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### Group of National Experts on Special Needs Education

COUNTRY REPORT FOR DENMARK  
PATHWAYS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS TO TERTIARY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

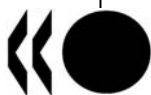
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# Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Em- ployment (an OECD project) Country Report, Denmark

The Danish Ministry of Education  
& Rambøll Management

Pathways for Disabled  
Students to Tertiary Education  
and Employment  
(an OECD project)  
Country Report, Denmark

Country Report

January 2009

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- Handicap og job – en beskæftigelsesstrategi for personer med handicap (Beskæftigelsesministeriet, 2004)
- Handicap – uddannelses- og erhvervsvejledning (Center for ligebehandling af handicappede, 2004)
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- Web portalen for SU styrelsen (www.sustyrelsen.dk/)
- Web portalen ”Tilgængelighed til Uddannelse” (www.tilgaengelighed.emu.dk)

- Web portalen "Handicappede studerende og kandidater" ([www.hsknet.dk/forside.php](http://www.hsknet.dk/forside.php))
- Web portalen "I job nu – den direkte vej mellem virksomheder og mennesker med nedsat funktionsevne" ([www.ijobnu.dk/](http://www.ijobnu.dk/))
- Web portalen "Mangfoldighed" ([www.mangfoldighed.dk](http://www.mangfoldighed.dk))
- Web portalen for Center for ligebehandling af handicappede ([www.clh.dk/](http://www.clh.dk/))
- Web portalen for Specialpædagogisk støtte og handicaptillæg ([www.spsu.dk/](http://www.spsu.dk/))
- Web portalen for Specialfunktionen for job & handicap ([www.bmhandicap.dk/](http://www.bmhandicap.dk/))
- Web portalen for Det Centrale Handicapråd ([www.dch.dk](http://www.dch.dk))
- Web portalen "Handicapportalen" ([www.handicapportalen.dk](http://www.handicapportalen.dk))
- Web portalen for de danske handicaporganisationer ([www.handicap.dk/](http://www.handicap.dk/))
- Web portalen for små handicapgrupper ([www.csh.dk/](http://www.csh.dk/))
- Web portalen for blinde og svagsynede ([www.ibos.dk](http://www.ibos.dk))
- Web portalen "Vidensnetværket – handicap og beskæftigelse" ([www.vidensnetvaerket.dk/](http://www.vidensnetvaerket.dk/))



## **Introduction**

This country report is one component of the OECD project on *pathways for disabled students to tertiary education and employment*. Another central component of this project, which Denmark actively participates in, is a longitudinal study that aims to describe pathways that young adults with disabilities follow from upper secondary education to tertiary education and to employment. The longitudinal study, which spans from 2008 to 2010, is implemented as a survey in each of the participating countries.

The present country report describes the context of the policies and provisions related to support and aid for students with disabilities or learning difficulties in Denmark. The primary focus of the report is on the current policies and provisions as well as the key factors that are influencing transition policies in the educational field for disabled students. However, the report also includes references and descriptions of related factors in the field of employment.

The report is structured according to the guidelines for country reports proposed by the OECD and covers the following topics: definitions of disability; data; policy and future developments; funding; provisions; support services; informational and learning resources as well as parental involvement.

## **1. Definitions of disability**

In the Danish literature, the term "disability" refers to an objective and ascertainable physical or psychological condition, while the term "handicap" refers to the lack of ability to function qua the surrounding society. In other words, the term handicap – as a situation-dependent condition – is about the limitations placed on a person by the surrounding environment<sup>1</sup>. As such, the real disability stems from the lack of correspondence between the surrounding society and the needs and demands of people with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

This definition of the term handicap is called the environment related handicap concept, because a disability becomes a handicap at the moment when a disabled person runs into barriers, which makes it difficult for him or her to participate in society on the same conditions as non-handicapped people. The environment related handicap concept is also the one used in United Nations standard rules on equal opportunities for handicapped.<sup>3</sup>

Needless to say, different definitions of disability can have a direct influence on disabled students' transition to tertiary education and employment. This is because; the definition of disability in many ways determines whether or not a disabled student is eligible to disability-related support and aid. As just one example, a very narrow definition of disability may exclude certain disabled students, whose functional limitations are not included in the definition and in effect serve to keep them from the opportunity to receive disability-related aid and support. This – unmet need for support – may in turn influence their ability to advance towards or complete a secondary or tertiary educational program. The same – of course – concerns employment.

### **1.1 The concept of disability in the Danish context**

In Denmark, there is no shared, unambiguous and formal definition of disability. As shown in what follows, the definitions of disability employed in the fields of education and employment are presented in the form of guiding – but not exhaustive – lists of what constitute a disability. This allows for an individualized, case-by-case judgement by relevant professionals when making decisions about eligibility for disability-related aid and support.

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<sup>1</sup> Nordisk inklusion (DPU Århus, 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Handicap og beskæftigelse – et forhindringsforløb? (SFI, 2004)

<sup>3</sup> Handicap – Uddannelses- og erhvervsvejledning (Center for ligebehandling af handicappede, 2004)

### 1.1.1 Education

The Danish Education Support Agency administers (SU), among other things, grants and loans to students (over 18 years old) enrolled in youth education programs or higher education courses.

The first definition of disability is employed by the Danish Education Support Agency, when determining eligibility for the handicap supplement (Handicap-tillæg), which serves as a compensation for disabled students' lack of ability to carry out student employment while studying (see section on the *handicap supplement* in chapter 6: support services). The definition, which is presented as a guiding list, states that a handicap involves functional limitations due to:

- A permanent physical disability:
  - Mobility problems as a consequence of hard muscle- and nerve pains, for example muscular dystrophy, sclerosis, hard back pains, cerebral palsy.
  - Blindness and severe visual impairment
  - Deafness and severe hearing impairment
- A permanent psychological disability:
  - Severe psychological and psychosomatic disorders, for example as a consequence of fear/anxiety, phobia, autism or personality disorder (source: SU)

Another – and somewhat broader – definition of disability, also employed by the Danish Education Support Agency, is used for determining eligibility for special educational assistance (see section on *special educational assistance* in chapter 6: support services) and includes:

- Any physical or psychological functional limitation – temporary or permanent – that keeps a student from completing a secondary or tertiary educational program on equal footing as other students (source: SU)

### 1.1.2 **Employment**

In relation to disability-related aid and support during employment, the definition of disability employed by the special division on job and handicap (Specialfunktionen Job & Handicap), an agency under the Ministry of Employment, is of particular importance. The definition, which is presented as a guiding list, involves functional limitations due to

- Visual impairment or dyslexia
- Severe hearing impairment
- Severe functional limitation
- ADHD – asperger
- Brain damage
- Psychological disorders
- Any other handicap, which may warrant special compensation or support.

(source: Specialfunktionen job & handicap)

The definition is used for eligibility determination for support services that serve to compensate for functional limitations, including special equipment, alternative means of transportation etc.

## 2. Data

In Denmark, it is illegal to register persons on the basis of their disability. For that reason, there is no central register on disabled persons in Denmark, and - as a consequence - no *full-count, register-based data* exist on the number of disabled students entering and/or completing secondary or tertiary educational programs. However, the Danish Education Support Agency maintains a register on recipients of disability-related support and aid, which may provide reliable estimates of the number of disabled students in higher education. In addition, the Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted, a nationwide institute for young people and adults with visual disabilities, maintains a register of their members.

### 2.1 Existing data on young persons with disabilities or learning difficulties

The following tables are based on data from the Danish Education Support Agency, which, among other things, is the government agency responsible for assignment and payout of special educational assistance (SPS), which students with functional limitations can receive during their education.

#### 2.1.1 Higher education

The first table presents the number of SPS-support recipients and the amount of funding awarded different types of disabilities (2004-2006). As the table shows, the number of recipients as well as the amount of funding has gone up in the time period between 2004 and 2006; though, the amount of funding per recipient remains stable at about 32500 per year.

**Table 2.1 SPS-support recipients and the amount of support in Mio. Kr. (2004 – 2006)**

	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006
	Support recipients			Mio. Kr. <sup>1</sup>		
<b>SPS-support:</b>	<b>1.132</b>	<b>1.099</b>	<b>1.407</b>	<b>36,9</b>	<b>38,4</b>	<b>45,4</b>
- hearing difficulties	78	76	76	14,7	16,1	14,4
- visual difficulties	73	69	77	4,2	14,3	5,5
- reading/writing difficulties	693	692	929	15,5	15,3	21,7
- motion difficulties	229	199	242	2,1	1,8	2,1
- psychological difficulties	40	48	61	0,3	0,7	1,0
- other	19	15	22	0,1	0,1	0,6

Table note: <sup>1</sup> excl. tax (Source: SU-styrelsen)

The amount spent on different kinds of SPS-support is provided in the table below for the years 2004-2006. The table shows that most SPS-support is awarded to interpreting services (around 14,0 mio. Kr.) and assisting tools and introduction when including IT-support services (around 10,0 mio. Kr.).

**Table 2.2 Different kinds of SPS-support in 2004 -2006**

	2004	2005	2006
	Mio. Kr. <sup>1</sup>		
<b>SPS-support:</b>	<b>36,9</b>	<b>38,4</b>	<b>45,4</b>
- interpreting services	14,0	15,3	13,9
- teaching materials	4,7	5,0	6,9
- assisting tools and instruction <sup>2</sup>	9,9	6,2	2,8
- courses	4,7	3,2	0,5
- secretary and practical assistance	2,1	1,8	1,7
- study and assessment of the needs of support	1,4	1,6	2,4
- IT-support services	--	2,9	7,6
- study support hours	--	2,1	8,7
- special workspace accommodations	--	0,3	0,8
- other	0,1	0,0	0,2

Table note: <sup>1</sup> excl. tax; <sup>2</sup>Until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 assisting tools and instruction included IT-support services (Source: SU-styrelsen)

Table 2.3 provides an overview of the number of disabled students receiving handicap supplement in 2005-2006, as well as the total amount of funding spent on the handicap supplement in that period. As the table shows, the number of disabled students receiving the handicap supplement has dramatically increased from 670 recipients in 2005 to 1.102 recipients in 2006. In accordance with this development, the amount of funding for the handicap supplement has risen from 30,1 million kr. to 54,3 million kr. between 2005 and 2006.

**Table 2.3 Handicap-supplement recipients and amount of support in Mio. Kr. in 2005-2006**

	2005		2006	
	Support recipients	Mio. Kr.	Support recipients	Mio. Kr.
Handicap supplement	670	30,1	1.102	54,3

Source: SU-styrelsen

### 2.1.2 The employment rate among disabled persons

There are no data on the employment rates among *young* persons with disabilities, but some data – from various studies carried out by research groups or institutes – exist on handicapped persons and employment in general. The tables and statistics presented in the section that follows are based on a study, carried out by the Danish National Center for Social Research (SFI), on employment rates among disabled and non-disabled people.

Among persons with disabilities or long-lasting health problems, around 56 pct. (adv. 389.400) were working in 2005, compared to 83 pct. (adv. 2.343.000) among persons without a disability or a long-lasting health problem. Moreover, around 41 pct. (adv. 285.100) of the disabled people were outside the labour force in 2005, compared to 14 pct. (adv. 379.721) of the non-disabled that same year<sup>4</sup>.

While the unemployment rates for *all disabled and non-disabled people* (16-64 year-olds) are level at around 3 pct., the unemployed share of the *labour force* is somewhat higher among persons with disabilities or long-lasting health problems (around 6 pct.), as compared with people without a disability/long-lasting health problem (around 4 pct.).

In 2005, around 13 pct. (adv. 50.623) of the disabled in employment were initially hired on special condition compared to 9 pct. (adv. 33.061) in 2002. This corresponds to an increase of about 16.500 persons<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 2.4 The labor market affiliation among the 16-64 year-olds in 2002 and 2005.**

	Persons with a disability/long-lasting health problem		Persons without a disability/long-lasting health problem	
	2002	2005	2002	2005
<b>Employed</b>	52,9	56,3	83,7	83,3
<b>Unemployed</b>	3,4	2,7	3,4	3,2
<b>Outside the labour force</b>	43,7	41,0	12,9	13,5
<b>In all</b>	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
<b>Unemployment percentage<sup>1</sup></b>	6,0	6,2	3,9	3,7
<b>Observation enumerated to the whole populations</b>	694.423	695.378	2.791.224	2.812.753

Table note: <sup>1</sup> The unemployment percentage is calculated as the unemployed share of the labour force. Source: Handicap og beskæftigelse – udviklingen mellem 2002 og 2005, (SFI 2006)

<sup>4</sup> Handicap og beskæftigelse – udviklingen mellem 2002 og 2005, (SFI 2006)

<sup>5</sup> Handicap og beskæftigelse – udviklingen mellem 2002 og 2005, (SFI 2006)

The percentage of persons with a disability, who works more than 15 hours a week has grown from 51 pct. in 2005 to 55 pct. in 2006. The equivalent numbers for non-disabled persons remained at around 77 pct. in the same time period<sup>6</sup>.

**Table 2.5 Number of 16-64 year-olds employed more than 15 hours a week (2005 – 2006).**

	Persons with a disability/long-lasting health problem		Persons without a disability/long-lasting health problem	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
<b>Share in employment more than 15 hours a week</b>	50,6	54,8	77,4	77,4
<b>Basis of calculation enumerated to the whole population</b>	678.580	673.268	2.708.673	2.705.368

Source: Handicap og beskæftigelse i 2006 (SFI, 2008)

<sup>6</sup> Handicap og beskæftigelse i 2006 (SFI, 2008)



### 3. Policy and Future Developments

#### 3.1 Compulsory basic school

Excellent basic skills and competences are a vital basis for acquiring new knowledge and skills and engaging in learning throughout life. The Danish Folkeskole (primary and lower-secondary school) has many good qualities and pupils generally like going to school. However, it is a major challenge that one in six children leave school with insufficient reading skills and that the academic level of the Danish Folkeskole is not quite as high as in other countries with which Denmark usually compares itself.

In the Folkeskole, where the compulsory education is a decisive element of the legislative basis, it is laid down very precisely and obligingly that all children are obliged and therefore also entitled to complete the Folkeskole or other teaching of a standard which can measure up with that of the Folkeskole. The Act on the Folkeskole thus applies to all children of basic school age as well as children who have not yet started school, if they due to a handicap have needs for special educational assistance. The aims of the school, the number and scope of the subjects, the organisation of the teaching in class levels, evaluation etc. are thus directed equally at well-functioning pupils and at pupils with severe functional disabilities.

It is the Government's aim:

- That all pupils shall have excellent academic skills and knowledge.
- That the Folkeskole shall provide pupils with knowledge and skills, promote creativity and independence and prepare them for further education.
- That the pupils shall be among the best in the world in four basic subject areas: reading, mathematics, science and English, and
- That all young people gain knowledge and skills which provide them with the basis for actively taking part in a globalised world.

Reforms in the Danish Folkeskole include in particular the following initiatives:

- A new clause stating the objectives of the basic compulsory school - that is to prepare for further education - and stressing proficiency and the pupils' familiarity with Danish culture and history.
- The culture of evaluation is being strengthened through implementation of national tests and personal pupil plans are being introduced.
- The final exams are made obligatory and the number of subjects including exams is being expanded.
- The laying down of action plans for basic subjects: reading, mathematics, science and English.

- The responsibility of the municipalities is being clarified, including the task to make annual quality reports stating the quality in the basic compulsory schools.
- A new teacher training education programme aiming at ensuring better quality and increased opportunities for specialisation and a targeted effort in continuing education of teachers and school managers.

The Government has allocated DKK 230 million for continuing education of teachers and school managers for the period 2007-2009.

### 3.2 **General and vocational upper secondary education**

Excellent basic qualifications are crucial for everyone to be able to cope in the labour market and to be able to continue learning. The needs for a well-educated labour force will also increase in the coming years. It is therefore crucial that upper secondary education, general as well as vocational, is attractive and challenging and that it offers good opportunities to all young people. This applies not least to vocational education and training, which provide young people with good employment opportunities.

Almost all young people begin an upper secondary education, either a general education programme or a vocational education and training programme. However, too many drop out of the education programme. The proportion of all young people who completes upper secondary education was in 2006 around 80 per cent<sup>7</sup>. The dropout rate is particularly high for vocational education and training programmes. There is a need, therefore, for a larger number of young people, especially young people of a different ethnic background, to complete a qualifying upper secondary education providing access to further education or to the labour market. It is important that more young people are guided and motivated to engage in education.

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<sup>7</sup> Profilresultater for kommunerne (UNI-C, 2008)

It is the Government's aim:

- That all young people shall have a qualifying education. At least 85 per cent of all young people shall complete an upper secondary education by 2010, and at least 95 per cent by 2015.
- That upper secondary education shall be attractive and of the highest quality.
- That the general education programmes shall provide pupils with good academic and general skills so that more can complete a higher education programme.
- That vocational education and training programmes shall challenge the most talented pupils and provide them with increased opportunities for further education. At the same time vocational education and training programmes shall provide realistic training opportunities for weak academic learners.

Reforms in upper secondary education include the following initiatives in particular:

- Municipalities shall be responsible for helping to ensure that young people complete a general or vocational upper secondary education through, among other things, better guidance and improved educational provision for weak learners.
- Vocational education and training shall be strengthened through, among other things, continuing training of teachers and better school environments.
- Efforts to increase the number of practical training places in vocational education and training shall be increased in both private and public enterprises through, among other things, a national campaign in cooperation with business and organisations.
- More flexible pathways and education programmes will be introduced in vocational education to meet the needs of all pupils, both the strong and the weak. In this regard the assessment of prior learning is an important and integral tool of vocational education and training.
- Vocational education and training will be divided into steps corresponding to the needs of the labour market so that all young people can obtain an education which is suited to their abilities and at the same time providing improved opportunities for access to higher education.

Within the agreement on implementing the globalisation fund DKK 750 million are to be allocated for quality development in vocational education and training for the period 2007-2009 and almost DKK 7 billion to increase the education capacity in upper secondary education until 2012.

### 3.3 Higher education

A highly educated labour force plays a central role for innovation and growth and thus for dynamic development in society. Denmark's future competitiveness and prosperity depend to a large degree on our ability to develop new knowledge and products and to exploit our know-how in the global market place. Denmark shall therefore have world-class education, and it is crucial that more young people acquire a higher education and that they complete their education programmes faster.

In 2006, around 47 per cent of a youth cohort is expected to complete a higher education programme<sup>8</sup>. This is less than in many other countries, and far too many drop out. There are also practical barriers to credit transfer which limit the opportunities to build on a previously completed education programme. Therefore, there is a need for greater cohesion in higher education programmes and between vocational education and short cycle higher education programmes. There is also a need for new and more vocational higher education programmes and education at the highest international level which match the needs of the labour market. At the same time, it is crucial that the academic and pedagogical quality of higher education programmes is strengthened.

It is the Government's aim that:

- At least 50 per cent of a youth cohort shall have a higher education in 2015.
- The quality of short cycle and medium cycle higher education programmes and university education programmes must match the best in the world.
- All higher education programmes shall have a contents which matches the needs of society.
- All young people shall complete an education programme with a global perspective.
- Young people shall be encouraged to begin higher education programmes earlier.
- The education programmes shall be organised so that delays are kept to a minimum.

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<sup>8</sup> Profilresultater for kommunerne (UNI-C, 2008)

The Government will in particular take the following initiatives in relation to higher education programmes:

- New profession-oriented and practice-oriented education programmes will be developed.
- All institutions providing medium cycle higher education will be concentrated in a few multi-disciplinary university colleges with academically strong and modern study environments.
- Short cycle higher education programmes will be made more attractive and flexible, they will be targeted towards the needs of the labour market and access to them from vocational education and training will be improved.
- New attractive education programmes will be developed in the areas of science, technology and health.
- Elite master's education programmes will be established so that the most talented students can be on a par with the best in other countries.
- The quality shall be improved at all levels in higher education through the inclusion of increased continuing training of teaching staff and accreditation of all higher education programmes.
- The admission system and the organisation of education programmes shall be changed in order to promote earlier commencement and a faster completion of education programmes.

As part of the implementation of the globalisation funds, more than DKK 4 billion have been allocated up to 2012 for initiatives aiming at enhancing quality and expanding teaching capacity in higher education. This includes DKK 150 million for teacher training for the period 2007- 2009 in short and medium cycle higher education and DKK 220 million for new teaching methods and teacher training in long cycle higher education in universities.

## 4. Funding

### 4.1 People with disabilities

There are no tuition fees at Danish educational institutions and people with disabilities are eligible (like all other Danes over the age of 18) to public support for his or her further education – regardless of social standing. The public grants and loans are awarded by the State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme (SU) through a system managed by the Danish Educational Support Agency (Styrelsen for Statens Uddannelsesstøtte) in collaboration with the educational institutions and under the auspices of the Danish Ministry of Education. In addition to the regular grants and loans, students with disabilities are eligible for the *handicap supplement*, which is described in detail in chapter 6. In brief, the handicap supplement compensates for the lack of ability to maintain a student job while studying.

Finally, a wide-range of charitable societies and organisations offers students a helping hand in covering living costs and other expenses related to their studies, including books and accommodation.

In relation to employment there is a range of opportunities for economic support, which serves to ensure that people with functional limitations are integrated into the labour market. The economic support, which is provided by the different municipalities and administered by social advisors under these, may cover expenses related to the rehabilitation activity, e.g. expenses to books, courses, materials, personal assistance or transportation.

### 4.2 Educational institutions

The educational institutions are, in accordance with the principle of sector responsibility, obligated to provide special education and other arrangements in order to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. The provisions and support services provided by the educational institutions are either funded by the school or by the special educational assistance program (SPS), which is administered by the Danish Educational Support Agency (Styrelsen for Statens Uddannelsesstøtte) under the auspices of the Danish Ministry of Education (see chapter 6 for a more detailed account of the special educational assistance program). The SPS covers expenses related to disability-related accommodations, including, but by no means limited to technical support materials and specially-arranged teaching in consideration of the students learning abilities.

### **Funds to development of the area of special teaching**

It is possible to apply for funding for development activities within the areas of special teaching for children, youth plus education and other handicap-related educational activities. These activities can for example be in the form of evaluations, research initiatives and teaching experiments. Funding can also be awarded towards expenses in relation to courses and conferences, communication through preparation reports and publishing of the results of pedagogical development work. There is also given subsidy to information meetings and courses for disabled students or training sessions for teachers, leaders and other professionals employed within these areas.

### **4.3 Employers and job centres**

Employers may receive funds and subsidies in relation to a range of disability-related provisions and support services. The opportunities for receiving subsidies and funds include:

The icebreaker program, where a company receives financial support for up to 6 months and in some cases up to 12 months when hiring disabled persons on regular conditions of employment for a fixed time period (see chapter 6 on *special support services* for a detailed description of the program). The funds for the icebreaker program are provided by the municipalities.

The personal assistance program, where a disabled person receives personal assistance to a wide range of practical functions related to their job description. The personal assistant is often employed in the same company as the disabled person and the employer receives financial support to cover the expenses of the personal assistant. The funds for the personal assistance program are provided by the state.

The funding scheme for assistive technology for handicapped is an initiative that covers expenses related to special working tools, assistive technologies or other accommodations of the workplace that make it possible for the handicapped to perform a job. The costs related to the funding scheme for assistive technology is shared by the municipalities and the state.

The Mentorship program is a funding opportunity that allows for employers to establish a mentorship program within their company in support of employees with disabilities. The employer then receives financial support to pay for the employees who take on the responsibility as mentors. The funding is provided by the municipalities.

The flex job scheme makes it possible for employers to establish a position with wage subsidy – a so called flex job. The flex job scheme compensates the employer for the employee's reduced ability to work and special needs. The funding for the flex job scheme is provided by the municipalities.

## **5. Provisions**

### **5.1 The state-level government**

In Denmark, with the introduction of the principle of sector responsibility, it is now the responsibility of the different sectors (education, employment and so forth), as represented by the different ministries, to ensure that disabled people are able to benefit from society on equal terms with non-disabled people. In the field of education, as just one example, the educational institutions must ensure that their educational programs are accessible and available to disabled and able-bodied students alike. The compensational support and aid, which a disabled person may need in order to complete an educational program, must therefore be made available by the Ministry of Education.

In support of the different ministries and government agencies, the Central Handicap Council provides support by offering council to state agencies and ministries on issues related to disabled people. The Central Handicap Council, which was founded in 1980, consists of representatives from the health and social services area, representing both users and providers of disability-related services. All members are appointed by the Minister for social welfare.

The members of the council oversee the implementation of disability-related rules and initiatives. Their primary tasks are the following:

- To monitor and evaluate conditions in the society for persons with disabilities, including the area of preventative care and accessibility
- To give advice to government agencies in all general matters, which concern the conditions in the society for handicapped persons
- To give advice to other central public agencies in matters that concern the conditions for persons with disabilities
- To advance disability-related political initiatives and proposals

In 2007, the Central Handicap Council has given special attention to the implementation of new youth educational program for youth with special needs as well as the development of a national test system in the folkeskole that will include students with special needs.



## 5.2 The municipalities

In 2007 a major structural reform was implemented in Denmark. The structural reform reduced the previous 271 municipalities to 98, and the 14 counties were abolished and replaced by five new administrative regions governed by popularly elected boards.

Responsibilities and the division of labour were restructured, resulting in more tasks and obligations for the municipalities, which are now responsible for almost all public services. The municipalities are governed by locally elected politicians.

## 5.3 The social system

On a general level, the municipality is the main entrance to the public help and support system offered for families with a disabled child. The support is provided by the social security service and given on the basis of an assessment of the particular situation and context of the family. The awarded benefits will differ from municipality to municipality, because the municipalities independently determine/impose their own service standards within the legal framework.

The municipalities also help and guide disabled students and their parents on how to navigate between the different available options for aid and support for disabled children and students. Social advisors inform the families about the relevant offers for support and discuss the individual needs with the family. It is the role of the social advisors to involve the parents as much as possible in the process. It is also the social advisor, again in cooperation with the family, who coordinates and plans the transition when a child moves from one institution to another.

Nearly all municipalities use a written 'plan of action' to ensure a coordinated effort for the disabled child. The plan of action details the kind of actions that should be initiated, the purpose and duration of the actions as well as other things relevant to the implementation of these (for example supporting materials and treatments). The action plan is typically adjusted regularly to ensure that the action plan is timely and relevant to the development of the disabled person.

The plan of action is not a legal requirement for children and young people with disabilities. Adults with disabilities are on the other hand according to the law of service §111 legally entitled to be offered a written plan of action by the municipality.

In order to remain informed on issues relating to handicapped people, each municipality has a local handicap council. The local handicap councils support the municipalities in their work on disability-related initiatives and strategies.

## 5.4 The educational system

Different sections of the educational system have different provisions for compensation to students with disabilities. There are a lot of different aspects of the different educational programs, which may influence whether or not a person with a disability will enter and complete the program. Besides living up to the prevalent professional demands of the educational program, there may be special demands related to the program, which can exclude people with disabilities. As just one example, a program may require a driver's license, which in effect excludes people with severe visual impairment.

In general, and in accordance with the principle of sector responsibility, disabled persons will have the same possibility to enter and complete secondary and tertiary education on the same conditions as non-disabled persons. It is the Ministry of Education and the individual educational institutions that are responsible for providing the necessary means of support and aid for persons with disabilities, including – but by no means limited to – adequate learning materials, accessibility, secretary support etc.

### 5.4.1 Special educational assistance (primary school and lower secondary education)

The Act on the Folkeskole contains supplementary provisions on special rights for certain pupils and on possibilities of deviating from some of the provisions in the act in relation to these pupils. In section 3 of the Act on the Folkeskole, it is laid down that "Special education and other special educational assistance shall be given to children whose development requires special consideration or support", and it is directly mentioned that these provisions may contain deviations from the subject-range of the school, the provisions on proficiency assessment and the weekly timetable. It is characteristic of section 3 of the act that there is no indication of any form of objective or categorical delimitation of the group of pupils with special educational needs. The decision as to whether a child's development requires special consideration or support is dependent on a concrete assessment in each individual case, which according to section 12 in the act shall be made upon pedagogical and psychological counselling and upon consultation of the pupil and his/her parents.

Special educational assistance includes special pedagogical counselling to parents, teachers and personnel; specially-arranged teaching in consideration of the students learning abilities; teaching and training in modes of function and methods to overcome functional difficulties; as well as personal assistance to overcome practical difficulties related to participation in school activities (see section 6.1.1. under support services for a description of SPS).

The aim of special educational assistance is to ensure that students, by the end of secondary school, have the necessary preconditions to continue an educational career and/or enter vocational employment or other employment. The pedagogical-psychological advisory centres (PPR) service is obliged to assess the pupils' needs for special educational assistance upon request.

#### 5.4.2 **Transition Period**

45 municipal Youth Guidance Centres provide guidance services for young people up to the age of 25 years. The 45 centres cover the 98 municipalities in Denmark, each centre covering a "sustainable" area in terms of the number and variety of youth education institutions as well as geographical distance.

Already during the last year of primary education, which is in Denmark the 6th grade, plans for the future of each individual student are elaborated, in the form of thoughts about what should happen after compulsory education or the voluntary 10th grade following compulsory education.

In Denmark this transition plan is partly elaborated on the basis of the so-called "Uddannelsesbogen" (the Educational Record) and the "Uddannelsesplanen" (the Educational Plan). This latter presents a kind of portfolio, which is created in the 6th grade and contains summaries of individual dialogues between the counsellor and the student on topics, such as when and where the educational program will be completed, the aims of attending the educational program and how the student's progression is best achieved (law on youth educational programs for youth with special needs, paragraph 7, article 3 and 4).

The Educational Record provides the necessary documentation with regards to the counselling process and the student's choices during this process. The course of choosing a youth educational programme or employment after schooling is also shown in the Educational Record.

The Educational Record deals with issues such as the student's forte, interests, expectations to the future and wishes in terms of development. The student's efforts during a certain time span could also be described and put forward as intermediate aims in the Educational Record.

The student's wishes and expectations, as put forward in the Educational Record, are not binding for his or her future choices. They are meant to serve as guidelines for defining important issues in relation to the transition from school to further education or employment.

On the basis of the Educational Record the student will elaborate an Educational Plan during 9th grade and perhaps again whilst attending the 10th grade. This Plan will show the student's aims and objectives in relation to further education or employment. The reason why it could be elaborated again after the 10th grade is that compulsory education finishes after the 9th grade.

To strengthen the students' abilities to choose a programme for further education or employment, educational, vocational and labour market relations are taught as a subject during the last years of schooling. Furthermore, all students are offered vocational training programmes within an enterprise. Young people with special educational needs are offered a more comprehensive vocational training programme than others, and it is also possible to offer to them a so-called work training programme of a longer duration during their last years of schooling. This will be arranged either for two whole days per week, and the student will then attend school for the remaining three days, or it can be for five afternoons per week, so that the student attends school each day from 8 a.m. to 12 approximately. The student will receive non-tariff based remuneration, i.e. a so-called financial reward for participating in the work-training programme. This kind of work training is well known in several European countries as "The Dual System".

Furthermore, each municipality can offer all students to participate in a so-called bridge-building programme in the course of the 9th and 10th grade. These are programmes combining guidance and teaching. They aim at providing the young person with better possibilities and motivation in order for him or her to choose and accomplish a youth education programme and to develop professional and personal qualifications. In Denmark youth education programmes cover:

- General upper secondary education
- Vocational upper secondary education (e.g. vocational education and training, agricultural education, social and health education).

The duration of these bridge-building programmes varies from 1 to 4 weeks. They comprise elements from various types of schooling as mentioned above, or they can be organised so that the students will attend courses at production schools or labour market introductory courses.

### 5.4.3 Upper secondary education

Almost all youth educational programs provide the possibility for compensation to students with disabilities<sup>9</sup>.

The special educational assistance is intended to constitute a necessary and adequate supplement to the school's standard instruction (both at school and during work experience), so that pupils suffering from handicap and similar difficulties can receive an education on equal terms with other pupils, i.e. as inclusive education.

The concept of "inclusion" (or inclusive education) has replaced the "integration" of handicapped pupils on vocational school training courses.

It means:

- that young handicapped people take their place in an education that fully qualifies them - and subsequently in the labour market - on a permanent basis. Handicapped pupils form part of the natural student population, and cannot against their will be "referred" out of their education on the basis of their handicap,
- that vocational school training courses should be able to accommodate all handicapped pupils who apply under the standard rules of admission,
- that such training courses should be physically and mentally accessible.

The strategy for the approval of grants for special educational assistance is to create "handicap technology" to assist pupils in their work,

- that ensures independent learning on the pupils' part,
- that permits management and instruction by the schools' ordinary teachers,
- that does not require teachers to possess any specific "handicap expertise".

Special educational forms of teaching, materials and methods

- are usually more educational than special,
- are therefore also important tools in standard instruction,
- involve a qualitative teaching improvement for all pupils.

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<sup>9</sup> Handicap – Uddannelse og Erhvervsvejledning, (Center for ligebehandling af handicappede, 2004)

**General upper secondary**

There are four different general upper secondary education programmes in Denmark: STX, HHX, HTX and HF, aimed at young people who are interested in knowledge, concentration, seeing things in perspective and abstraction. The common objective of the education programmes is to prepare young people for higher education, and in that connection ensure that they acquire general education, knowledge and competences by means of the subjects they study and in the interaction between them. STX, HHX and HTX take three years to complete and admit young people who have completed nine years of basic school. HF takes two years and admits persons who have completed 10 years of basic school.

The STX and HF programmes consist of a broad range of subjects in the fields of the humanities, natural science and social science.

The HHX programme focuses on business and socio-economic disciplines in combination with foreign languages and other general subjects.

The HTX programme has its focus on technological and scientific subjects in combination with general subjects.

Each of the education programmes has its specific range of compulsory subjects that are common for all pupils taking the programme. In STX, HHX and HTX, in addition, each school offers a number of different specialized studies packages (packages normally containing three subjects) and elective subjects for the pupils to choose between. In HF the pupils make their choices from among the electives offered by the school.

All the education programmes also contain multi-subject courses, among other things with the object of strengthening the pupils' preparedness for further study. This includes the ability to apply knowledge and methods from several subjects to illustrate interdisciplinary themes and problems and the ability to compare the subjects' knowledge and methods.

**Vocational education (VET)**

The Danish vocational education and training programmes are alternating or sandwich-type programmes, where practical training in a company alternates with teaching at a vocational college. The programmes consist of a basic and a main programme. The student must enter into a training agreement with a company approved by the social partners (a confederation of representatives of employers and employees) in order to accomplish the main programme. There are approximately 125 vocational education and training programmes (2007), each of which can lead to a number of vocational specialisations. The social partners have considerable influence on and thus, great responsibility for VET.

The objective of vocational education and training programmes is to motivate young people to complete a programme of training that can qualify them for employment and at the same time, accommodate the needs of the labour market. The programmes aim to give the young people a taste of further education and active participation in society by developing the students' personal and social skills like instilling a spirit of independence and cooperation, and stimulating their awareness about innovation, environment and internationalisation.

Those who have completed VET can immediately work within the line of industry or trade that is the focus of the programme.

The target group of vocational education and training programmes are not only students who come directly after obtaining basic school education, but also adults with prior vocational experience.

#### **Production schools**

Production schools are independent institutions with statutes approved by the local authority that provides the school's basic grant. The local labour market organisations (social partners) must be represented on the school board, and the board can include representatives of the municipality(ies) providing the basic grant.

The objective is to strengthen the personal development of the participants and improve their chances in the education system and the ordinary labour market. This educational option is organised with a view that the young people obtain qualifications that can enable them to complete an education on upper secondary level leading up to a professional qualification.

This option is given to young people under the age of 25 who have not completed a qualifying youth education and who, at the time, are not qualified to start such education, or who have dropped out of a youth education programme. Production school may only admit a participant with a state grant when the Youth Guidance Centre has assessed and identified that the young person belongs to the target group of the production schools.

Under normal circumstances, the individual pupil is entitled to a maximum of one year at a production school. This includes present and earlier courses at the same or other production schools.

The pedagogical theory and practice of the production schools is built around activities in various workshops, taking a point of departure in practical work and problem-solving combined with instruction in theory, with a view to genuine production and sales. The professional standard at the workshop is used as an educational tool to make a contribution to the development of personal and social competencies. In addition, the school offers teaching in general subjects in order to prepare the participants to commence a regular youth education programme. Up to one third of a school-based programme can be spent on teaching, education programmes and courses that are established by means of, or pursuant to, an educational Act. This can consist of, for example, general subjects at an Adult Education Centre (VUC) or part of the basic programme at a vocational college. A general rule is that, pupils attending a production school for more than three months must take part in a programme of minimum 2 and maximum 5 weeks that grants credits and is aimed at a qualifying education and training programme, for example vocational education and training (EUD). Participants also have the opportunity for work experience placement for 4 weeks per half year that they have commenced.

**Basic vocational education and training – EGU**

EGU is an individualised basic vocational education and training programme that is geared towards both employment and continued education. EGU is an alternating or sandwich-type training programme where practical training is combined with a subject-relevant school-based part in an overall 1½-3 year programme in which the school-based part lasts between 20 to 40 weeks. The school-based elements are taken from a number of existing education and training programmes. Roughly 800 students attended an EGU program in 2007.

The objective of EGU is for the pupils to achieve personal, social and professional qualifications that both admit them to one of the other education and training programmes leading to a professional qualification, and provide a basis for employment. The programme and the competence aimed at, within a professional sector are described in the EGU pupil's personal education plan.

The EGU Act describes the target group as persons under the age of 30; living in the municipality who are neither receiving education (including not in a production school programme either) nor have a job; and do not have the preconditions for completing another qualifying youth education.

The young people in question, are typically, practically-oriented who are often with weak educational background, and are not very academically inclined.



Each time an EGU plan is signed, in principle a new individual educational programme is established that is adapted to the individual young person's qualifications, wishes and needs. An EGU plan can thus be freely drawn up within a frame of up to three years, with between 20 and 40 weeks at school wherein school and practical training can alternate in the course of a week.

On the basis of the professional competence aimed at, for the pupil, the EGU plan describes the practical training and school-based parts included in the programme. Practical training can take place within the whole of the private and public labour market, The EGU supervisor responsible, must ensure that the required professional competence is achieved. Examinations are held, if they are on the programme for the educational elements that make up the pupil's EGU.

EGU pupils are typically trained for an assistant function within a particular line of industry. When the EGU has been completed and the pupils have gained employment and educational competencies, as well as graduate rights, they can become members of an unemployment fund. Thus, an EGU plan is to ensure that pupils actually are prepared for the labour market when they have completed their EGU.

The EGU plan must ensure that the places offering training are sufficiently qualified to be able to live up to the objective of EGU practical training. Practical training places are very largely made available by enterprises that cannot be approved for Vocational Education and Training (VET).

#### **Youth education for young people with special needs**

In 2007 The Danish parliament passed a law about upper secondary education for young people with mental disabilities and/or other special needs. The purpose of the law is to ensure that disabled and other youth with special needs have the right to an individually planned youth educational program. This program also gives the right for young people with severe disabilities to get a 3 year youth education. The program, which is focused on enhancing the students' potential in relation to further education and employment, is best perceived as a stepping stone to an independent adult life, combining more traditional coursework with practical training.

The program is individualized and planned in consideration of the person's qualifications, maturity and interests and aims to give young people with disability and other young people with special needs a rightful certainty for education. It takes three years to complete and there must be elements of common culture, development of special abilities and interest and meetings with the practical reality. It is the intention of the program that the student should acquire the social and academic competence to pursue further education and employment. There are elements of teaching and practical activities, including work experience in companies and institutions<sup>10</sup>.

By the end of the program, a competence paper is made for each graduating student, detailing the achieved competencies in addition to an assessment of the student's fulfilment of the goals for the individual parts as well as for the program as a whole.

#### 5.4.4 Higher education

The Act on Special Educational Assistance for Higher Education applies to students with a disability on all officially approved higher education courses, irrespective of whether they are funded by the State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme, rehabilitation benefit, training allowance, early retirement or other source.

SPS is administered by the Danish Educational Support Agency in association with the educational institutions. Students may apply for SPS at their educational institution when they are enrolled on the course. The educational institution will forward the application to the Danish Educational Support Agency, which will decide whether or not to approve the application. The educational institution will then see that the allotted support is provided with the aid of a grant from the Agency.

To qualify for SPS, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

The student must

- be enrolled on a higher education course
- suffer from a physical or mental disability that need support to follow the course
- be an active student
- be a Danish citizen, be covered by an international agreement or be on an equal footing with a Danish citizen.

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<sup>10</sup> Handicap – Uddannelse og Erhvervsvejledning, (Center for ligebehandling af handicappede, 2004)

Irrespective of its nature, students with a disability may obtain advice and guidance as to which courses they might realistically follow, and which forms of SPS may apply to the course in question.

Depending on which functional difficulty is involved - and on which course the student is to follow - special forms of support may be provided that are allotted on the basis of a professional needs assessment. Specific examples of support provided are signing services for the deaf, reading and writing aids for the dyslexic, blind and visually handicapped, and an ergonomic mouse or dictaphone for note-taking by the physically handicapped etc.

#### 5.4.5 **Special teaching**

The law about special education for adults is a framework law, which outlines the overall guidelines that the municipalities use to arrange/organize disability-related aid and support. The law declares that people with a physical or psychological handicap who have finalised compulsory education can receive teaching and special pedagogical support, which aims to overcome or limit the consequences of the handicap (compensatory special teaching). In connection to this, it is possible to arrange special lessons, which are set up in consideration of the participants' handicap<sup>11</sup>.

According to the declaration, the teaching scheme intends to support disabled students' active participation in society. This happens through a teaching, which aims to:

- Improve the participants' opportunities to use the compensatory strategies, methods and support materials, which increase the opportunity for active participation in society life.
- Overcome and limit the functional limitations through focused compensatory teaching adjusted to individual conditions and needs<sup>12</sup>.

Other related demands for the teaching, is:

- That it can be arranged as special youth education sequences
- That it uncovers the individual conditions, skills and needs of each of the students.
- A lesson plan is prepared after consultation with the participant at the beginning of the program
- That the offer can include subject lessons, which is planned in consideration of the participant's handicap, as a part of the whole teaching offer<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Nordisk Inklusion, (DPU Århus, 2007)

<sup>12</sup> Nordisk Inklusion, (DPU Århus, 2007)

<sup>13</sup> Nordisk Inklusion, (DPU Århus, 2007)

It is the responsibility of the local municipality, where the disabled person has permanent residence, to offer and provide the necessary special teaching.

## 5.5 The employment system

The Danish government's employment strategy involves an effort to increase the opportunities for people with disabilities to enter the job market. In 2004, the Minister of Employment and the Minister of Social Welfare jointly articulated a new employment strategy for people with disabilities. The strategy, containing 12 nation-wide initiatives, aimed at making it easier for people with disabilities to obtain and maintain a job. More specifically, the strategy aims to:

- Increase the number of people with disabilities who enters the labor market by 2.000 people per year
- Increase the share of employers who hires people with disabilities by 1 percentage point annually

### 5.5.1 Job centres

With the new structural reform (see section on *the municipalities* above), the Public Employment Service (PES) and the employment authorities in the municipalities are located together in 91 new job centres and have entered into a binding cooperation that focuses on the promotion of employment. The reform entails that the 91 job centres around the country are now responsible for administering handicap-related compensation programs within the field of employment.

Moreover, the creation of the 91 job centres led to the establishment of 4 jobcentres with special functions: handicap, equality, ethnic employment initiatives and EURES (European Employment Services). These special units are responsible for providing guidance and support to the employment services in the other jobcentres and following up on legislation and policy developments within their designated areas.

### 5.5.2 **The special unit for job and handicap**

With the establishment of the job centre in Vejle the 1. of January 2007, there was established a special function for persons with a handicap. The special unit supports jobcentres and other actors in the field of employment by providing:

- Guidance – give guidance to actors in the employment services, e.g. inform about relevant legislation and concrete opportunities for handicapped persons.
- Information – communicate information about legislation and knowledge about how persons with a handicap are ensured employment
- Development – develop new methods in the employment field, which promote that an increased number of disabled are integrated and maintained at the labour market.<sup>14</sup>

In the beginning of 2007, the special unit for job and handicap provided a one-day training program for close to all of the designated key persons within the handicap field (see description of these below) in the 91 jobcentres. The course included a thorough introduction to relevant legislation, central concepts and terms as well as the role of the designated key person within the handicap field. The course will be offered on a regular basis.

In the early fall of 2007, the special unit for job and handicap provided six additional training sessions in different parts of the country, focusing on recent developments in the legislation on job and handicap.

### 5.5.3 **Key persons within the handicap field in the job centres**

All job centres have a designated person who specializes in employment and disability. The purpose of this position, which is similar to a previous type of position in the old counties, is to ensure that caseworkers and other professionals in the job centres are up-to-date on relevant information on issues related to employment and disability and able to provide an adequate employment service to people with disabilities. Moreover, the designated persons serve as important links between the jobcentres and the special unit for job and handicap (see 5.5.2). Their tasks are to make sure that the information from the special unit for job and handicap, are passed on to the caseworkers and professionals at the jobcentres.

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<sup>14</sup> [www.bmhandicap.dk/sw2132.asp](http://www.bmhandicap.dk/sw2132.asp), Kontrakt om varetagelse af specialfunktionen for beskæftigelsesindsatsen over for personer med handicap, (Beskæftigelsesregion Syd-danmark, 2006)

More specifically, their roles include:

- Providing counsel to people with disabilities who are entering the job market
- Contacting the special unit for questions about employment for persons with handicap
- Passing on questions about employment for persons with handicap from colleagues in the jobcentre to the special unit.
- Ensuring that employment opportunities for disabled people are a priority in the employment services in the jobcentres.

The special unit for job and handicap offers support to the appointed key persons in the form of education, support to establishment of networks with other key persons, guidance on project work and access to relevant knowledge about employment and disability<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> [www.bmhandicap.dk/sw3178.asp](http://www.bmhandicap.dk/sw3178.asp)

## 6. Support services

Denmark has a range of support services in the field of education and employment.

### 6.1 Financial support during education

The Danish educational sector, tries to encourage young persons with disabilities or learning difficulties to complete educational programs by supporting them economically. A young person with disabilities or learning difficulties, who is attending an educational program, may receive two different kinds of government benefits, in addition to regular grants and loans.

#### 6.1.1 Special educational assistance (SPS)

All students with a disability have the opportunity to apply for special educational assistance (SPS); though, the extent of the student disability must be examined and documented<sup>16</sup>. Then the SPS-responsible administrator at the educational institution, potentially in teamwork with the special pedagogical subject consultant, applies for the support on behalf of the student. The SPS aims to ensure that students with a physical or psychological disability can go through an educational program on equal terms as non-disabled students. Students can also receive guidance and counselling on the types of education programs that would be realistic to accomplish and which forms of SPS would be relevant in relation to the particular programs<sup>17</sup>.

It is also possible for students with disabilities or learning difficulties to apply for special accommodation in making the curriculum accessible for students with visual impairments and/or reading difficulties.

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<sup>16</sup> The SPS-responsible person is often a student advisor or an administrator.

<sup>17</sup> [www.spsu.dk](http://www.spsu.dk)

Students can receive this type of aid at the following types of educational institutions:

- 3 A (vocational upper secondary school - in Denmark known as HHX (higher commercial examination with business-oriented subjects), HTX (higher technical examination with technological and scientific subjects), erhvervsuddannelser (vocational education and training), landbrugets grunduddannelse (agricultural education) as well as certain parts of the basic vocational education and training known as EGU)
- 2 A (free basic schools)
- 2 A (free boarding school)
- 3 A (general upper secondary school, in Denmark known as Gymnasium, where students attend STX (general upper secondary program) or higher preparatory examination known as Hf)
- 2 A (social- and health care worker, in Denmark SOSU)
- 3 C (nursery assistant, in Denmark PGU)
- 5 A (Tertiary/higher educations)

It is not possible to receive special educational assistance for students enrolled in open education programs for adults, general adult education (AVU) or preparatory adult education (AVU).

The awarded SPS depends on the individual needs and the type of educational programs. The following lists include examples of special educational assistance:

#### Secondary education

- Additional and specially prepared learning materials
- Personal assistance
- Assistive equipment
- Interpreters (sign language, oral and tactile) and real time captioning

#### Tertiary education

- Guidance and counseling on the influence of functional limitations on the completion of an educational program
- Assistive equipment
- Interpreters (sign language, oral and tactile)
- Secretary and practical assistance.



### 6.1.2 **The handicap supplement (Handicaptillæg)**

From the 1st of August, 2004, the Danish government implemented a new type of financial aid called the handicap supplement (handicaptillæg) designed for disabled students who are unable to carry out a student job while studying<sup>18</sup>. The handicap supplement compensates for the lack of possibilities to have an extra income in addition to the state education grant, which is why it is referred to as a supplement. The supplement is awarded in addition to the regular state education grant (SU).

To receive the handicap supplement a student has to:

- Receive the state education grant (SU)
- Be enrolled in a secondary or tertiary educational program, where he/she can acquire SU
- Prove that he/she has a permanent disability

The supplement is awarded on the basis of an evaluation of the nature and extent of the physical and mental limitation in respect to holding a student job while studying.

## 6.2 **Advising**

The youth educational advising centres (Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning), located in 45 places in the country, provide advice for youth (under 25 years of age) on educational programs and employment.

The youth educational advising centers provide educational and occupational guidance for youth from 6th grade to 10th grade, youth under the age of 19 who needs advice as well as young people between the ages of 19 to 25, who apply for advising services. The advising centers are especially focused on youth with special need for advising.

There are 45 youth educational advising centers, which are located all over the country, often with one central office and different local offices. The advising sessions often take place at the educational institutions. The different centres cooperate with the schools and educational institutions about advising courses and advising activities e.g. transition programmes, practical training etc.

The purpose of the advising centers is to integrate the individual interests and personal preconditions in the advising sessions and to connect these interests and preconditions with future needs for qualifications in the labour market. The advising must empower the individual to seek and apply information about education, educational institutions and future occupations.

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<sup>18</sup> Center for ligebehandling af handicappede, ([www.clh.dk](http://www.clh.dk))

### 6.3 **Support to further increased involvement by employers**

There are a lot of different agreements, which give the possibility for compensation to disabled persons who are already in or about to enter the labour market for the first time.

The different schemes and programs in regard to disabled people and employment is in short described below:

#### 6.3.1 **The Icebreaker program**

The icebreaker program includes financial support to new graduates, who experience handicap-related difficulties when entering the job market.

One central purpose of the program is to ensure that new graduates with a handicap can gain work experience early upon graduation, which in turn makes it easier to obtain a job. Through the icebreaker program a disabled person is employed in a company on regular conditions of employment for a fixed time period. The company receives financial support for up to 6 months and in some cases up to 12 months. To attend the program the disabled person must have accomplished a minimum of 18 months of education, have an unmet need for work-experience and enter the program at least 2 years after graduation<sup>19</sup>.

Another central component of the icebreaker program is the Priority access scheme (Fortrinsadgang). People with disabilities may experience barriers created by the lack of knowledge and prejudices about handicapped persons. The priority access program aims to overcome these barriers by providing priority access for handicapped persons to job openings in the public sector, provided they satisfy the formal educational requirements. If the employer judges that the handicapped applicant is just as qualified as the other applicants, the handicapped person must be offered the vacant position.<sup>20</sup>

#### 6.3.2 **Personal assistance**

Disabled persons can receive personal assistance to a wide range of practical functions, which is contained in their job description or in their continuing educational program. The personal assistant is often employed in the same company or educational institution as the disabled person.

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<sup>19</sup> Isbryderordningen (Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelsen, 2006), [www.mangfoldighed.dk](http://www.mangfoldighed.dk)

<sup>20</sup> Et nyt arbejdsliv – reglerne om fortrinsadgang for personer med handicap (Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelsen, 2000)

The employer receives a financial support to cover the expenses of the personal assistant. The assistant can provide support for a maximum of 20 hours per week, unless the disabled person has multiple, different handicaps. The program is administrated and funded by the state through the different jobcentres<sup>21</sup>.

### 6.3.3 **Assistive technology for handicapped employees**

If special working tools, assistive technologies or other accommodations of the workplace make it possible for the handicapped to perform a job, it is possible for the employer to receive support to the payment of these accommodations. The employer can receive financial support to cover specially designed tools, special working chairs, widening of doors, installations of ramps and lifts. The condition to receive the support is that the support is pivotal for the handicapped person to maintain employment.<sup>22</sup> The assistive technology is funded by the municipalities and the state.

### 6.3.4 **Mentorship program**

Through the mentorship program it is possible to establish a mentorship at educational institutions or at workplaces. A mentorship at a workplace means that an employee introduces, guides or trains the handicapped person to the workplace.

The employer then receives financial support from the municipalities to pay for the employees who take on the responsibility as mentors. The employer may also receive support to improve the conditions for the mentorship program, for example to provide relevant education to the employees who are going to manage the mentorship.<sup>23</sup>

### 6.3.5 **Rehabilitation**

Rehabilitation is an umbrella term for a wide range of vocational activities and economic support, which serves to ensure that people with functional limitations are integrated into the labour market. The purpose is to improve people's possibilities to become self-supporting by entering the labour market. The economic support may cover expenses related to the rehabilitation activity, e.g. expenses to books, courses, materials, personal assistance or transportation. The municipalities share the costs related to rehabilitation with the state.

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<sup>21</sup> Personlig assistance (Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelsen, 2006), [www.mangfoldighed.dk](http://www.mangfoldighed.dk)

<sup>22</sup> Hjælpebidler – fastholdelse og indslusning af personer med handicap (Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelsen, 2006)

<sup>23</sup> [www.mangfoldighed.dk/?ID=498](http://www.mangfoldighed.dk/?ID=498)

### 6.3.6 **Flex job**

Flex jobs are for people with physical limitations that keep them from maintaining regular employment on normal conditions. The flex job scheme makes it possible for employers to establish a position with wage subsidy – a so called flex job. The flex job takes the employee's reduced ability to work and special needs into consideration and allows for flexibility in terms of the employee's ability to take breaks during the day, work slower than the rest of the employees, or work at reduced hours.

Flex job is an arrangement, which is most often applied when all other attempts to achieve employment under normal conditions have proven unsuccessful.<sup>24</sup> Funding for flex jobs comes from the municipalities.

### 6.3.7 **Reduced duty jobs with payment subsidy**

The reduced duty jobs are for recipients of inability benefits, who are unable to find or maintain employment at reduced time on the ordinary labour market.<sup>25</sup> The municipalities share the costs related to reduced duty jobs with the state.

### 6.3.8 **Protected employment**

Protected employment is for people with reduced ability to work, who can't get a flex job or a reduced duty job. A person can be hired in protected employment, e.g. at a protected workshop. The employment is especially focused on people, who can manage tasks focused on production, installation and packaging.<sup>26</sup> The municipalities share the costs related to protected employment with the state.

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<sup>24</sup> [www.dch.dk/publ/fleksjob](http://www.dch.dk/publ/fleksjob), [www.mangfoldighed.dk/?ID=498](http://www.mangfoldighed.dk/?ID=498)

<sup>25</sup> [www.mangfoldighed.dk/?ID=498](http://www.mangfoldighed.dk/?ID=498)

<sup>26</sup> [www.mangfoldighed.dk/?ID=498](http://www.mangfoldighed.dk/?ID=498)

## 7. Informational and learning resources

The extent to which issues related to transition is included in initial and/or in service training for teachers and other professionals is difficult to ascertain, especially since these issues may be integrated into a broader curriculum under various educational programs.

However, there is also a wide range of disability-related informational resources and other forms of support for professionals and non-professionals, notably parents.

### 7.1.1 The handicap portal (Handicapportalen)

An on-line portal and search engine that covers everything related to disability and provides an on-line meeting space for people with disabilities, their aids and relatives and anyone else with an interest in information on disability-related information. ([www.handicapportalen.dk](http://www.handicapportalen.dk))

### 7.1.2 The facilities portal (tilbudsportalen)

The facilities portal gives an overview of social options in the disability sector: special day-care facilities, residential facilities and clubs. Members of the public and social workers can use the site to compare the options, their teaching methods, physical facilities and special services. ([www.tilbudsportalen.dk](http://www.tilbudsportalen.dk))

### 7.1.3 The education guide

The 'education guide' provides guidance on options regarding education and vocational training, including advice on transitions between different youth educational programs ([UddannelsesGuiden.dk](http://UddannelsesGuiden.dk)).

### 7.1.4 Access to education (tilgængelighed nu)

The homepage focuses on and collect knowledge about education and disability. There are references to different educational programs and information about physical accessibility (see vejviseren below) and different compensation opportunities. The homepage is a part of the EMU (electronic meeting place for people involved in the field of education) and is produced in cooperation with the Ministry of Education ([www.tilgaengelighed.emu.dk](http://www.tilgaengelighed.emu.dk))

### 7.1.5 Vejviseren

Vejviseren is online resource/directory that provides contact information (address, phone, e-mail) as well as up-to-date information on accessibility to educational institutions in Denmark. ([www.vejviseren.emu.dk](http://www.vejviseren.emu.dk))

**7.1.6 SPSU-net – Administration of SPS**

SPSU-Net is an on-line informational and administrative gateway for professionals at educational institutions, who work with the administration of special educational assistance (SPS).

**7.1.7 The disabled students and candidates (HSK)**

This organization provides guidance to students in higher education, including advice about educational opportunities and employment.<sup>27</sup>

**7.1.8 The Danish handicap organizations**

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI) is an umbrella organisation for the Danish organisations for people with disabilities. The website contains links to organisations for parents and people with disabilities. DSI also provides support and guidance to professionals and non-professionals who work with or are relatives to disabled people. ([www.handicap.dk](http://www.handicap.dk))

**7.1.9 The center for equal treatment of people with handicaps (CLH)**

The aim of CLH is to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with the same opportunities and rights as non-disabled people. The center provides documentation and information on issues related to disability rights and issues within the sectors of education, employment and transportation.<sup>28</sup>

**7.1.10 VISO**

VISO is a national knowledge and special advice organisation that aims to provide citizens, municipalities and institutions with information on social work and special teaching. VISO also provides opportunities for knowledge development and knowledge presentation. The stated aim of VISO is to assist the municipalities and citizens with free special guidance in the most specialized and complicated single cases within one of these areas:

- Children, young and adult with handicap
- Children and young with social or behavioural problems
- Vulnerable groups (including social psychiatry)
- Special teaching and special pedagogical support for children, young and adults.

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<sup>27</sup> [www.hsknet.dk](http://www.hsknet.dk)

<sup>28</sup> [www.clh.dk](http://www.clh.dk)

VISO consists of 11 knowledge centres:

- The institute for the blind and partially sighted (Ibos)
- The knowledge center for people with autism
- The knowledge center on handicaps related to physical limitations
- The knowledge center for people with hearing impairments
- The knowledge center for people who become deaf or blind
- The knowledge center for people who are born deaf or blind
- The knowledge center for people with epilepsy
- The knowledge center for people with brain damage
- The Danish knowledge center for people with dyslexia
- The Danish knowledge center on stuttering
- The knowledge center on communication and multiple functional limitations among children and youth with aphasia/aphemia (VIKOM)

And three other support organisations:

- The Danish Center for Rare Diseases and Disabilities (CSH)
- The support and aid institute (hjælpeinstituttet)
- The knowledge center for social psychiatry

#### 7.1.11 **The knowledge network – handicap and employment**

The knowledge network provides information on the issues related to disability and employment for people with disabilities as well as relevant professionals. ([www.vidensnetvaerket.dk](http://www.vidensnetvaerket.dk))

## **8. Parental and community involvement**

The extent and nature of parental involvement in the transition process to tertiary education and/or to employment is based on individual needs and circumstances. There are no national guidelines or initiatives. That being said, there is still a legislative demand for parental involvement in relation to the assessment of the need for special consideration or support for children under the age of 18 years.

In the act on the Folkeskole, it is made explicit that the decision as to whether a child's development in primary and lower secondary school requires special consideration or support is dependent on a concrete assessment in which the pupil and his/her parents are to be consulted (paragraph 3, article 4,6 and 7). Moreover, in the act on special needs education and other special pedagogical support in the Folkeskole it is stated that parental demands and wishes for special pedagogical support should be awarded significant weight (paragraph 4).

Similarly, in the act for the youth education (upper secondary education) for young people with special needs (see section on youth education for young people with special needs in chapter 5) it is laid down that the youth and his/her parents are to be consulted in the planning of the educational program and notified in writing of any decisions regarding the planned program (paragraph 4, article 1 and 2). Moreover, the law also states that the educational plan (see section 5.4.2 for a more detailed account of the educational plan) has to be developed in collaboration with the youth and his or her parents (paragraph 7). The parents' wishes in relation to the planning of the educational program should be awarded "significant weight" (paragraph 4).