



The Danish Ministry of Education

Guidance in Education

– a new guidance system in Denmark

Guidance in Education

FACTS & FIGURES

Population: 5.4 million; approx. 1.4 % of the total EU population (2004)

Young people (12–24 years): 792.081 (2004)

Percentage of a year group moving on from compulsory education to youth education: 94% (2002)

Percentage of a year group completing a youth education programme: 78% (2002)

Percentage of a year group continuing into higher education: 52% (2002)

Percentage of a year group completing a higher education programme: 43 % (2004)

Labour force: 2.881.000; 53% men, 47% woman (2004)

Unemployment rate: 6.3 % (2004)

Youth unemployment rate (16-24 years): 4.2% (2004)

Sources:

Statistics Denmark

“Uddannelse på kryds og tværs – 2004”, Ministry of Education

Provision of educational and vocational guidance for pupils and students in the education system and for young people outside education and employment is given high priority in Denmark.

In April 2003, the Danish parliament adopted a new act on guidance (eng.uvm.dk/guidance/guidance.doc), as a result of which a comprehensive restructuring of guidance services in the educational system was initiated. The Danish Government wishes to make it easier for citizens to make realistic decisions about learning opportunities and careers - for the individual's own sake and for the good of society as a whole. The Danish guidance reform should be seen in this perspective.

The new guidance system became operational 1 August 2004. The Ministry of Education has been responsible for the implementation of the Danish guidance reform, and it has a controlling and coordinating role in relation to the new guidance system.

This publication gives an overview of the key elements of the reform and the new Danish guidance system in the educational sector. The reform is primarily concerned with guidance services for young people. The main providers of guidance services for adults are the public employment services and the municipalities but these services are not covered by the reform and, therefore, they are not described in this booklet.

An online version of the present publication is available at:

pub.uvm.dk/2004/guidance

MAIN AIMS OF THE GUIDANCE REFORM

The new Danish act on guidance aims to develop a simpler and more transparent guidance system with easy access to high quality guidance services. The act is primarily targeted at young people up to the age of 25 years, but it also addresses adults wishing to enter a higher education programme.

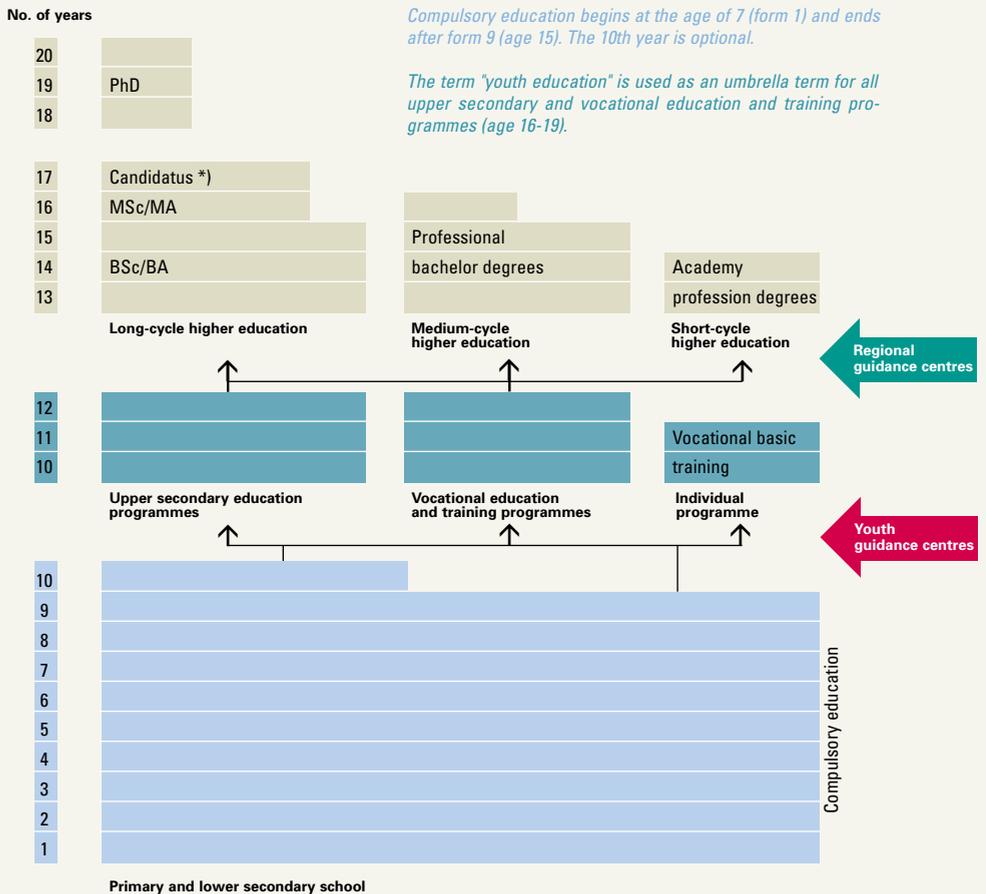
The act defines the 7 main aims of the reform. According to these aims, guidance related to choice of education, training and career shall:

- ▶ help to ensure that choice of education and career will be of greatest possible benefit to the individual and to society;
- ▶ be targeted particularly at young people with special needs for guidance in relation to choice of education, training and career;
- ▶ take into account the individual's interests and personal qualifications and skills, including informal competencies and previous education and work experience, as well as the expected need for skilled labour and self-employed businessmen;
- ▶ contribute to limiting, as much as possible, the number of dropouts and students changing from one education and training programme to another;
- ▶ contribute to improving the individual's ability to seek and use information, including IT-based information and guidance, about choice of education, educational institution and career;
- ▶ be independent of sectoral and institutional interests.

The last objective is to raise the quality level of Danish guidance, including an improvement of guidance counsellors' qualifications and competencies.

Two new types of guidance centres, which are independent from sectoral and institutional interests, have been established:

- 46 Youth Guidance Centres ("Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning", UU) provide guidance in relation to the transition from compulsory to youth education.
- 7 Regional Guidance Centres ("Studievalg") are responsible for guidance in relation to the transition from youth education to higher education.



*) Some programmes last more than 2 years

YOUTH GUIDANCE CENTRES

In accordance with the ideas underlying the guidance reform, guidance is regarded as a continuous process that should help young people become more conscious of their abilities, interests and possibilities, thus enabling them to make decisions regarding education and employment on a qualified basis.

The 46 youth guidance centres are distributed among the 271 municipalities in Denmark. Each centre covers a "sustainable" area in terms of geographical distance and quality; quality referring to number and variety of youth education institutions in the area as well as the management structure of the centres. The municipal youth guidance centres provide guidance services for young people up to the age of 25 years, focusing on the transition from compulsory to youth education or, alternatively, to the labour market. Their main target groups are:

- Pupils in lower secondary school – forms 6 to 10.
- Young people under the age of 19 outside education, training or employment.
- Young people between the age of 19 and 25 who seek out guidance in relation to youth education programmes or employment.
- Young people with a special need for guidance concerning choice of education, vocation and career – a transverse target group of young people with various problems related to the continuing or completion of an education programme.

In cooperation with the school principals, the youth guidance centres organise guidance activities at schools – close to the pupils. Teachers are still responsible for the provision of general careers education from form 1 to form 10 but the youth guidance centres should serve as a source of coordination, inspiration and further development in this area. Guidance specifically related to the transition from compulsory to youth education is the responsibility of the youth guidance centres – but it is provided at the pupils' schools. The pupils' educational logbooks are important in this connection. Through a learning process based on dialogue with the guidance counsellor, each pupil starts developing a logbook in form 6. The aim of this process is to develop the pupils' self-knowledge and ability to make



decisions regarding education and career. It is concluded with the drawing up of an individual transition plan in form 9, describing plans and objectives after compulsory school.

The centres are obliged to establish contact with young people under the age of 19 who are outside the education system or the labour market. Together with the individual young person, the guidance counsellors discuss different opportunities and schemes that may help them get back into education, training or employment.

The youth guidance centres are funded by the municipalities, and the municipal councils in a particular area define the framework for their centre's activities – within the scope of the new act on guidance. Before the reform, school principals were responsible for the provision of guidance activities, which were carried out by teachers working part-time as guidance counsellors at the schools. With the reform, the daily management and responsibility have been moved to the managers of the centres, whose sole focus is provision and continuous development of youth guidance services in their area.

Quality assurance is emphasised in the guidance reform. Transparency in relation to the youth guidance centres' activities and results is important in order to ensure a high level of quality. Objectives, methods, planned activities as well as the performance of each centre are thus to be published on the Internet. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has developed a set of guidelines, which the centres are encouraged to use when they set up their own quality assurance system.

Cooperation across sectors is a key issue in the new act on guidance. The aim is to ensure a coherent guidance system and a regular exchange of experiences, knowledge and best practice. The youth guidance centres are thus obliged to cooperate closely with primary and lower secondary schools and youth education institutions in the area, as well as local business life and the public employment services.

Our main aim is to give every young person the guidance and support that he or she needs in relation to education-, training- or job-related decisions. Individual and group guidance sessions for pupils in lower secondary schools are provided at the pupils' schools. We arrange work placement periods for all pupils in forms 8-10 (1-2 weeks per year) and 4-week bridging courses at different youth education institutions for all pupils in form 10. We are in close contact with enterprises and the social partners in our area and we act as a mediator when schools want to visit e.g. a specific type of enterprise or if they wish to invite representatives from enterprises, trade unions or employers' organisations.

“Our guidance counsellors have become much more conscious of their profession, and they express a wish to work towards greater professionalism”



As for young people outside the education system, we have several local offices across the 11 municipalities, located where they are easy to find for young people. Any young person is welcome to visit us at our offices or to contact us via phone, e-mail or SMS to make an appointment for a guidance session. Our website provides all relevant contact details. We are informed automatically when a young person drops out of school or college, and we then contact him or her to discuss available options. Furthermore, our own administrative system regularly reminds our guidance counsellors to contact the young people, whom we consider to be “at risk” for various reasons.

We cover a large region. Some staff members have coordinating tasks and some are responsible for cross-regional activities such as integration of young people from

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ethnic minorities or cooperation with regional educational institutions. However, the majority of our guidance counsellors work in a specific geographical area within the region. Still, it is important for us to develop a corporate spirit and to ensure that we move in the same direction. Consequently, we have monthly meetings and we have developed a set of common descriptions of our main tasks, practices and procedures for the entire UU. Together with more locally oriented targets and action plans, the common descriptions will be collected in a “UU Sjælland Syd Handbook” for internal use in our organisation. We see these joint efforts as a way of ensuring the quality and dynamics of our work.

Many Danish guidance counsellors have been worried that with the establishment of the new guidance centres, the close relationship to the pupils would disappear, thus making it difficult to provide high quality guidance services. It is still too soon to assess our new guidance system but based on our experience so far, there is no doubt that the dynamics in a centre with almost 50 guidance counsellors are much more powerful than at a school with only one or a few part-time guidance counsellors. It is easy for us to exchange and discuss ideas and experiences. Also, it appears that our guidance counsellors have become much more conscious of their profession, and they express a wish to work towards greater professionalism. Currently, our main challenges are to specify who actually belongs to the group of young people with special needs for guidance and to ensure that the majority of our resources are targeted at this group.



11 MUNICIPALITIES IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF ZEALAND WITH A TOTAL POPULATION OF 150,000 PEOPLE

25,000 YOUNG PEOPLE (12-25 YEARS OLD)

50 PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

48 GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS ARE EMPLOYED AT UU SJÆLLAND SYD (13 FULL-TIME, 35 PART-TIME)

REGIONAL GUIDANCE CENTRES

Whereas the youth guidance centres focus mainly on guidance concerning the transition from compulsory to youth education, the 7 regional guidance centres are responsible for provision of

- ▶ guidance in relation to the transition from youth education programmes to higher education; and
- ▶ quality information about all higher education programmes in Denmark and about the possible occupations or professions that these higher education programmes may lead to.

The regional guidance centres' main target groups are:

- Pupils in youth education programmes.
- Young people and adults outside the education system who wish to enter a higher education programme.

Teachers at the youth education institutions, working part-time as guidance counsellors, continue to provide guidance to the pupils concerning the completion





of the specific youth education programmes. The regional guidance centres focus on the transition from youth education to higher education. They organise a wide variety of educational and vocational guidance activities for pupils in upper secondary education, including workshops, seminars, careers fairs, individual and group guidance sessions. These activities take place at the pupils' schools.

Young people and adults are welcome to call or visit the centres to get information about higher education opportunities or to make an appointment for a guidance session. On a regular basis, it is also possible to meet guidance counsellors from the centres at different neutral localities across the 7 regions – e.g. at a public library – to ensure that geographical distance does not prevent people from getting access to relevant guidance services.

The 7 regional guidance centres are funded by the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry has the overall responsibility for the centres. The centres have been selected after a call for tenders. Most of them are consortia of different educational institutions. The centres operate on the basis of a contract with the Ministry, in which the financial conditions are also specified.

The performance of the centres is described in their annual activity reports, which are approved by the Ministry. The centres are obliged to develop a quality assurance system on the basis of a set of guidelines designed by the Ministry.

Like the youth guidance centres, the regional guidance centres are obliged to cooperate with relevant partners in their region to ensure a coherent guidance system and a regular exchange of experiences, knowledge and best practice. Relevant partners include youth education and higher education institutions, the social partners and industry and commerce.

CASE STUDY

STUDIEVALG KØBENHAVN – a regional guidance centre

3 COUNTIES WITH A TOTAL POPULATION OF 1.5 MIO. PEOPLE

99 YOUTH EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

26,000 PUPILS IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

23,000 PUPILS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

11 GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS AND 5 SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS
ARE EMPLOYED AT STUDIEVALG KØBENHAVN



Our guidance services are related to choice of higher education. Guidance activities differ according to target group but generally speaking, our main objective is to put our clients in a position where they themselves are capable of making qualified decisions regarding choice of higher education.

For pupils in upper secondary education, which gives access to the entire range of higher education programmes, we offer:

- 5 obligatory workshops or seminars, focusing on themes such as the national guidance portal, higher education programmes, admission procedures, careers, studying abroad, and entrepreneurship;
- “café meetings” with a specific theme of current interest;
- thematic meetings where the pupils’ parents also are invited;
- individual guidance for pupils at their school.

Through these events we ensure that the pupils are confronted with different perspectives on higher education several times during their 2-3 years in upper secondary education. We divide the schools between us so that the pupils get familiar with “their own” guidance counsellors. At the same time, we remain “neutral ground” in the sense that we do not know the pupils well from classes. Quite a few pupils consider this an advantage because they won’t be met with pre-conceived opinions when they want to discuss their future possibilities.



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By guidance counsellor Jan Svendsen

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For pupils in vocational education and training, which gives access to a limited number of mainly short-cycle higher education programmes, we organise one event aimed at final year pupils, focusing on their possibilities in the higher education system. For young people and adults outside the education system, we arrange information meetings several places in our region, e.g. about further education opportunities and possibilities of getting State grants.

Both young people and adults are welcome to call, e-mail or visit us in our centre in central Copenhagen. In some cases we can answer their questions right away. If not, we offer both individual and group guidance sessions.

We give high priority to quality assurance and have developed client feedback and evaluation systems which are used after all our events. Continuous development of our services and staff training are two other important areas. Apart from attending various further training courses, we also arrange regular staff meetings where we discuss themes such as our services in general, specific events, or guidance methodologies.



“Our main objective is to put our clients in a position where they themselves are capable of making qualified decisions regarding choice of higher education”

NATIONAL GUIDANCE PORTAL



Increased use of ICT-based careers information and guidance is an objective of the new act on guidance. If more people can help themselves by finding the careers information they need in order to make qualified decisions about education, training and careers, there will be more resources available for clients with a special need for guidance. Consequently, a national guidance portal has been launched by the Ministry of Education: www.uddannelsesguiden.dk (the "education guide"), or simply www.ug.dk.

The portal provides comprehensive and up-to-date information on:

- ▶ youth education and training programmes;
- ▶ higher education programmes;
- ▶ occupations/professions;
- ▶ labour market issues;
- ▶ learning opportunities abroad.

Both guidance counsellors and citizens at large have the possibility of personal log-on. Furthermore, the portal includes an e-mail based enquiry service, the possibility of developing an interactive personal education plan, an Internet-based guidance tool facilitating the choice of education, occupation and careers, as well as links to educational institutions and to the electronic admission systems (www.optagelse.dk).

The regional guidance centres have their own pages at the portal where they present their activities and provide contact details. The youth guidance centres' contact details are available at the portal, and against payment they may develop their own pages.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the development and running of a national centre of expertise for guidance. This includes activities such as collecting examples of best practice and knowledge within the field of guidance, quality development, coordination among different types of guidance services, and initiating analyses, surveys and cross-sectoral experimental and developmental activities.

To support and disseminate information about these activities, a virtual resource centre has been established, specifically aimed at guidance counsellors (www.vejledningsviden.dk). The virtual resource centre includes an electronic news service, an on-line journal on guidance, a virtual library, links to relevant legislation, information about best practices, recent research activities, surveys and analyses etc., within the field of guidance.



NATIONAL DIALOGUE FORUM



Denmark has a long tradition of cross-sectoral cooperation on guidance issues at national, regional and local levels. At national level, this tradition is continued through a new National Dialogue Forum, which was established by the Minister of Education in 2003. The purposes of the Dialogue Forum are:

- ▶ to develop and enhance the level of quality in Danish guidance services, and
- ▶ to secure a close dialogue between the Minister and relevant organisations, institutions, guidance counsellor associations and individuals holding a leading position in Danish guidance.

The National Dialogue Forum has 3-4 annual meetings where best practices, experiences, new ideas and innovative thinking within the field of guidance are discussed. In between meetings, the Dialogue Forum members have the opportunity to continue discussions – or initiate new ones – on an ICT-based discussion board.

Individual members and member organisations of the Dialogue Forum are appointed for a period of 2 or 4 years, respectively. Currently, the Dialogue Forum consists of 11 individual members as well as representatives from 12 member organisations and 5 ministries. Examples of member organisations are:

- ▶ national employers' and employees' organisations;
- ▶ guidance counsellor associations;
- ▶ youth organisations;
- ▶ county and municipal authorities.





One of the objectives of the Danish guidance reform is to improve the qualifications and competencies of guidance practitioners in order to professionalize Danish guidance services. Consequently, a large number of different, and mainly short, sector-specific further training courses have been replaced by one common training programme available to guidance counsellors from all sectors. It is not obligatory to have followed the new training programme in order to be employed by one of the new guidance centres.

Six Centres for Higher Education across the country offer the new training programme on a part-time basis. It is equivalent to 6 months full-time studies and consists of 3 modules:

- Careers guidance and the guidance practitioner (guidance theories and methodologies, ethics, ICT in guidance, etc.).
- Careers guidance and society (labour market conditions and policies, the education system and educational policies, development of society and business, etc.).
- Careers guidance and the individual (different target groups, human development, learning theories, etc.).

The training programme is offered as an adult learning programme and corresponds to half a diploma degree. Entry requirements are, as a minimum, a completed short-cycle (2-year) higher education programme and 2 years of relevant working experience.

Lifelong guidance is on the agenda in many international fora, and the main aims and components of the Danish guidance reform are very much in line with the EU and OECD recommendations on guidance policies and practices. The EU Council Resolution on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Guidance throughout life in Europe thus focuses on a number of the issues that are also central to the Danish guidance reform; e.g.:

- Provision of guidance services for children and young people that can help them develop effective self-management of learning and career paths.
- Increased focus on social inclusion and the re-integration of early school leavers into appropriate education, training or job schemes.
- Use of new methodologies and technologies, including ICT, to increase the diversity, flexibility and accessibility of guidance services.
- Development of better quality assurance mechanisms.

The OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies in Denmark (2002) pointed to both strengths and weaknesses in the Danish guidance system. The Danish guidance reform addresses the main weaknesses, namely:

- ▶ the basing of the main guidance services within sectors, which tends to make them inward-looking;
- ▶ the weakly professionalized guidance counsellors; and
- ▶ the lack of effective quality assurance procedures.

The Danish Ministry of Education is also aware of the importance of promoting an international dimension in Danish guidance. International activities for guidance practitioners are initiated by the Ministry's Division for Guidance, which hosts the Danish Euroguidance centre. The Euroguidance Network includes national centres in 31 European countries and is partly funded by the EU through the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The network supports the development of the European dimension in educational and vocational guidance and promotes mutual awareness and cooperation among guidance services in Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION



Guidance and education in Denmark:

The Danish guidance reform: eng.uvm.dk/guidance

PowerPoint show introducing the main elements of the new guidance system:

www.uvm.dk/vej/documents/DanishGuidanceReformPresentation.ppt

The Danish education system: eng.uvm.dk

OECD Country Note on Danish Career Guidance Policies:

www.oecd.org/dataoecd/51/19/2088292.pdf

Brief introduction to the Danish public employment services:

www.jobnet.dk/sw8633.asp

Enquiries concerning guidance in Denmark may be addressed to:

euroguidance-denmark@uvm.dk

Guidance in an international perspective:

EU Council Resolution on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Guidance throughout life in Europe:

europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/resolution2004_en.pdf

OECD web pages about career guidance:

www.oecd.org/document/20/0,2340,en_2649_34511_32474452_1_1_1_1,00.html

The Euroguidance network www.euroguidance.org.uk



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