



## Postsecondary Vocational Education and Training in Denmark Strengths, Challenges and Recommendations

### STRENGTHS

- Workplace training is mandatory, well-structured and has clear learning goals.
- Effective measures guide students to programmes, and support them in seeking to update their skills.
- A parallel adult education system provides access for adults to all main programmes.
- The social partners are fully engaged in the system, though robust institutional structures.
- The “taximeter” funding system provides effective incentives for institutions to minimise dropout and seek efficiencies in delivering outcomes.

### CHALLENGES

- The planned reorganisation of the postsecondary sector, envisaged for 2015, has few immediate benefits and is opposed by the social partners.
- There is uncertainty over the role of research in postsecondary VET institutions in Denmark, with pressure from some quarters for a more active research role, particularly in university colleges.
- Despite the development of a framework for recognition of prior learning, it seems to be insufficiently used, particularly to realise course exemptions.
- There is a challenge in ensuring that postsecondary vocational teachers and trainers maintain and develop their experience and knowledge of modern industry, in the face of rapid technological change.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The transfer of responsibility for professional bachelor's degrees from academies to university colleges, planned for 1 January 2015, should not go ahead. Instead, in co-ordination with the social partners, alternative plans should be developed for consolidation in the sector designed to sustain its role in meeting labour market needs. The evaluation of academies, planned for 2013, should be extended to look also at the university colleges, and be designed so as to support the development of these alternative plans.
2. Danish government policy in the funding of Research and Development (R&D) should ensure: *i)* that the primary vocational training mission of university colleges and academies is sustained; *ii)* that the vocational training delivered is effectively informed by knowledge and research; and *iii)* that the benefits of R&D are maximised through the encouragement of collaboration among research bodies and with the private sector.
3. Following the development of an effective structure for recognising prior learning, further measures are necessary to realise its potential. There is a need to strengthen incentives for RPL through adjustment of the funding system, stronger quality control and better information. In addition, following the example of other OECD countries, Denmark should consider encouraging the development of an industry-led professional examination system.
4. Ensure that the vocational knowledge and skills of postsecondary VET teachers remains up-to-date by: *i)* providing incentives for teachers to regularly update their vocational skills; and *ii)* establishing a framework that allows teachers to regularly spend time in a company or institution within their professional field.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Increasingly countries look beyond secondary school to more advanced qualifications to provide the skills needed in many of the fastest growing technical and professional jobs in OECD economies. The OECD study, *Skills beyond School*, is addressing the range of policy questions arising, including funding and governance, matching supply and demand, quality assurance and equity and access. The study will build on the success of the previous OECD study of vocational education and training *Learning for Jobs* which examined policy through 17 country reviews and a comparative report. The study also forms part of the horizontal OECD Skills Strategy (OECD, 2012).<sup>1</sup>

Full country policy reviews are being conducted in Austria, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Israel, Korea, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (England), and the United States (with case studies of Florida, Maryland and Washington State). Shorter exercises leading to an OECD country commentary will be undertaken in Belgium (Flanders), Canada, Iceland, Romania, Spain, Sweden and in Northern Ireland and Scotland in the United Kingdom. Background reports will be prepared in all these countries, and in France, Hungary and Mexico.

[A Skills beyond School Review of Denmark, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training](#) (Field, S., et al., 2012) was published on 4 September 2012.

Further information about the policy review and reports on VET systems in other countries is available on the OECD website [www.oecd.org/education/vet](http://www.oecd.org/education/vet)

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1. OECD (2012), *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies*, OECD Publishing. Doi: 10.1787/9789264177338-en