutions have direct economic incentives to improve the completion rates by the production of student credits by their students. This might also be an incentive to improve more immediately productive groups than students with impairments or learning difficulties.

- There exist some special subsidies for increasing accessibility to education, but this is mainly a municipality, county or higher educational institution responsibility.
7. PROVISION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the existing provisions for all students in upper secondary and tertiary education in Norway. A graphical overview of the educational system is provided in Figure 5. Provisions allowing for transitions to higher education and employment are highlighted, as well as special provisions for students with impairments or learning difficulties. The chapter also looks at the Labour and Welfare Administration, what kind of transition programs it offers and other types of employment and/or educational programs it offers for students with impairments.

Table 28. Number of students in upper secondary and higher education. 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of education</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary schools, students (ISCED 3)</td>
<td>187 245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices</td>
<td>36 747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentice-candidates</td>
<td>919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational colleges (ISCED 4)</td>
<td>7 948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State University Colleges (ISCED 5a and 5b)</td>
<td>88 574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other university colleges (ISCED 5b)</td>
<td>14 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities and scientific university colleges (ISCED 5a and 5b)</td>
<td>111 763</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Norway

7.2 Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education and training comprises all courses leading to qualifications above the lower secondary level and below the level of higher education. Young people who have completed primary and lower secondary education or the equivalent have a right to three years of upper secondary education and training leading to admission to higher education, to vocational qualifications or to basic skills. All of these young people are entitled to a place on one of three alternative education programs they have applied for admission to and to two years of further schooling that is based on this education program.
Figure 5. The Norwegian educational system.

Source: Statistics Norway
Upper secondary education and training is available all over the country. Earlier, there were a number of different types of schools offering upper secondary education courses of varying length, but since 1976 Norway has had a unified upper secondary structure that coordinates general studies and vocational studies. The education and training normally takes three years and is divided into three levels: Vg1, Vg2 and Vg3 (in a few cases four years, with a Vg4).

Vocational education and training mainly lead to a craft or journeyman’s certificate, usually after two years in school and one year of in-service training in an enterprise. Vocational education in Norway follows what is termed as a 2+2 model. It mainly leads to a craft or journeyman’s certificate, usually after two years in school and two years of in-service training in an enterprise. In-service training at a training establishment is usually combined with one year’s productive work, so that the apprenticeship takes two years in all. If it is impossible to provide training places, the county authorities are obliged to offer Vg3 in school, in which case there is no productive work. The final craft or journeyman’s examination is the same as it would have been after training in a training establishment.

Box 7. Programs in upper secondary education

Upper secondary education and training is organized in 12 different education programs.

Programs for General Studies:
- Program for Specialization in General Studies
- Program for Sports and Physical Education
- Program for Music, Dance and Drama

Vocational Education Programs:
- Program for Building and Construction
- Program for Design, Arts and Crafts
- Program for Electricity and Electronics
- Program for Health and Social Care
- Program for Media and Communication
- Program for Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry
- Program for Restaurant and Food Processing
• Program for Service and Transport
• Program for Technical and Industrial Production

Source: Ministry of education and research

7.2.1 Transitional provisions

There are several provisions in upper secondary education, aiming at enhancing the transition from school to work and from upper secondary to tertiary education for students *in general* (i.e., including students with impairments and learning difficulties).

*Transitions between programs*

General studies take three years and lead to general university admissions certification. It is possible for pupils who have finished their vocational education at Vg1 and Vg2 or an apprenticeship program to take a Vg3 supplementary program for general university admissions certification. This supplementary program is of one year’s duration. Although discussions in Norway have been focusing on whether students with only a vocational certificate should be allowed to access tertiary education, the Knowledge Promotion Reform has made the supplementary program more difficult by adding an additional 40 hours of mathematics.

*Career guidance*

All upper secondary schools are obliged to provide both social-pedagogical counseling and career guidance for their students. As we saw in chapter 4, both of these services used to be conducted by one person only, but today more schools are dividing their counseling services to specialize to a larger extent in either psychological issues or competence in educational and vocational opportunities. Part of the career guidance might include visits to enterprises or higher education institutions as well.
Job practice

Many upper secondary schools include job practice as part of their educational programs. This is more normal for vocational training than it is in programs for specialization in special studies.

Apprenticeships

The 2+2 model of Norwegian vocational education means that students in these programs get valid job experience and networks in the labor market. As apprentices, young people spend all day in a firm or a training company co-owned by several enterprises and financed by a state subsidy. Apprentices are in reality quasi-workers and receive a salary paid by the firm. This salary increases steadily for each semester and ends at 80% of a new entrant’s wage (OECD 2008).

Attaining lower competence

For students who have learning difficulties or experience other obstacles to achieving a qualification for higher education or vocational certification, there exists an alternative of completing upper secondary school with a lower competence level. According to the Education Act, “upper secondary education shall lead to qualifications for higher education, vocational qualifications or a lower level of competence” (section 3-3). Lower level competence can be achieved either in a planned or unplanned way. Planned lower competence is, for example, when somebody aims at completing upper secondary education with reduced curriculum objectives and enters a training place instead of an apprenticeship place, becomes an apprenticeship candidate instead of an apprentice and ends up taking a competence examination instead of a craft or journeyman examination. They will have a chance later to complete their upper secondary education and achieve either a vocational or higher education qualification.

Unplanned lower level competence happens when somebody aims at achieving a higher education or vocational qualification, but fails to pass all subjects. In these cases, the student often only receives a transcript of grades with failing grades included. We have indications that the provision of lower level competence is under-utilized, and many more students fail
upper secondary education rather than achieving some kind of documentation of their level of competence:

[...] 34.2 per cent of those who left compulsory education in the south-eastern parts of Norway during spring 2002 had not achieved a qualification for higher education or completed a vocational qualification five years later. When we look solely at those who had been apprentices, this relates to 29.2 per cent.

During spring 2007, that is, at the end of the fifth year of upper secondary education, we found 32 apprentice candidates among the 9,749 young people in the study. In addition, 23 young people who had been apprentice candidates during their time in upper secondary education were registered. In total, this means that 55 out of the 9,749 have been apprentice candidates. This corresponds to 0.56 per cent of the youth who finished 10th grade in the south-eastern parts of Norway in 2002.

A comparison of this share of the 0.56 per cent with the 34.2% of youth who neither achieved qualification for higher education nor attained a vocational qualification illustrates that there must be a powerful under-utilization of the training candidature scheme. We do not claim that 34.2 per cent are potential apprentice candidates, but a significant proportion of these would be likely to gain from taking upper secondary education toward planned competence at a lower level instead of trying to qualify for higher education or to gain a vocational qualification. (Høst 2008, p. 44)

7.2.2 Other special provisions for students with impairments and learning difficulties

There also exists a set of provisions for students with special needs in upper secondary education to compensate for disadvantages they might have in terms of learning difficulties or lack of accommodations for impairments.

Admission

Students who are classified as having special needs after an expert assessment have the right to be admitted to a specially prioritized program in upper secondary school. This might be a special education program or a program prioritized because impairments or learning disabilities might impede the learning process in some vocational or general studies programs.
Special education

The county assigns special education to a pupil only after an expert evaluation of the pupil’s specific needs. This assessment suggests whether the student needs special education and what kind of tuition should be provided. According to the national guide from the Directorate for Education and Training, the assessment has to be based on a realistic consideration of what the pupil might achieve with respect to the goals set in national curricula (Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet 2004). The municipal Educational-Psychological Service (see chapter 8) is responsible for the expert assessment, but might also acquire assistance from the National Support System for Special Education (Statped, see chapter 8). If someone is found eligible for receiving special education, this cannot be rejected on the basis of lack of resources in the county administration.

The special education itself might take place inside the normal group of students or organized outside of it. The tuition has to be performed by staff with teacher’s certificates. If assistants are used, an authorized teacher has to supervise and be responsible for the training that is given. Special education should, as a general rule, be given at the nearest school, but there are exceptions, such as junction schools for students with special impairments (e.g., vision- or hearing-impaired).

The school has to develop an individual educational plan when a decision for special education has been made in the municipality or county. The individual educational plan has to show the goals of the pupil’s education and the content of the tuition. The plan is continuously evaluated, and the school has to provide bi-annual reports on the progression of the special education. There have been instances where individual plans have included transitional issues, but we do not have evidence that this is normally the case.

Teaching and learning aids

Upper secondary schools also have to provide adapted teaching and learning aids to students with impairments or learning aids. The Directorate for Education and Training has initiated a national project for universal design of learning aids in Norwegian schools. Part of this
project has been to document needs for better adapted learning aids, and these surveys have shown that there are still substantial needs to be met (see chapter 5).

Five-year studies

Students with special educational needs can attend upper secondary education for two more years to fulfill their individual educational plans. An extension is automatically given to pupils being taught in sign language or Braille. We have not been able to acquire data on how many students are using this opportunity and whether it is positive or negative for their transitional opportunities.

Adaptation of examination

Primary and secondary schools have to adapt examinations so as to fit the abilities and aptitudes of everyone. In case of the need for a special adapted exam, the Educational-Psychological Service makes an assessment of the individual pupil. Both the pupil and his/her parents can issue a statement on why they think the exam should be adapted, but it is the school’s headmaster who has the final word in the decision-making process.

Subsidized apprenticeships

A weak aspect of the Norwegian apprenticeship model is, according to some reports (OECD 2008), that students have to find their own apprenticeship places. This might lead to difficulties for students with small networks in the labor market (immigrant youth) or students who might be met with discriminatory attitudes, such as students with impairments. To create incentives for employers to take in apprentices in, companies who take in apprentices with special needs for adaptations might receive state subsidies to compensate for extra costs related to accommodations. In the national budget for 2009, the subsidies to such companies have been estimated at NOK 8 698 000. We have not been able to find other data on the effectiveness or outreach of this subsidy (St. prp. nr. 1 2008-2009).
7.2.3 Responsibility

The state bears the overall responsibility for the Education Act with regulations, contents and financing of primary and secondary education and training. The County Governors are to act as links between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate for Education and Training on the one hand and the education sector in municipalities and counties on the other. The County Governors are responsible for supervision and dealing with complaints related to regulations, participation in quality development, information, guidance and various administrative matters.

The 19 counties in Norway are responsible for providing upper secondary education. Such responsibilities include overseeing pupil intakes, appointment of staff, budgeting, negotiating school curricular content following national guidelines and monitoring educational standards. Legislation and regulations, including the National Curriculum, form a binding framework, but within this framework the county authorities, schools and teachers can influence the implementation of the education and training. Each school has a head teacher and various boards, councils and committees.

**Box 8. The pupils’ school environment**

In addition to being responsible for upper secondary education, the County Governors have a supervisory role for some aspects of primary and secondary schools. One such example is the pupils’ school environment.

If any pupil feels discomfort that she/he believes is related to the physical environment, the pupil or his/her parents may ask the school to take measures to improve the situation to be in accordance with chapter 9a of the Education Act. Such a request should be in writing and should be dealt with in conformity with the Norwegian Public Administration Act’s provision for administrative decisions. If the person requesting measures is not satisfied with the school’s decision, or if the school does not make a decision within a reasonable time, the person in question will be entitled to an appeal. An appeal against an administrative decision is addressed to the County Governor, but sent to the school, so that the school/school owner may deal with it.

If the school/school owner does not support the complainant, the appeal is to be brought before the County Governor, who is authorized to decide whether the school has complied with chapter 9a. If the County Governor finds that the school has failed to do so, the school will be ordered to make necessary measures.

*Source: Directorate of Education and Training*
7.2.4 Quality assessment and supervision

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is an executive subordinate agency for the Ministry of Education and Research. The Directorate’s main tasks are to promote quality development, quality assessment, analysis and documentation in primary and secondary education and training and to perform administrative tasks connected with primary and secondary education and training in addition to bearing the overall national responsibility for supervision of primary and secondary education and training.

The national quality assurance system in primary and secondary education consists of the following elements:

*Examination and national tests:* The Directorate is responsible for preparing examinations, national tests and diagnostic tests for primary and secondary education. Examinations provide a final assessment of the competence of each individual pupil. National tests provide information on the pupils’ basic skills and a basis for improvement and development in the school. Diagnostic tests are intended to detect needs for individual follow-up and adaptation.

*User surveys:* User surveys of pupils, apprentices, teachers, instructors and parents provide valuable feedback to schools, school owners and the authorities. There have also been particular surveys among pupils receiving special education. Results and analyses are published on the Directorate’s website. This knowledge is intended to help improve Norwegian schools.

*National supervision:* The Directorate coordinates yearly national supervisions of the primary and secondary schools together with the County Governors. The supervision is done in a representative selection of schools and is designed to reveal whether school owners fulfill their duties as defined in national acts, regulations, circulars and guidelines.

*Research-based evaluation:* In addition, the Ministry of Education and Research, Directorate for Education and Training and other public research funding agencies receive funding in the national budget to conduct research-based investigations and evaluations of primary and secondary education. In the evaluation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform, there is an emphasis on adapted education and drop-out issues, as well as other issues.
The School Portal: The School Portal is the web service the Directorate uses to provide schools and school owners with data about primary and secondary education. The aim of the portal is to give schools and school owners (the local and county authorities) easy access to relevant and reliable information to be used in local quality assessment activities. The School Portal provides data relating to the fields of learning dividends, learning environment, completion of upper secondary education, resources and school facts.

School owners and the school administration are responsible for carrying out local assessments of primary and secondary education according to section 13-10 of the Education Act and the regulations relating to activity-based assessment. The Directorate has developed guides for local evaluations using the School Portal as way of channeling educational information to school owners and administrations in municipalities and counties.

7.3 Higher education

In the Norwegian educational system, the terms “tertiary” and “higher” are almost interchangeable. The small vocational college education sector (ISCED 4), which only includes a few thousand students, is not part of the “higher education” sector (ISCED 5 and 6) (Ministry of Education and Research 2005). Higher education in Norway, according to this definition of the term, consists of different types of higher education institutions regulated by the Act on Universities and University Colleges and Act on Private Higher Education.

Box 9. Tertiary vocational education (ISCED 4)

Tertiary vocational education (ISCED 4) is an alternative to higher education and is based on upper secondary education and training or equivalent informal and non-formal competence. A university admission certificate is not required. The education consists of vocational courses lasting from six months to two years. Apart from the traditional schools of technical management and maritime subjects, which are publicly financed (by the county authorities), most of the schools offering this kind of education are private. All courses must be accredited by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT).

Source: Ministry of Education and Research
The higher education sector today consists of 7 universities, 7 specialized institutions at the university level (including 1 private), 24 state university colleges, 2 national institutes of the arts and 2 private university colleges, 31 private institutions with accredited study programs (22 of which receive some public funding) and approximately 195 000 students, of whom approximately 24 500 study at private colleges/university colleges. Most institutions of higher education are state-run and are responsible for the quality of their own instruction, research and dissemination of knowledge. Higher education builds on the successful completion of three years of upper secondary school. Since 2001, access can also be granted for those older than 25 years on the basis of a documented combination of formal, informal and non-formal competence (total qualifications).

The Quality Reform of 2003 introduced a degree structure, grading system and quality assurance system in line with the Bologna Process. As of 2003, the degree structure consists of a three-year bachelor’s degree, a two-year master’s and three-year doctorate (PhD). Exceptions to the model are the old university college two-year degree (college candidate), five-year consecutive master’s degrees, six-year professional programs, master’s degrees of one to one and a half year’s duration, four-year bachelor’s degrees in performing music and performing arts and four-year programs in teacher education. The grading scale conforms to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) rating scale with the letters A (best) to E for pass and F for failed.

There are seven universities in Norway, all state-run. Apart from instruction and dissemination of knowledge, the universities and specialized institutions at the university level have a special responsibility for research and the education of researchers through their doctoral programs.

There are 24 public and two private university colleges. The university colleges are important as decentralized higher education institutions. The 24 university colleges predominantly offer three-year professional bachelor programs (teaching, engineering, nursing, social work, etc). There are also professional programs of varying lengths, from one to five years, for example in teacher training and business administration. Several university colleges offer master’s programs and have the right to award doctorates in one or more subjects. The university colleges also engage in research and development work.
Universities and university colleges provide opportunities not only for students on campus, but also for distance learning. Table 29 gives an overview of students in both decentralized study programs and programs for distance learning (these are interchangeable in existing statistics). We are unable to provide data on the ages of students in these programs, but in information from the Ministry of Education, long-distance courses are normally considered as life-long learning courses. That is, most persons participating in these courses are older persons (professionals, like teachers, etc.) who have already attained a university or college degree (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2009). These distance-learning courses are normally not part of bachelor’s or master’s studies. The table shows that the numbers of students in such programs have been decreasing.

Table 29. Number of students in decentralized and distance learning programs, 2003-2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State university colleges</td>
<td>16 067</td>
<td>17 996</td>
<td>16 866</td>
<td>10 376</td>
<td>10 567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>2 233</td>
<td>2 490</td>
<td>3 400</td>
<td>1 344</td>
<td>1 468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific university colleges</td>
<td>1 254</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private university colleges</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>398</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19 554</td>
<td>20 597</td>
<td>21 338</td>
<td>12 008</td>
<td>12 433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2009)

7.3.1 Transitional provisions

The higher education sector has some incentive to facilitate the transition from higher education to work for students in general. This can be related to the Quality Reform in 2003, which, among other things, aimed at increasing the completion rate of students in higher education.

Closer follow-up

The Quality Reform introduced increased modularity and teamwork for students in higher education. This means that students hand in short papers and have smaller exams than they used to before 2003. Combined with the economic incentives for higher education institutions to produce more student credits per year (i.e., higher completion rates), this has resulted in a closer follow-up of students.
Student loans and grants

Most students in Norway apply for loans and grants from the State Educational Loan Fund (Statens lånekasse) to finance their living costs while studying. For students not living with their parents, the loan/grant-ratio is 60/40%. The grant, however, is first given to students as a loan and then converted into a grant when they have passed their exams. This is intended to work as an incentive for students to complete studies at a quicker pace as exams not passed will result in a higher debt burden.

It is difficult to say whether it is incentives provided by the loans and grants provision or a closer follow-up that has led to a higher production rate of study credits in higher education, but data show that average study credits per student have increased from 39-42,2% in the period 2002-2006 (i.e., an increase of more than 8%). There are huge variations between the institutions, but all show an increase in the production of study credits (St.meld. nr. 7 2007-08).

Rates of failure have, on average, also decreased between 2002 and 2006, but this decline had already begun before the introduction of the Quality Reform. In addition, the completion rates of master’s programs at the universities and university colleges show different results. At the universities, the percentage of students completing master’s programs within the prescribed time has increased from 21% in 2000 to 30,6% in 2004, whereas university colleges have experienced a decrease from 47% in 2000 to 30,2% in 2004 (St.meld. nr. 7 2007-08).

Career guidance

Career guidance is normally a joint venture between Student Welfare Organizations (Studentsamskipnadene). The size and number of programs of these career centers depends on the number of students at the institution.
7.3.2 Special provisions for students with impairments and learning difficulties

Admission

As already described in chapter 5, the regulation on admission to universities and university colleges creates exceptions from the admission criteria (i.e., higher education certificate and grades) for students with disabilities. We do not have data on how many students have been admitted under this exception, and research on the practice from the mid-1990s suggests that it could provide more obstacles than opportunities for students with impairments (chapter 5). We also know little on the practice of early admission for students with special needs for accommodations.

Learning aids

Unlike in upper secondary education, where the schools are responsible for providing the necessary learning aids, students in higher education have to acquire these themselves. The Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille (NLB) is responsible for providing books for visually impaired and other users upon request. The library is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs. Its function is to provide library services to the blind, the partially sighted, the visually impaired and others with reading disabilities. Other categories include persons who cannot hold a book or turn pages due to a physical impairment and persons with illnesses that prevent them from reading standard prints. Acquiring a book from the NLB requires a medical certificate.

The statutes of the NLB give priority to blind and other visually impaired individuals, whom it defines as it primary users. Literature is produced for other groups as long as it is not at the expense of the library’s primary users. Students with reading difficulties, for example, are not entitled to having new books produced upon request, but must use previously produced literature. This has created A- and B-teams in terms of access to adapted learning aids for students with reading difficulties (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonssenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007). Research and documentation also show that, despite improvements in the last few years, the NLB is chronically slow in its production of accessible literature and has not been able to keep up with the pace of the Quality Reform (Brandt 2005; Kunnskapsdepartementet 2007).
Students in need of other types of learning aids have to finance these through National Insurance Scheme benefits administered by the NAV Center for Assistive Technology (*Hjelpemiddelsentralen*). Information from the National Coordinator for Accessibility in Higher Education (*Nasjonal pådriver*) suggests that this has been a source of conflict between NAV and the higher education institutions, and it is unclear who is going to provide which types of learning aids and when (Knarlag 2007).

*Examination*

There are no national regulations on examination practices in higher education, nor do students in higher education have a right to individually adapted exams. Before the Quality Reform, the most typical form of examination was written exams given at the end of each semester, sometimes followed by an oral examination. The Quality Reform has enabled a variety of forms of examinations, and each institution makes up its own regulations on how to adapt examinations and application procedures for being granted such adaptations. The students with impairments in Brandt’s evaluation of the Quality Reform reported that there had been few adaptations to students’ needs in terms of examinations (Brandt 2005). We do not know how this has changed in the last four years.

*Study loans and grants*

There are no funding arrangements in the State Educational Loan Fund or elsewhere to cover extra expenses that students with impairments might have in higher education, but there are provisions to counterbalance the incentive to complete studies in the prescribed time frame. It is, for example, possible for students to be delayed in their studies for one year without losing their right to receive grants and loans from the State Educational Loan Fund. If the reason for the delay is illness or impairment, it is possible for students to delay their studies further without losing this right. If the student must take leave from his or her studies because of sickness, the loan may also be converted into grants. In the study year 2007-2008, the State Educational Loan Fund gave sickness grants with a total value of NOK 15 568 000\(^{10}\) (this includes all students on sick leave, including those with loans and grants in upper secondary

\(^{10}\) Statens Lånekasse [www.lanekassen.no](https://www.lanekassen.no) (accessed 20.07.2009)
and other forms of education). If, however, the illness occurs before the student begins studying, the loans will not be turned into grants. This might affect students with impairments such as chronic diseases.

The study financing provision has been debated for many years by parliament and in the disability movement, and there seems to be a consensus that the provision works to the disadvantage of students with impairments and learning difficulties. A student using more than the prescribed time to pass one or more exams will accumulate a higher debt burden than others if the reason for the delay is not long-term sickness. There exist several indications that students with impairments or learning difficulties are using more time to complete their studies due to lack of accessibility, badly coordinated support services, frequent “bad periods” and lack of adapted learning aids (Brandt 2005; Kessel 2008), and hence the study loans and grants provision might have a negative effect for students experiencing these obstacles. One solution for a student with an impairment might be to apply for a disability pension after completing his or her studies, which might convert the loan (or parts of the loan) into grants. A precondition is that the student has not been receiving vocational rehabilitation or medical rehabilitation benefits during his or her studies.

We do not know how many former students apply for disability pensions after their studies, but we do know that most young adult students with impairments finance their higher education with the loans and grants provision, whereas 30% finance it through National Insurance Scheme benefits, part-time jobs or other arrangements (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008, p. 166).

7.3.3 Responsibility

The state is responsible for universities and university colleges, which are directly subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Research. Each institution has a board that is responsible for the direction and organization of operations. Accredited institutions have been awarded extensive academic powers and may establish and terminate their own courses of study. University colleges decide for themselves which studies and topics they are to offer at the first

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11 Deliberations in the National Assembly (Stortinget) 22.04.2004
degree level. Universities determine for themselves which subjects and topics they wish to offer at all levels, including doctoral programs (ISCED 6).

The Act on Universities and University Colleges lays the responsibility for all students, including those with impairments and learning difficulties, to a large extent on the institutions themselves, making the board of directors fully responsible for the learning environment of the students. As we saw in the chapter on legislation, this does not cover any specific transition issues. Incentives for transition come first and foremost through the mode of funding for upper secondary education.

7.3.4 Quality assessment and supervision

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) was established in 2002. It is an independent agency with the task of carrying out external quality assurance of higher education and tertiary vocational education in Norway. NOKUT also handles applications for general recognition of foreign qualifications. NOKUT’s tools are evaluation, accreditation and the recognition of quality assurance systems, institutions and course provision.

An important premise for the accreditation schemes introduced is the demand that every higher education institution, both public and private, have an implemented and functional quality assurance system. The efforts of the institution to create a healthy learning environment for all have to be an integral part of the system of quality assurance at the institution. The consequence of not having such a system, or of having a system that does not cover the minimum standards set, is that the institution is not allowed to establish new study programs (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2005). We have not been able to find any provisions regarding transition issues as a requirement for quality assurance.

The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority (Arbeidstilsynet) is responsible for supervising the learning environment of the students, as defined in section 4-3 of the Act on Universities and University Colleges. The Labour Inspections Authority’s main responsibility is to ensure
that the Working Environment Act is upheld in the labor market. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Authority does not prioritize supervision of higher education institutions.12

Through the National Action for Disabled from 1998-2001, all institutions of higher education were instructed to work out local action plans for disabled students in order to assure equal quality of education. Part of the requirement was that students with impairments had to be included in the construction of the plans. The Report to the Storting no. 40 (2002-2003) continued to express this instruction, but the demand was not inscribed in acts or regulations. Today, the Ministry does not include an instruction for local action plans in their accreditation letters. In the year of 2002-2003, 34 out of 38 institutions had such plans (Båtevik et al. 2003). We do not know whether action plans at any institution include transition issues.

7.4. The Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

The Norwegian labor and welfare services, with regard to persons with impairments, are undergoing transformation. In 2006, the labor market service conjoined with the welfare service, resulting in the new Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV). This reform means that two state-run services had fused and entered into a partnership with local municipalities. By 2010, all of the inhabitants of Norway will have access to a NAV office in their municipality. In these offices, users of the services will find an integrated office (one-stop shop) where staff of what was formerly the labor market service and the national insurance service and the relevant municipality’s social welfare service are supposed to work together to find sound solutions for their users. The minimum requirement for a NAV office is to offer financial and social assistance from the local authority and the whole spectrum of government services previously provided by the former national insurance and labor market services.

In addition to administering economic welfare schemes, the service is to make a contribution to the efficient operation of the labor market. This means that the service is required by law to provide job seekers with advice and help, whether they are already unemployed or are merely

12 Discussion in user forum for higher education, 06.04.2009
seeking to change employment. In this context, the service also provides assistance to employers looking for new staff.

Many of the programs offered by NAV offices are carried out by so-called vocational rehabilitation enterprises. There are about 110 vocational rehabilitation enterprises in Norway, most of which are members of a joint employers and industrial body. The vocational rehabilitation enterprises’ main task is to provide vocational rehabilitation through vocational training and increasing the participants’ qualifications. These enterprises also offer guidance in further education, vocational rehabilitation and career choice and offer permanent work for occupationally handicapped employees who have few possibilities to get a job in the regular labor market. In 2007 they provided services to approximately 35,000 persons.

In addition to the vocational rehabilitation enterprises, there are 226 so-called “growth enterprises” that employ people who require an adapted working environment for shorter or longer periods. Close to 13,000 persons are employed by the growth enterprises, the main aim of which is to make it possible to lead an active vocational life rather than being a passive recipient of benefits. On the other hand, the growth enterprises also offer, to a greater degree than the vocational rehabilitation enterprises, permanent sheltered employment.

7.4.1 Labor market programs

NAV offers a range of labor market programs for the vocationally disabled in general, which also includes young persons with impairments who might be in transition from school to work. These measures are normally given while the person is part of a vocational rehabilitation program. This is an active labor program for the vocationally disabled, where the aim is “suitable work/employment.” Relevant measures can include schooling/studies or vocational training/testing in the labor market. Measures such as wage subsidies, trainee placement, supported employment and the like are used for vocational training and testing in the labor market. They might be provided as programs in themselves or as a combination of measures (i.e., supported employment with wage subsidies).

As we have seen earlier, the terms for being granted vocational rehabilitation are that the ability to perform income-generating work is permanently reduced or the possibility to freely choose an occupation or a place of work is reduced due to health problems. If these terms are
met, the applicant and NAV formulate a plan of action where the future goal (“suitable work/employment”) and the means to achieve this goal are factored in. The NAV is also entitled, on its own initiative, to decide whether rehabilitation allowances are to be offered to a person to go through certain measures in order to remain in or enter into income-generating work. During the vocational rehabilitation period, economic support is given in the form of the following:

- A rehabilitation allowance, which shall cover living costs for the duration of the period. The main rule is that the allowance is 66% of the yearly income in the year before the recipient became ill or the average income for the last three years.
- A rehabilitation benefit, which covers special costs in regard to carrying out the rehabilitation. It is this support arrangement that is the most relevant for young people with impairments who have not been working. There are various allowances for different rehabilitation measures. Education has, for instance, a set of separate rules.

**Box 10. Central labor market measures for young job-seekers with impairments**

*Wage subsidies:* Wage subsidies are a labor market measure geared toward persons defined as "occupationally handicapped.” The aim is to ease the transition to the labor market. This means that the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration pay part of the wages for the employee for an agreed-upon period of time. Several trials concerning different kinds of wage subsidies have been carried out, the latest being non-specific regarding time, where the duration of the subsidies is not standardized, but rather determined for each individual.

*Trainee placement:* Trainee placement offers adjusted work experience with follow-up. This measure provides the individual with a chance to try out the labor market and contributes to strengthening the individual’s opportunity to gain access to work or education. Traineeships may take place in both regular and sheltered enterprises, but the training taking place in sheltered enterprises can only be offered to vocationally disabled individuals who, according to NAV’s opinion, have particularly poor work-related qualifications and who are in need of regular follow-up. Persons with serious mental illness or who are mentally handicapped will often fall into this category. The trainee placement is of limited duration, and there must be a plan for the individual participant’s training, which must be approved by the NAV.

*Supported employment:* Supported employment is offered to occupationally handicapped people with such great problems in getting or keeping a job in a regular enterprise that they are regarded as having special needs for close and varied follow-up from support services. Supported employment consists of a person coming with the user to the place of work and helping with training, practical vocational training and physical adaptations of the work tasks. This facilitator may also assist in finding an appropriate place of work and give training in social skills, as well as give advice and guidance to the employers. The maximum duration of this measure is three
years, but if it is used in the transition from education to work, the user can be granted an additional six months.

*Temporary employment measures:* Temporary employment measures shall provide work experience for persons at risk of being permanently excluded from the labor market or those having problems getting established in the labor market. An extraordinary place of work in a public enterprise might be created or a voluntary organization for persons in need of more long-term work experience. This measure can last up to two years, but other measures must have been tried before this measure can be started. Persons in temporary employment measures are employed and salaried by the employer.

*Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)*

The cost-effectiveness of these programs – especially for youth – is an unsettled issue in Norway, as both register-data based analysis and other statistical analysis show (OECD 2008). A recent literature review of all labor market measures for persons with impairments in Norway showed that the research points in very different directions; most shows that these labor market measures seem to have a limited effect on the employment of persons with impairments (Anvik et al. 2007). Despite the relatively high numbers of persons who have been through labor market programs in NAV or the preceding employment services – and despite the extraordinary growth period the Norwegian economy has recently experienced – the number of employed persons with impairments has not been increasing (see chapter 2).

Because of the relatively higher employment rate among persons with impairments with higher education, one might be led to the conclusion that educational measures would be some of the most effective for this particular group. However, analysis of register-based data shows that education does not have an independent effect on the likelihood of employment for vocationally disabled individuals:

Descriptive statistics reveal that the employment rate among persons participating in educational programs was more than eight percentage points higher than the employment rate for eligible individuals not participating in active training. However, many factors can render this simple estimator of the training effect invalid. First, we find evidence of differences in observed characteristics between vocational rehabilitation clients participating in educational programs and VR clients not participating in any program. Individual characteristics such as youth, higher level of education (before training), and more work experience significantly increase the probability of participating in educational training.
programs. So does a higher level of unemployment in the local district. Finally, the chances of participating are higher for women than for men.

All of the individual characteristics that increase the probability of participating in educational training have positive effects on the probability of being employed after the training period. This fact is consistent with the hypothesis of creaming in the sense that persons participating in training programs are those most likely to obtain a job after training. The local unemployment rate contradicts the creaming hypothesis in the sense that individuals living in areas with a relatively high unemployment rate are more likely to participate in training programs, but are less likely to get a job. However, this coefficient is not statistically different from zero in the employment outcome. (Aakvik 2003, p. 533)

Aakvik’s study does not differentiate between higher educational and other educational measures, such as smaller courses, vocational training, upper secondary schooling, etc. Even though higher education has been shown to have a better effect for persons in vocational rehabilitation programs, it has a limited effect for young persons in a transitional stage. Support for education through vocational rehabilitation is limited to persons older than 26 years, and it can only be granted to persons younger than this age in exceptional cases. As we saw in chapter 3, the majority of students receiving support through vocational rehabilitation are more than 30 years old.

In terms of transitions, the qualitative studies of education through vocational rehabilitation show that young adults who finance their education in this way experience the welfare and employment officers as a major obstacle to successful transitions (Anvik 2006; Berge 2007). These studies describe prejudice, abuse of power and tight control of regulation in the relationship between administrators of vocational rehabilitation and its recipients. In several instances, the disabled persons in these studies experienced private employers as more open than their counterparts in the welfare and employment offices (Berge 2007).

7.4.2 Quality assurance and supervision

It is chiefly the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority (*Arbeidstilsynet*) that is responsible for investigating whether the conditions in public and private enterprises are in accordance with the provisions in The Working Environment Act. The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority is therefore responsible for making sure the enterprises live up to the demands for
an adapted working environment for employees with impairments. This is meant to be an integrated part of the Authority’s supervision, guidance and information activities.

The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud was established January 1st, 2006, and will be responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Discrimination and Accessibility Act. A person who claims to have been discriminated against because of, for example, lack of accommodations by a public sector enterprise may file a complaint whereupon the Ombud will render a decision. The Ombud also provides for general legal counseling and guidance regarding matters of discrimination. Decisions by the Ombud may be appealed to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Board of Appeals. The Board may impose moratorium fines on those who do not abide by the Board’s decision.

The NAV administration has a control system based on goals and results. This means that in a number of the administration’s undertakings goals are in place, and there is monitoring to determine to what degree the units of the administration achieve these goals. The demands for results concern, among other things, how large a share of people on vocational rehabilitation shall be in active measures and how many cases must be handled within certain time limits.

The services of NAV are inspected by The Office of the Auditor General of Norway (Riksrevisjonen). The Office of the Auditor General of Norway has, among other things, examined the car subsidy service that covers persons with impairments and the NAV’s follow-up of people on long-term sick leave and recipients of time-limited disability pensions.

Next to the frequent and publicly financed research-based evaluations of the labor market measures and the social security system, the NAV reform itself is subject to research-based evaluation, which is administered by the Norwegian Research Council. This evaluation is intended to monitor the implementation of the reform and study its effects up to the year 2014. One aspect of the evaluation of the NAV reform is to look at the relation between NAV and the educational system. No reports on this issue have so far been published.

7.5 Programs and cooperation on the transition from education to work

Although there are no national labor market programs for the transition from education to work – with the possible exception of the trainee program in the Ministries and Directorates –
there have been some local project-based programs for the transition from education to work for students with impairments and learning difficulties. Due to the decentralized nature of the NAV offices and the educational system, it is difficult to identify all such programs. Box 11 shows the most recent or ongoing programs, and we believe that this is quite a complete list of projects.

**Box 11 Examples of transitional projects for students with impairments and learning difficulties**

The transition to work for students at NTNU: In 2006, a cooperative project between Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), the University College of Sør-Trøndelag and NAV Sør-Trøndelag was started to ease the transition from education to work. The project was aimed at young people with physical and mental impairments. The majority of the 31 participants were suffering from mental problems. The project was financed by NAV and consisted of a full-time executive officer at the NTNU following up students on their way into the labor market.

One of the challenges was that a number of the students had little or no work experience to refer to, even if their age was relatively high, and they lacked confidence in their abilities. Because of this, it was important to ensure that the students got work experience as part of the study program as well as summer jobs. It was noted by the project manager that students with severe physical incapacities were met by negative attitudes by the employers. Twenty-two of the participants had been in a job or had work experience by the project’s end in 2008, and several are now in permanent employment. This is, however, one of the first projects of its kind in Norway.

Young people in trainee placement and work in Hedmark: The project “Young physically disabled persons in work – how to stop barriers between school and the working life?” has been a cooperation between Hedmark county, the secondary education department, the University college of Hedmark, NAV, the Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO) Hedmark, and the main organizations of the labor market. The project lasted from 2005-2006, and the main target group was persons with impaired work capability aged 18 to 35. The aim was dual. On the one hand, the program was intended to get more persons with physical impairments into regular work, but it was also a project for the development of serviceable routines in Hedmark to be able to handle the transition from school/studies to work for young persons with impairments in general.

The main method used in the project was testing in the labor market through trainee placements. The evaluation showed that most of the participants and the enterprises were satisfied, and most of the 15 participants got a chance to try out the labor market. On the other hand, only three of the participants got permanent employment. The project highlighted that a number of good support arrangements for young disabled people exist and that these, with simple adaptations, can be put to use quickly and non-bureaucratically when needed. The greatest challenge was, however, to get the participants with complex problems – often combinations of physical and
mental impairments into work. In Hedmark, the project led to the development of new routines for handling transition education – work for young people with great need for various supports.

**Easier transition from studies to work:** The counties of Oslo, Hordaland and Troms are involved in a three-year project to ensure a smoother transition from studies to work. The project in Oslo is based on cooperation between the Career Center at the University of Oslo, NAV Oslo and a rehabilitation enterprise responsible for the follow-up of the students. The students in this project are basically offered guidance adapted to their needs and assisted in finding trainee placements in workplaces. All three counties report having problems in recruiting enough participants to the projects, and many of the participants are already known to NAV as they have had their education financed through vocational rehabilitation.

*Sources: Interviews with NAV employees and (Spjelkavik 2007)*

The evaluation of the *Plan of Action Against Dropout in Upper Secondary School* also showed that there exist a series of cooperative organs between community actors, local businesses, service providers, employment offices and secondary schools that were utilized in a heightened effort to reduce high school drop-out rates (Havn et al. 2007). Common examples were *cross-sectoral cooperation forums*, where departments in several municipalities, upper secondary schools, the Follow-up Service, the Educational-Psychological Service and employment offices met to discuss joint efforts to reduce drop-out in their counties. There were also instances of *cross-sectoral teams* where municipal Children and Family Services, Social Services and other departments regularly met with upper secondary schools, the Educational-Psychological Service, social security and employment officers to discuss and decide on courses of action for single cases where youth were in danger of dropping out of high school. Such anti-dropout projects and examples of cooperation are most likely more normal in upper secondary education and on a county level than they are in relation to higher education and on a national level.

### 7.6 Summary

- There are some provisions in upper secondary education aiming at improving the transition from school to higher education or work for students in general. These are the ability to attain a higher education certificate with a basis on vocational skills,
career guidance in school, job practice as part of the studies, apprenticeships in private
companies and an opportunity to complete upper secondary education with a lower
level of competence.

- Research does not tell whether these arrangements are important for students with
impairments and learning difficulties, but several provisions exist aiming at qualifying
students with special needs for further studies or work. These are: special admission
practices, special educational programs, adapted learning and teaching aids, the
opportunity for using extra time to finish studies (up to five years), adaptation of
exams and subsidized apprenticeship placements.

- Drop-out rates are important factors in the supervision of upper secondary education,
but we have not been able to identify other transitional issues in the quality assurance
system. However, there is a strong emphasis on providing students with special needs
with their equal right to education and on reducing the use of segregated programs –
and hence the ability of these students to complete their education with qualifications
equal to others’.

- In higher education there has been an increased focus on completion rates and
production of study credits as a result of the Quality Reform (2003). Students now
receive a closer follow-up than before, and the loans and grants provision creates
incentives for students to complete their education at a prescribed time.

- Special provisions for students with impairments and learning difficulties include
special admission criteria, learning aids for the vision impaired and students with
reading difficulties, adaptations of exams and special rules in the loans and grants
provision for students who are sick for long periods because of impairments.

- Research and documentation show that most of these special provisions work poorly
or unsatisfactorily. The special admission criteria can impede the admission of
students with impairments, the production of learning aids is slower than the pace of
the studies, adaptations of exams are poorly done and the loans and grants provision
will give students who take more time to complete their studies (because of obstacles
related to their impairment) a higher debt burden.

- Research on labor market programs for “vocationally disabled” individuals is
inconclusive, and we know little about the outcomes of young persons in the transition
from education to work. There exist some examples of programs to enhance the
transition from higher education to work in which higher education institutions and the
NAV cooperate, but the examples are few and time-limited. On the county level, cooperation between municipalities, counties and employment services seems to be more important. We do not know, however, how focused these cooperative relationships are on the transition from school to work or higher education versus on only reducing drop-out.
8. SUPPORT SERVICES

8.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the miscellaneous support services provided for students with impairments or learning difficulties in upper secondary and higher education, support for educational institutions, and for employees with impairments and their employers. In addition, the chapter discusses the quality of some of these services and specifically how these support services are coordinated.

8.2 Support services in upper secondary education

Support services for both students with impairments or learning difficulties in upper secondary education and the upper secondary schools themselves are carried out by a wide array of service providers. Figure 6 provides an overview of all support services provided for the students (and their families) – ranging from practical assistance in the home to medical treatment in a hospital – depending on the needs of the student. Few students or families will receive support from all of these different service providers during the course of their upper secondary education, such as students with learning difficulties, who will mostly receive their support from school or external educational service providers. However, some students – especially those with severe physical and mental impairments – will be in need of support from several service providers, including the school, municipality, the NAV, hospitals and rehabilitation institutions. In the beginning of this chapter, we will take a closer look at these services before we discuss how they are coordinated and what their roles are in transitional phases in the end of the chapter.
8.2.1 Economic and practical support outside school

Economic and practical support for students and their families is normally provided by the NAV and municipality. Even though upper secondary schools are responsible for technical learning aids, the NAV Center for Assistive Technology is responsible for all technical aids that students need to function in the physical environment at home, in the community and at school. An example of the division of responsibilities for assistive technologies might be that of a wheelchair user. Whereas the technical aids needed to get back and forth from school and to move around the school area (i.e., the wheelchair) are the responsibility of NAV, a specially adjusted desk is the responsibility of the school. In some cases, this division of responsibilities might be unclear. Whose, for example, is the responsibility of providing a wheelchair used for sports classes at the school – is such equipment a technical aid related to the education, or is it related to the needs of the individual independent of the education? This type of conflict, on the other hand, does not seem to be very important in upper secondary education as it is not reported as a major problem in the literature (Wendelborg 2006).
Another important form of support from NAV is given financially to families with children with impairments through basic and auxiliary benefits. These benefits are intended to compensate for some of the extra health expenses that these families might have due to the health care needs of their children.

**Box. 12 NAV Center for Assistive Technology**

Funding for assistive technology for students in upper secondary education is provided by The National Insurance Scheme (*Folketrygden*) and is administered by the NAV. Practically, the purchase, distribution and installation of technical aids is organized by the county-wide NAV Centers for Assistive Technology (*Hjelpemiddelsentralene*). Assistive technology in Norway is organized as a lending service. This means that those who receive the assistive technology do not own it, but must give it back when there is no more need for it or the need has changed. The condition to be allowed to borrow technical aids at the NAV Center for Assistive Technology is that one must have an impairment of substantial nature and duration for more than two years. Qualified health workers, usually a doctor, a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist from the municipal health service, must recommend the technical aids. Children and young people under 26 years of age have extended rights to assistive technology.

*Source: Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)*

The Social Services Act instructs the municipalities to provide a number of services for children and youth with impairments and their families. This type of support is mostly given according to means testing and can be received by application to the municipality. Among the social services in place for families with children with impairments are:

- **Care benefits:** Care benefits can be given to parents who have a particularly heavy workload of caring for children with impairments. The care benefit is not the same as a wage replacement for parents who choose to stay at home to take care of their children instead of working and is intended to be a supplement to other income.

- **Relief measures:** Relief is a type of practical assistance given to parents who have a particularly heavy workload when it comes to taking care of their children. The intention of the relief is to give the caretakers an opportunity to rest, go on holidays and have some leisure time in everyday life. The families have a lot of say in how the relief is arranged, and it can take place in the home, by organizing group activities for the children, and even through part-time separate housing for the children involved.

- **Life assistant:** The life assistant arrangement includes families with children with impairments in which the persons with impairments themselves are in need of extra
support after school or on weekends. The life assistant’s work contributes to the activities of the person with the impairments, and the life assistant normally acts as a personal assistant in leisure activities.

Students with impairments might also receive practical assistance in their home or personal assistance in their leisure time, but this is more often the case when the students lives by him- or herself or is deemed old enough to be a supervisor of personal assistants. These social services are therefore more normal for persons with impairments in higher education or at work.

8.2.2 Educational services

The school provides a range of supports for students with impairments and learning difficulties. Those already mentioned include adapted learning aids and other technical aids related to the training, special educational arrangements such as extra tuition and special classes, etc., and accommodation of exams. But among the services provided by the school we also find personal assistance, viewed as an extension of educational assistive technology, such as sign language interpretation or practical assistance for the movement impaired. In addition to providing schools with educational support services, the Educational-Psychological Service (PP-tjenesten) and National Support System for Special Education (Statped) also help children and their families to cope with an impairment or learning difficulty at school. Both students with visual impairments and their families, for example, might be taught in sign language at a national center of competence in the Statped system. The county also has to provide transportation for students with impairments back and forth from school.

8.2.3 Health services

The municipality provides the most basic health services for all inhabitants in Norway, such as primary health care conducted by “family doctors,” maternal and child health care centers, and physiotherapy and occupational therapy services. These services are in principle free of charge, but are mostly co-funded by a relatively inexpensive patient fee. The family doctors are especially important gatekeepers in the sense that they control access to the rest of the health care system. According to the Education Act and the Act on Municipal Health
Services, the municipalities also have to provide a school health service, which is responsible for the promotion of a healthy learning environment and for preventing illness and injuries at school. The health service might be located at the school or outside the school premises (at a municipal health station) and normally consists of school nurses who regularly visit schools to consult with students, teachers and parents.

The specialized health service plays an important role in the advanced medical treatment (both habilitation and rehabilitation) of persons with impairments and persons with learning difficulties that are seen as a health problem. Specialized health services are the responsibility of the State, but administered by five separate regional health authorities. Within these regions, somatic and psychiatric hospitals are organized as health trusts. The regional health authorities establish national resource centers for the treatment of specific illnesses and impairments, and they buy rehabilitation services – like the municipalities – from private rehabilitation and training facilities.

**Box 13: The Frambu Resource Center of Rare Disorders**

Frambu is a national resource center for people with rare disorders and disabilities caring for approximately 100 different rare disorders. The center provides services funded by the government that are supplementary to the normal treatment and care to which everyone is entitled. Frambu works with people who have specific rare disorders as well as with their families/caretakers and with healthcare professionals. The center has organized its work into the following core areas:

*Residential courses:*
Courses at Frambu are organized on the basis of specific disorders, groups of disorders and topics that may be relevant to many disorders. Courses are planned in collaboration with user organizations. Courses are geared toward people affected by a disorder, their close/immediate family and healthcare professionals. While attending a course, people stay at Frambu and come together for lectures, group discussions, consultations and joint activities. Children can attend day care and school on site at Frambu and are supported by play therapists. Courses offered at Frambu are free of charge for users and their immediate families.

*Summer Camps:*
Each summer, Frambu arranges four camps for groups of 40-50 children and adolescents with rare disabilities without their parents. These camps last for one to two weeks and enable youngsters to meet others in the same situation as themselves, to share experiences and to build a network of friends and acquaintances.

*Creating local networks:*
Frambu assists persons with rare disorders and the professionals who work with them to develop supportive networks in their own communities. Collaboration with local health services and staff may ensure that people with rare disorders and their families receive treatment, care and services appropriate to their needs within their local community. Staff from Frambu visit people in their home environment, pass on information and hold guidance meetings, as well as making contributions to courses, conferences and seminars. This service is provided free of charge.

**Development, communication and documentation:**
Development work involves surveying, collating and organizing the knowledge base around rare disorders, gleaning material both from practical experience and from Frambu’s day-to-day operations. People with a rare disorder, their immediate/close family and professionals may contact Frambu by e-mail or telephone for information about the rare disorders to which Frambu caters. Frambu also produces informational materials about individual disorders, groups of disorders and topics relevant to many disorders.

*Source: www.frambu.no*

### 8.2.4 NGO support

In addition to these services, disability NGOs give extensive support to their own members. This might take the form of information on individual rights and health issues, political campaigning, legal assistance and leisure time activities. In addition, several disability NGOs hold peer groups for persons with impairments and their family members where people in similar life situations support each other by sharing feeling and information and exchanging experiences.

### 8.2.5 Support services for upper secondary schools

Not only are students in upper secondary education and their families supported, but schools themselves that receive students with impairments are also supported by the State, the counties, municipalities and higher educational institutions as shown in Figure 7.
Figure 7. Support services for upper secondary schools serving students with impairments or learning difficulties

Of the most important support services for schools are the Educational-Psychological (Pedagogisk-psykologisk tjeneste) Service and the National Support System for Special Education (Statped). According to the Education Act, each municipality and county authority shall provide an educational and psychological counseling service (EP-service). The EP-service personnel visit schools, intervene and assist school teachers and administration. Pupils with special needs are diagnosed and reports are written so that extra educational resources can be provided. The coordination of providing extra resources to students with special needs is a responsibility of the EP-service. The service gives guidance and counseling to school teachers, places of employment, and families with impaired children. Often, the EP-service is also involved in writing the individual educational plans for pupils who receive special education.

The EP-service is not, however, expected to be knowledgeable on all issues affecting the education of pupils with impairments and learning difficulties. Therefore, the National
Support System for Special Education (Statped) plays an important role in supporting upper secondary schools and county administrations. Statped consists of 16 resource centers owned by the state and 14 units for special education, owned by local authorities, county administrations, foundations or private organizations, from which Statped buys services. Statped has expert knowledge in the areas of teaching and training, etc., for pupils with visual impairments, hearing impairments, deaf-blindness, language, speech, reading and writing difficulties, complex learning difficulties, social and emotional problems, profound and multiple learning impairments, minority language and learning difficulties, early childhood intervention stimulation, information technology, acquired brain damage, Sami language and culture, AD/HD, Tourette syndrome and narcolepsy.

The general objective of the national support system is to ensure that children, young people, and adults with major and special educational needs are secured well-advised educational and developmental provisions. The responsible municipal/county body – normally the EP-service – applies for the services of Statped, and these services are basically free of charge.

8.2.6 Transition services

Some of the support services for students in general, and students with impairments and learning difficulties in particular, have a transitional focus (see Figure 8). In earlier chapters we have already described the Follow-up Service that is supposed to take care of students who drop out of upper secondary education and lead them back into an educational program or into employment, the counseling and career guidance service that is supposed to provide advice for students on future career choices, and vocational rehabilitation programs that might be put into effect if a young person who is defined as vocationally disabled by the NAV system has problems advancing to higher education or employment by him- or herself. In addition to these services, a student with needs for support from several different service providers might have a responsibility group consisting of him- or herself, parents and representatives from the organizations from which he or she receives services. A responsibility group might include transition issues and important service providers in transitional situations, but this varies a lot depending on the experience and attitudes of service providers and the students and the families themselves – as a responsibility group is not a legal requirement, nor the content of its function.
Figure 8. Transitional services from upper secondary education to tertiary education or work for students with impairments or learning difficulties

8.3 Support services in tertiary education

Students in tertiary education also receive support from a host of different service providers under different authorities (see Figure 9). The first and most notable difference at the tertiary level is that educational services are scarce and there are few special supports for students with special needs – like the special education provision in upper secondary schools. The second major difference is that students in tertiary education to a much larger extent have to fend for themselves. They have to obtain the adapted learning aids they need and apply for assistive technology for their education themselves, and there are no follow-up services to take care of students who are in danger of falling out of the educational system.
8.3.1 Economic and practical support outside tertiary education

Students with extra costs due to health problems or impairments continue to receive economic support from the National Insurance Scheme through the NAV to compensate for extra living costs (basic and auxiliary benefits), and they continue to receive assistive technology to complete everyday life functions. As students grow older, they are also entitled to new social services like user-managed personal assistance (BPA). This type of assistance might be granted to persons with extensive needs for help in the home and during leisure time. BPA implies that the person in need of assistance is the manager of her/his own assistants and decides for her-/himself when and where she/he needs help. The users themselves regard this as a very important scheme for students in higher education or young persons seeking entry to the labor market as it provides more flexibility than other social services (Guldvik 2003).

Students who live by themselves can also get practical assistance to accomplish practical tasks at home. These can, for example, be shopping, house cleaning, washing of clothes and personal care.
NAV also administrates a car support scheme that provides support in buying and adapting cars for persons who cannot use collective transportation. The NAV Center of Assisted Technology orders the car for the user when the application is granted and ensures that the car is adapted to the person’s needs.

8.3.2 Educational services

As seen in previous chapters, higher educational institutions are not responsible for providing assistive technology in the same way as upper secondary schools. The Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille is responsible for the production of learning aids for the visually impaired and students with reading difficulties, and the NAV Center for Assistive Technology is supposed to provide other learning aids. On the other hand, universities and university colleges have a duty to ensure equal access to the learning environment and perform reasonable accommodation. In practice this means that they have some technical equipment for students with impairments or learning difficulties and use part of their operational budget on accessibility measures. This division of labor between NAV and higher education institutions is unclear and a source of conflicts (Knarlag 2007), and actual procedures often have to be negotiated between the institution and NAV in each particular situation. An example of a conflict that might arise is the responsibility for accommodation of workplaces in cases where internships are part of the educational program. Is accommodation in such cases the responsibility of the institution that requires its students to get professional experience, or is it the responsibility of NAV, which should normally accommodate the workplace?

Students in higher education institutions do not have access to an educational-psychological service of any kind, but the contact and consultancy service for disabled students provides relevant information and might also be of practical assistance if they experience difficulties in their study situation. As we have already seen, the quality of this service is often dependent on the size of the institution. As well, the university supports students who are in need of accommodation of exams.

In order to make it easier for students and employees with movement impairments to get to their university, college or work, a national experimental scheme of affordable transportation
services for persons who cannot use public transport was introduced in 2001. An individual who wants to be included in the service cannot have travel expenses back and forth from school or work covered in other ways, and the right to use the service is obtained by application to NAV. Normally the transportation is organized with taxis or taxi-buses, and the fare is equal to a normal public transport fare for the same distance. An evaluation of this transport arrangement showed that 85% of all users said that it was very important for their education or employment relationship, and 40% claimed that they would have to quit their present education or job if they lost this form of transportation (Anvik et. al. 2007:56).

Another indication of the importance of this service is found in the Living Conditions Survey of 2007 (LCS 07), where 22% of all young persons with impairments reported having problems with using collective transport. Half of this group again experienced these problems as so grave that they had to take a taxi instead (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008).

Students in higher education have the opportunity to rent an accessible residence through the publicly funded student welfare organizations (Studentsamskipnadene). There seems to be a shortage of accessible student housing. Although the number of accessible residences is increasing, only 2.9% of all residences were accessible in 2006 (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonssenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007). If there is no accessible student housing available for a student with impairments, there are other supportive measures in place. The Housing Bank offers subsidies to persons who have particularly high expenses because of low income caused by impairments or the lack of accessible housing. These subsidies are administered by the municipality. Most of the young persons with impairments in LCS 07 did not report any problem with housing, as only 4% reported problems with moving in and out of their residence or moving between rooms in their house or apartment. The reason for this, however, is that most of these individuals do not need accommodated housing. For young persons with movement impairments, the share reporting problems with their own housing is 13% (Bjerkan & Veenstra 2008).

8.3.3 Health services and NGO support

Students with impairments and learning difficulties in higher education have access to the same type of health services as students in upper secondary education, and the only exception is that the school health service of the municipalities is replaced by the student’s health service provided by the student welfare organizations. The difference between these services
is that the student’s health service in tertiary education normally does not work with preventive measures, as is the case at primary and secondary levels. NGOs exist for disabled individuals of all ages and might also give support (information, peer groups, legal advice, etc.) to students in higher education.

8.3.4 Support services for higher educational institutions

The difference between Figure 7 and Figure 9 illustrates another significant difference between upper secondary and tertiary education. Whereas upper secondary schools – teachers and administrative personnel – receive both informational and practical support from several county-based and national agencies, higher educational institutions with students with impairments or learning difficulties might only receive advice from a couple of institutions.

Figure 10. Support services for tertiary educational institutions serving students with impairments or learning difficulties

One of these is the National Coordinator for Accessibility in Higher Education (Nasjonal pådriver). Established in 2003, this agency acts as a resource center for students and institutions of higher education. It provides information on accessibility in higher education and gives advice to educational institutions, teachers, governing bodies and units of assistive
technology on issues as diverse as universal design of the physical environment and adaptations of teaching aids and examinations. On the other hand, the agency only consists of 2,4 posts, which significantly restricts its outreach. In comparison, the National Support System for Special Education (Statped) had 870,8 posts in 2008 (Statped 2008). The so-called Delta Center for Participation and Accessibility of the Directorate of Health publishes guides on universal design and provisions that might be useful for tertiary institutions, but higher education is not a specific emphasis of this center. In short, the lack of external support (advisory, practical and economic) for tertiary institutions means that they have to use internal resources to train teaching staff, make physical accommodations and assist students with “special needs.”

8.3.5 Transition services

Some services related to tertiary education have, or might have, transitional elements (see Figure 11). The most immediate of these is the career centers – a joint venture of universities/university colleges and student welfare organizations. We have no information on whether any such centers have special programs for students with impairments or learning difficulties or special training for their personnel (this is probably an indication that they do not exist). Also, students in higher education might have a responsibility group around them with representatives of service providers that might take transitional issues into consideration. On the other hand, we do not have any information available on how important such considerations are. Students with impairments or learning difficulties can, like anyone else searching for work, also consult the career guidance centers at the NAV offices. If registered as job seekers/unemployed, they might also have access to informational and practical courses. The last course of action for unemployed former students with impairments is to try to get into the vocational rehabilitation system, where they might get access to other types of assistance (supported employment, trainee placement, extra training, etc).
8.4 Support services in employment

8.4.1 Support services for employees

Employees with impairments have the same access to health and social services as any other individual above 18 years of age. The economic, practical and medical support from the municipality, the NAV (including transportation), specialized health service and NGOs described for students in higher education is also valid for a person with impairment in employment (see Figure 12). In addition to these, NAV can provide assistive technology, interpretation, reading and secretarial help and ergonomic measures for people in ordinary employment and vocational rehabilitation. The criterion for receiving these aids is that they are necessary to either start or continue an employment relationship. Individuals are also entitled to adaptations of production equipment already in place in the enterprise. The condition for receiving this is a permanent impairment (lasting more than two years) that constitutes a “major reduction in ability to perform salaried work,” or limits the number of occupational choices or available workplaces.
Figure 12. Support services for employees with impairments or learning difficulties

Assistive technology is primarily a support service rendered for the employee. The employer is responsible for providing the work equipment, and it is usually also responsible for accommodations of the physical infrastructure at the workplace. In exceptional cases, however, the NAV can cover the costs of accommodations of the building where the work takes place. The NAV Center for Assistive Technology can, on the other hand, give counsel on how to accommodate the work place. For companies that are part of the Inclusive Working-Life Agreement, the Working Life Centers of NAV provide such assistance.

An accommodation guarantee was introduced by NAV in 2008 and is relevant to both employees and employers. Basically, the guarantee means that all existing measures in NAV can be put to use and that the case-work in the NAV office should be done quickly (in accordance with certain deadlines). The guarantee is binding for the local NAV office, the Working Life Centers and the Center for Assistive Technology, and it might include:

- Practical assistance, mapping of accommodation needs and technical aids.
• Efforts that will lead to either ordinary work or sheltered employment.
• Access to available labor market measures and assistive technology.
• Follow-up by NAV officers before and during employment, according to individual needs.
• Follow-up with the employer with the aim of enabling the employee to stay at work.

This guarantee is given in writing and can be presented in interviews by application. This is a new arrangement in NAV, and we do not yet know of its effects, strengths or weaknesses. We know more about the personal assistants at work – a measure that was introduced in 1997 and has since existed as a national experimental scheme. The measure particularly targets young persons with severe impairments and consists of the individual employee managing his or her own personal assistant to help in tasks like making photocopies, taking outdoor clothes on and off, assisting in the restroom, at lunch on business trips, etc. The assistant, however, is not to perform any of the work tasks of the impaired employee. The assistant might be a college student, but employers are fully compensated by NAV for the assistance. In 2008, around 100 persons received personal assistance through this arrangement, and this low number of recipients might be explained by the strict eligibility criteria – recipients have to have very severe impairments and should have tried out all other available labor market measures before being awarded such support. Research shows that the service is viewed as very important by both employers and employees. On the other hand, the arrangement has not been important in recruiting new employees with impairments. Nearly all of its users were already employed when they got the personal assistant, and the arrangement itself has often replaced voluntary assistance by colleges and employers (Econ 2008).

Supported employment (Arbeid med bistand) is another labor market measure that might be offered to persons who are defined as “occupationally handicapped” – even more specifically, persons who are regarded as having such great problems in getting or keeping a job in a regular enterprise, that they need closer and more varied follow-up from the support services. Very often, supported employment consists of a person coming with the potential employee to the place of work and helping with his or her training and in making accommodations of the work-place. The job coach may also assist in finding a workplace, give training in social skills and provide advice and guidance to the employer. Support employment in Norway seems to be important in getting some persons with mental illnesses into employment, but we know of
its long-term effects. Many persons employed with the assistance of supported employment later lose their jobs and support. This arrangement is normally geared toward getting people into a job, and there has been less focus on support for stabilizing the employment relationship (Anvik et al. 2007; Spjelkavik, Frøyland, & Skarðhamar 2003).

8.4.2 Support services for employers

As we saw in the former section, NAV can assist enterprises that employ a person with impairments with both accommodations (covering expenses and giving advice) and practical assistance (Working Life Centers or through supported employment). Still, NAV’s support services are mainly focused on employees and not employers directly, although they might indirectly be understood as incentives for employers to hire a person with the impairment: If the employer knows that the employee will get all the technical aids he or she needs to perform the job, they might be less reluctant to hire him or her. In addition to the support of employees, NAV has some economic incentives for employers to keep employees who are troubled by sickness or to hire new personnel without taking great risks. If an employee has been sick for more than 16 days, for example, the employer receives full compensation from NAV for paying sickness benefits to the absent worker. NAV can also use wage subsidies to employers who are willing to hire persons with “occupational handicaps.” The independent effect of wage subsidies in themselves has been shown to be close to none (reference). Figure 13 gives an overview of support services for employers.
8.5 Cooperation and coordination

Norway has a quite extensive net of support services in place for students and employees with impairments and learning difficulties, but these are spread under a range of authorities and agencies inside of these authorities. This poses the challenge of how these services cooperate and how they are coordinated, both in order to secure an enabling environment for the student or the employee and to foster the transition from education to work. As we saw already in chapter 1, both parents of children with impairments and young adults with impairments report the struggle with service providers and the coordination of these as one of the major obstacles to education and work.

8.5.1 Cooperation in habilitation/rehabilitation

Earlier in the chapter, we described how municipalities have the basic responsibility for habilitation and rehabilitation of children and young persons with health problems. They are also required to establish a coordinating function by national regulation (Forskrift om habilitering og rehabilitering). The specialized health service has the overarching
responsibility for diagnostics, treatment and guidance for other service providers. Here, the National Support System for Special Education (Statped) and the Child Rehabilitation Service (Barnerehablteringstjenesten) are important as national support systems. A survey conducted in three counties in 2004 showed that 41 out of 73 responding municipalities (of a total of 84 municipalities) had established a coordinating unit for rehabilitation, and 18 of these reported that they were a place of contact for the specialized health service. The study concluded that the degree of cooperation was often arbitrary and that these units had a lack of systematic work to improve their function. Another investigation concluded that municipal service providers in general have a problem navigating through all of the different regional and state services and that the Educational-Psychological Service often has the best knowledge of existing health-related supports (Andersson 2005, p. 76).

8.5.2 Cooperation in education

All counties and municipalities are also obliged to establish an Educational-Psychological Service, and although schools and the EP-service are supposed to work closely together – especially in cases of students with “special needs” – the relationship between them seems to be problematic. A survey of special education in 2004 showed that only 15% of the teachers surveyed had experienced cooperation with the EP-service in the educational development of special needs students as meaningful, and only 11% thought that the EP-service made valuable contributions to the social development of students. Forty percent of the teachers responded “no” to both of these questions. In total, one third of the teachers thought that the contact with the EP-service was useful, one third did not and another third were indifferent to the question. The parents, however, seem to be more satisfied. The same survey showed that around 54% of parents with “special needs” children believe that the employees of the EP-service have sufficient competence to meet the needs of their children, and 50% of the parents feel involved by the service. The response rate of this survey is very low, on the other hand, and one should be careful in generalizing its results (Wendelborg 2006, pp. 216-217). Another survey of headmasters showed that the majority of them did not think that the EP-service promoted a good school environment, and did not transfer their competence to the schools (Wendelborg 2006, p. 217). Prior literature reviews have not been able find any statistics or studies on cooperation between schools, the EP-service and the national support system of special education (Andersson 2005).
8.5.3 Individual plan and responsibility group

To cope with these coordination challenges, three main tools have been devised through national legislation, regulations and guidance to enable coordination between different service providers. One is the municipal coordinating units – which were established in almost half of all municipalities in 2004 (not taking into consideration county differences and that we are now in 2009) – and the two others are individual plans and responsibility groups. The Social Services Act, the Act on Specialized Health Services, the Act on Municipal Services and the Patient Rights Act all give service recipients the right to an individual plan (IP) and place a duty on the service providers to provide such plans. In addition, a regulation on individual plans describes their minimum requirements and desirable practices.

The initiative to make an IP can come from the person with the impairments, next of kin or employees in the service system, but the responsibility to follow up and coordinate the IP is placed with the officials, and often with one of the service providers (the school, the municipal social services or others). Ideally, the IP should contain an overview of the person’s goals, resources and needs and be formulated with the participation of the individual service recipient and his/her parents. The aim of the IP is to coordinate the diversity of public services for persons with long-term and extensive need for aids. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are different from individual plans since they only describe the educational needs of a student. An IEP, however, might be a basis for formulating an IP.

The research on the prevalence of IPs is extensive, but we know less of how the IP works in practice. Although the use of IPs is growing in both the municipal and the specialized health service, a large number of children and youth who are entitled to such plans do not have them (Andersson 2005). A national survey by the Office of the Auditor General (Riksrevisjonen) in 2006-2007 on IPs for children and adolescents with mental disorders showed that the coverage was very poor:

There is no connection between the self-assessment by the service providers on how good they are at making individual plans and what we found in the patient journals. Despite several efforts and significant attention to increased use of individual plans, the review of the journals shows little prevalence; less than 3% of the patients had an individual plan. The survey shows that it is unclear for both the municipal services and the policlinics.
who is responsible for initiating and coordinating the work. The work to make individual plans has not gained sufficient foothold either in the policlinics or in the municipalities. (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonssenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007)

Responsibility groups, on the other hand, are not a legal obligation like the IP. Instead, regulations on both IPs and habilitation and rehabilitation states propose responsibility groups as an arena to make the IP. According to the data on the subject, responsibility groups seem to be more widespread than IPs. A review by the Office of the Auditor General in 2003 on the efforts toward children and youth with mental disorders showed that many municipalities had established responsibility groups for these individuals and that about ¼ of the policlinics had employees present in responsibility groups (Andersson 2005, p. 203). Another study of 1780 children and youth with hyper-kinetic disorders showed that half of these had, according to the EP-service, an established responsibility group or had one coming. Reasons for not having established responsibility groups were that there was no need, parents had not requested it or that the individual already had other coordinator groups in place.

8.6 Transition issues

What does this mean in terms of transition issues? First of all, there are few transition services in place in Norway. Despite a political emphasis on increased career guidance and closer collaboration between NAV and the educational system, no service has been put in place that encompasses the whole set of service providers involved when a person with impairments or learning difficulties moves from one educational level to another or into the labor market. The responsibility group is probably the closest thing we have to a coordination mechanism that can be used for students in transitional phases, but we have no data on the extent to which this is happening today. Students with impairments in higher education already state that one of their main obstacles is to organize everyday life, and the efforts they have to put in are increased in transitions.

As universities or university colleges normally are not located in the same municipality/region where the student lived while undergoing upper secondary education, the person will often have to move to a new place. Like every other student, a person with impairment would have to choose his/her courses, apply for loans and grants, find housing, get literature, orient him-
or herself at the university/college, find new friends and establish a social life outside of the
 campus. In addition, he/she might have to manage accommodation of buildings and exams,
 transportation, accommodated housing, assistants, alternative literature, extra financing and
 technical aids. If moving to a new municipality, he or she also might lose the service
 providers with whom he/she has existing relationships. These might include doctors,
 occupational therapists, physiotherapists, case-workers at NAV, case-workers at the Center
 for Assisted Technology, case-workers in the social services of the municipality, former
 assistants, etc. The higher education institutions are trying to compensate for this extra burden
 of organizing in transition periods by the practice of “early admission” to the study. Early
 admission, on the other hand, means that the student must already have concluded his or her
 upper secondary education. This means that a person with impairments would have to wait a
 minimum of six months after completion of upper secondary education to gain early
 admission to the area of study he or she wants.

It is also an open question whether support services prepare adolescents with impairments or
 learning difficulties for transitions to higher education. Are “special needs” students in upper
 secondary education enabled to manage all of these services when leaving school or entering
 employment? In many ways, the responsibility for achieving this is placed on the habilitation
 and rehabilitation services, of which the official aim is to “[work systematically]
 to ensure that the person who is disabled because of illness, injury or congenital defect can
 reclaim, maintain or develop the functional ability and/or ability to master one’s own life with
 regards to the greatest possible level of independence and quality of life on one’s own terms”
 (Statens helsetilsyn 1998). Both official political documents and those from the NGOs of the
 disabled have emphasized a lack of habilitation or rehabilitation for young adults in
 transitional phases into adulthood, studies or employment. In 2006, the age median of persons
 entering rehabilitation was 67 years, and only 10 rehabilitation institutions had – to some
 extent– a focus on later employment as an outcome of rehabilitation (Helse- og
 omsorgsdepartementet 2007). Research also shows that there is a lack of knowledge of
 rehabilitation services among persons who receive disability benefits at an early age (Sem,
 Braathen, & Skøien 2007). This can indicate both a lack of information on existing services
 and that habilitation/rehabilitation services for young adults are scarce. The NGO Disabled
 Youth of Norway attributes this to a gap in rehabilitation services between childhood and old
 age: Whereas rehabilitation services for both children and the middle aged/elderly are in
 place, there exist no special offerings for young adults (Unge funksjonshemmede 2008). The
habilitation services in the municipalities intended for this group are mainly for mentally impaired adults (Lichtwarck, Handegård, & Bliksvær 2005).

8.7 Summary

- There exist a host of basically free-of-charge support services for students with impairments and learning difficulties in both upper secondary education and tertiary education, including health services, assistive technology, social security benefits and extra support at the educational institution. One of the major differences between upper secondary and tertiary education is that the educational support from a university/university college is far less substantial than at an upper secondary school. Normally, a student with impairment or learning difficulty in higher education is left to him- or herself, whereas the same student would have received a close follow-up and a range of accommodations in high school.

- Support services for the educational institutions also differ between upper secondary and tertiary education. In the first, the schools are potentially supported practically by an Educational-Psychological Service and a national support system in special education. In addition, teachers in upper secondary education might cooperate with municipal habilitation services and receive in-service training at universities and university colleges. Such a support system does not exist in higher education, where the institutions are responsible for creating such support systems themselves.

- Support services in employment basically involve following the individual employee/potential employee with impairment. This is the case for assistive technology, accommodation of the workplace, assistance, transportation and other practical forms of supported employment. Employers are responsible for providing work equipment and making accommodations of the physical infrastructure of the workplace, but might receive some practical advice from the NAV Center for Assistive Technology or the Working Life Centers. Incentives to employers for buying the labor of persons with impairment normally come as wage subsidies or compensation during sick leave.

- Norway has an extensive net of support services, but these are spread among a range of authorities (and agencies within these authorities). This poses coordination
challenges – especially in transitional phases. Increased coordination of service providers is a focus for the government, and three tools have been devised to foster this cooperation. *Municipal coordinating units* for health services are established in many municipalities, but it is not known how well they cooperate with other service providers. Individuals with the need for a wide range of services are entitled to an *Individual Plan*. The use of IPs seems to be spreading, but research indicates that they still have not gained a secure foothold in health services. *Responsibility groups* seem to be a more widespread practice, but we know little of how well they foster coordination or transitions.

- Transitional support services basically encompass career guidance and follow-up in upper secondary education and career centers in higher education. If these are not sufficient for fostering transitions to work or tertiary education, NAV measures for vocational rehabilitation are put into place. Still, coordination of services is reported as a major obstacle for young adults with impairments and learning difficulties, and it is especially difficult in transitions from education to work. Habilitation/rehabilitation services, which have the task of enabling persons with disabilities, do not have a focus on adolescents entering adult life.
9. TRAINING

9.1 Introduction

This small chapter takes a look at the training of teachers who work with students with impairments and learning difficulties and what focus there is on transition issues in their training.

9.2 Initial and in-service training of teachers

There are two different ways to become a qualified teacher in Norway. One is to go through a three-year general teacher bachelor’s degree program and thereby become qualified for teaching in primary and lower secondary schools. Another is to complete a bachelor’s or master’s degree in a given subject at a higher education institution and complement this with a one-year practical-educational study for being a teacher in lower and upper secondary schools. The overall plans for training of teachers for primary and secondary education in Norway are set by the Ministry of Education and Research, and these have a focus on inclusive education as part of educational theory and practice. Students in a general teacher bachelor’s degree program might also choose special education as a subject of specialization. This is not, however, part of the compulsory program.

In-service training for teachers in Norway is the responsibility of school owners (Education Act section 10-8) and normally financed in a partnership between the state, municipalities/counties and the teachers themselves. The training of already qualified teachers might take several different forms. It can either be collective training at school, where the school owners provide funding for courses for groups of teachers, or training outside the school at higher educational institutions or in centers like those that form part of The National Support System for Special Education (Statped). With the implementation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform, there has been a greater focus on the continual education of teachers, but it was not until 2008 that a system of permanent continual education of teachers was established. The new system is based on a partnership agreement between the Ministry of
Education and Research, the Central Organization of Municipalities (KS), teachers’ organizations and the Council of Universities and University colleges. The stakeholders have agreed on a system where the state finances all costs for admission to a program of study of a total of 60 credits. The state and the municipalities/counties each cover 40% of the costs of a substitute for the teacher, whereas the teacher her-/himself must pay the last 20%. In the strategy laid down for the continual education of teachers from 2009-2011, there is little emphasis on subjects that are important for the education of students with impairments and learning difficulties.13

9.3 Transition issues

This strategy, however, puts some emphasis on counseling as a subject that will be prioritized in coming years. Partly as a result of an OECD report on counseling services for students in Norway and some national investigations into the situation of career guidance, there has been an increased focus on the necessity of improving the counseling services in both upper secondary and tertiary education. Career guidance and counseling has been emerging as a separate area of study for teachers in schools, universities and university colleges. Counseling of students with impairments has a place in these studies, and although the practice varies from one university/university college to another, many of them set aside one day of teaching and discussion on transition issues for students with impairments and learning difficulties (reference interview).

9.4 Summary

- Both initial and in-service training of teachers are focused on adapted education, and special education is a subject of choice. In-service training of teachers is a cooperative effort between the State, school owners and the teachers themselves. The current strategy for in-service training of teachers, however, does not emphasize special education.

13 Instead, the focus is on Mathematics, English, Sámi and Reading. (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2008)
Career guidance and counseling is emerging as a separate subject at universities/university colleges, and participants in these courses are taught about challenges and opportunities for students with impairments and learning difficulties in transitional phases.
10. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we take a look at the system of community and parental involvement in education and employment in Norway and briefly discuss how parents are involved in education of students with impairments and learning difficulties and in transitional phases.

10.2 Levels of community and parental involvement

It is possible to talk about community and parental involvement on several different levels. One is at a systemic level, where political decisions are made concerning education and employment issues. Another is at a group level, where student groups or parental communities are involved in measures and institutions concerning their own education and employment or that of their children. The third is at the individual level, where parents are directly involved in the education of their child or in the transition from school to work.

The Norwegian system of government is recognized by its corporate traits, where the state and the so-called “social partners” (arbeidslivets parter) cooperate on labor market and welfare policies. Also, organizations of recipients of welfare benefits and support services, so-called user organizations (brukerorganisasjoner), are involved in developing policies. On a systemic level, there exist several meeting places for this kind of state-community cooperation. At the national level, we find the National Council on Disability, a liaison committee for the government and the largest organization of disabled in Norway (Funsjonshemmedes fellesorganisasjon), and a user-forum for disability issues in higher education where student organizations and the Ministry of Education and Research meet on a regular basis. By law, all municipalities and counties are required to establish a disability council where both political representatives and representatives from the organizations of the disabled participate. In addition, the various health regions and the NAV also have systems of user representation at all levels of management.
10.3 Parental and community involvement in educational institutions

All owners of primary and lower secondary schools are obliged to establish parents’ and students’ committees to ensure the participation of both of these groups in the management of the school. In upper secondary education there are no parents’ committees, but students themselves are represented both through a student council and in the school environment committee together with the headmaster, county representatives, teachers and administrative personnel. The students have to be a majority in the school environment committee, but there is no provision on representation of students with impairments or learning difficulties. We have not been able to find research on student involvement in upper secondary education and disability issues/transition issues.

10.4 Parental involvement in individual plans and responsibility groups

Although parents are not directly involved in educational institutions beyond the lower secondary level, this does not mean that they cannot participate in the supports their child receive or in their transition to tertiary education or into employment. First of all, parents have to be involved in special education if their child is entitled to such extra supports in his or her education. Another tool for increased parental involvement is the individual plan (IP), where the obligation of service providers to include parents is quite strong. In cases where students are not of age, the parents or the next of kin have to approve the development of an IP itself. We have not been able to find research on the extent to which parents (nor the individual) get involved in transitions to higher education or work. Other research on satisfaction with support services for children and youth with mental disorders and their parents shows that parents who had children with IPs were significantly more satisfied with the services they received than those whose children did not have IPs (Andersson 2005, p. 200).

The same study also concluded that parents of children and youth with mental disorders also have very positive experiences with responsibility groups, and they felt that services became more coordinated and they themselves became more included in the supports for their child (Andersson 2005, p. 204). Quantitative studies have been conducted on parental perception of services to children with impairments. These showed that 86% of 507 parents reported that
responsibility groups were established for their children, and more often for children with mental than those with physical impairments. The experiences of these parents were often contradictory. Parents of children with light impairments were more pleased than those of children with severe impairments, and some parents found the responsibility groups as a source of valuable information, whereas others experienced it more like a “battle arena”. This contradictory experience seems to be confirmed by other research on the subject, and it often varies with the diagnosis of the impairment/learning difficulty or the severity of it (Andersson 2005, pp. 205-206). We were unable to find research on transition issues and parental involvement through responsibility groups.

10.5 Summary

- Community involvement in Norway is widespread on a systemic level for persons with impairments, in cooperative meeting places between organizations and the State, municipalities and counties. Also, at school, parents and students are involved through a committee system, but there is no separate form of representation at this level for students with impairments or learning difficulties.

- Parents have to be involved in the special education of their children, and they may also be involved in the work of service providers through individual plans and responsibility groups. Research shows that such plans are quite widespread, but the experience of parents is varied and often contradictory. We do not know to what extent parents are involved in transition issues through such arrangements, but this might be the case.
11. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

11.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly goes through the most important future development of policies in Norway and the possible implications for the transitional opportunities of young persons with impairments or learning difficulties.

11.2 Most important future developments

Of the most important future developments for the transitions of young persons with impairments and learning difficulties will be the vast NAV reform that is now taking place. The reform itself has been introduced to, among other things, better coordinate services for persons with extensive needs for support to get into employment. Among other things, the responsible State authorities have made an intentional agreement with the association of municipalities to establish closer ties between NAV and the educational system. The result of this agreement is still to be seen.

As well, NAV is planning to replace temporary disability benefits, vocational and rehabilitation benefits by a new “clarification for work” benefit. The reason for this is partly to avoid benefit traps in the system and to direct all temporary benefits toward employment and not later passive benefits. Another reason is to streamline the NAV system. The new youth guarantee might – by guaranteeing young adults fast access to NAV services –also have an impact for young persons with impairments and learning difficulties. However, as the economic crisis deepens (rising by 86% from May 2008 to May 2009), the employment opportunities for this group might become increasingly volatile.

We have yet to see the results of the new Discrimination and Accessibility Act. Denounced institutions so far have been shops, travel agencies, etc., and not workplaces, schools or universities. Although the new act places an active duty on enterprises to ensure accessibility, there are very few deadlines to be met for public institutions or private enterprises. Of other
important developments is the future of the Agreement for a more inclusive working life. This agreement between the State, employer associations and trade unions is supposed to be renegotiated in 2009, but representatives from the associations have expressed worries that the agreement will not be continued.
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