

NORWAY

Introduction

Education for all is the basic principle of Norwegian educational policy. All children, regardless of social and cultural background, gender, geographical provenance and special needs, have an equal right to education. Public education in Norway is free up to and including the upper secondary level.

The Ministry of Education and Research sets the overall framework for education. Individual municipalities are responsible for running primary and lower secondary schools, while county authorities have responsibility for upper secondary schools.

Compulsory schooling comprises the primary and lower secondary stages, age 6 to 16. Upper secondary school is not compulsory, but a statutory right for pupils aged 16 to 19.

The culture and traditions of the Sami community are part of the common Norwegian and Nordic culture that the national curriculum requires all pupils to be acquainted with. In areas defined as Sami, and according to specific criteria elsewhere in Norway, such teaching is given in accordance with the distinctive Sami curriculum.

Within the framework of statutes and national curricula, municipalities, schools and teachers are able to decide what learning materials to use and what teaching methods to adopt. Each school has a head teacher as well as various boards and committees.

The State has responsibility for universities and colleges, but also provides considerable financial support for the running of primary and secondary schools.

Pre-primary education

Age	0-5
Duration	Variable
Description	Pre-primary provision is the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. It is not compulsory and not part of the school system. Children attend on their parents' initiative and to the extent that there are available places. Provision varies between municipalities. In 2004, 72% of all children between the age of one and five attended early childhood institutions. Attendance is low in the younger age groups, but around 90% for the five-year olds.
Timetable	Opening times vary. Full-day establishments may typically be open between 7.30 am and 5.00 pm, half-day establishments between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm. There is no minimum required attendance.
School year and holidays	Early childhood institutions are normally closed on public holidays, and many are closed for some weeks during the summer.
Subjects	Focus is on learning and growth through free and guided play, social skills, language and conceptual development. There is no curriculum, but a national framework within which institutions develop their own

	pedagogical work plans.
Exams	No
Schools	Public or private. In both cases parents pay a fee based on their income and according to government regulations. Private institutions receive financial support from the state.

Primary education

Age	6-13
Duration	7 years
Description	Children normally start compulsory education in the calendar year in which they turn six. Each pupil has a contact teacher who has the prime responsibility for following up that pupil. Pupils may be organized in traditional classes or in varying groups of different sizes. The school has a responsibility to offer each child an education adapted to their needs, and most pupils with special needs receive their education in ordinary schools.
Norwegian name	<i>Barneskole</i> or <i>grunnskole</i> (the term <i>grunnskole</i> comprises both <i>barneskole</i> (primary) and <i>ungdomsskole</i> (lower secondary)).
Timetable	The number of lessons per week ranges from 20 (15 hours) in the first year to 30 in the final years of compulsory education. The minimum annual taught hours are 789 (years 1-4) and 1026 (years 5-7). Within this framework, the school administration can decide the length and organisation of the school day.
School year and holidays	The school year comprises 190 days between mid/late August and mid-June. Autumn break: one week in October Christmas break: approx. two weeks from around 22 December Winter break: one week in February/March Easter break: a week to a week and a half during Easter.
Subjects	There is a national curriculum outlining principles on which teachers are to base their educational activities. The subject syllabuses throughout compulsory school include Norwegian, Mathematics, Social Studies, Arts and Crafts, Natural Science and Environmental Subjects, English, Music, Home Economics, Physical Education and Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education. As part of an ongoing school reform, a new national curriculum will be introduced from 2006.
Exams	No exams and no marks. Promotion to the next year is automatic. National tests in basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics, English) as part of formative assessment in years 4 and 7.
Schools	Most schools are public and run by the municipalities. Pupils as a rule attend the school closest to where they live. On application, the pupil may be accepted for another school if there are available places. Only about 2% of pupils attend private schools. Private schools for the most part have a particular orientation, either pedagogical (Steiner,

	<p>Montessori etc.), religious or linguistic. Private schools are approved by the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education. Public education is free, but private schools may charge a fee.</p> <p>As a result of Norway's highly dispersed population, 37 % of primary and lower secondary schools are so small that children of different ages are taught in the same classroom. Primary and lower secondary levels are often combined in the same school.</p>
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Lower secondary education

Age	13-16
Duration	3 years
Description	Each pupil has a contact teacher who has the prime responsibility for following up that pupil. Pupils may be organized in traditional classes or in varying groups of different sizes. The school has a responsibility to offer each child an education adapted to their needs, and most pupils with special needs receive their education in ordinary schools.
Norwegian name	<i>Ungdomsskole</i> or <i>grunnskole</i> (the term <i>grunnskole</i> comprises both <i>barneskole</i> (primary) and <i>ungdomsskole</i> (lower secondary)).
Timetable	Pupils have around 30 lessons per week. The minimum annual taught hours are 1140. Within this framework, the school administration can decide the length and organisation of the school day.
School year and holidays	<p>The school year comprises 190 days between mid/late August and mid-June.</p> <p>Autumn break: one week in October</p> <p>Christmas break: approx. two weeks from around 22 December</p> <p>Winter break: one week in February/March</p> <p>Easter break: a week to a week and a half during Easter.</p>
Subjects	There is a national curriculum outlining principles on which teachers are to base their educational activities. The subject syllabuses include Norwegian, Mathematics, Social Studies, Arts and Crafts, Natural Science and Environmental Subjects, English, Music, Home Economics, Physical Education and Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education as well as elective subjects. As part of an ongoing school reform, a new national curriculum will be introduced from 2006.
Exams	Teacher assessment is the basis for marks awarded. Promotion to the next year is automatic. National tests in basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics, English) as part of formative assessment in year 10. Final exams in year 10. A certificate is awarded detailing all marks gained.
Schools	Most schools are public and run by the municipalities. Pupils as a rule attend the school closest to where they live. On application, the pupil may be accepted for another school if there are available places. Only about 2% of pupils attend private schools. Private schools for the most part have a particular orientation, either pedagogical (Steiner,

	<p>Montessori etc.), religious or linguistic. Private schools are approved by the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education. Public education is free, but private schools may charge a fee.</p> <p>As a result of Norway's highly dispersed population, 37 % of primary and lower secondary schools are so small that children of different ages are taught in the same classroom. Primary and lower secondary levels are often combined in the same school.</p>
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Upper secondary education

All pupils who have completed compulsory school have a statutory right to upper secondary education. Pupils may apply to schools outside their own municipality. Applicants are entitled to a place on one of three courses applied for. A follow-up service for young people aged 16 to 19 who are not employed or attending school is established.

The school has a responsibility to offer each pupil an education adapted to their needs. Most pupils with special needs receive their education in ordinary schools, but may be entitled to up to two extra years of education if necessary to achieve their learning goals.

Norway has a uniform upper secondary school, combining general theoretical education and vocational training. Academic and vocational courses are provided side by side, often in the same school building.

- General education: Foundation course – Advanced course I – Advanced course II
- Vocational education: Foundation course – Advanced course I – Advanced course II
OR 2 years apprenticeship OR 1 year general studies.

Those who opt for vocational training can acquire the necessary qualifications for entrance to higher education by attending an additional course in general theoretical knowledge.

The Ministry of Education, through its curricular guidelines, specifies upper secondary curricula in 15 programmes of general or vocational study. The 15 Foundation Courses are:

General education:

- General, Business and Administrative Studies
- Music, Dance and Drama
- Sport and Physical Education

Vocational education:

- Health and Social Care
- Arts, Crafts and Design
- Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry
- Hotel and Food-Processing Trades
- Building and Construction Trades

- Technical Building Trades
- Electrical Trades
- Engineering and Mechanical Trades
- Chemical and Processing Trades
- Woodworking Trades
- Sales and Service Trades
- Media and Communications

General studies

Age	16-19
Duration	3 years
Norwegian name	Videregående skole (studieforberedende studieretninger)
Description	Each pupil has a contact teacher who has the prime responsibility for following up that pupil. Pupils may be organized in traditional classes or in varying groups of different sizes. Each programme of study comprises a foundation year and two years' specialisation.
Timetable	Within a national framework, the school administration decides the length and organisation of the school day.
School year and holidays	The school year comprises 190 days between mid/late August and mid-June. Autumn break: one week in October Christmas break: approx. two weeks from around 22 December Winter break: one week in February/March Easter break: a week to a week and a half during Easter.
Subjects	Common core subjects include Norwegian, Religion, languages, Social Studies, Geography, History, sciences, Mathematics and Physical education. The content of upper secondary courses is subject to decentralised adaptation, in order to meet the needs of individual pupils and in compliance with the principle of steering by objectives rather than by content specification. As part of an ongoing school reform, new national curricula will be introduced from 2006.
Exams	Assessment is based on continual assessment and end-of-year examinations. Examinations are usually externally set and marked. Progression between stages depends on performance. Schools issue certificates for courses which qualify for tertiary education. National tests in basic skills are conducted during the first year as part of formative assessment.
Schools	Public or private. No fees are payable for public upper secondary education, but pupils may be required to pay for textbooks and other learning materials. Private schools may issue fees.

Vocational training

Age	16-19
Duration	3-4 years
Description	Each pupil has a contact teacher who has the prime responsibility for following up that pupil. Pupils may be organized in traditional classes or in varying groups of different sizes. Each programme of study comprises a foundation year and two years' specialisation. Most vocational programmes convert the last year of specialisation into two years of apprenticeship training in enterprises.
Norwegian name	Videregående skole (yrkesfaglige studieretninger)
Timetable	Within a national framework, the school administration decides the length and organisation of the school day.
School year and holidays	The school year comprises 190 days between mid/late August and mid-June. Autumn break: one week in October Christmas break: approx. two weeks from around 22 December Winter break: one week in February/March Easter break: a week to a week and a half during Easter.
Subjects	Common core subjects include Norwegian, Religion, languages, Social Studies, Geography, History, sciences, Mathematics and Physical education. The content of upper secondary courses is subject to decentralised adaptation, in order to meet the needs of individual pupils and the local labour market, and in compliance with the principle of steering by objectives rather than by content specification. As part of an ongoing school reform, new national curricula will be introduced from 2006.
Exams	Assessment is based on continual assessment and end-of-year examinations. Examinations are usually externally set and marked. Progression between stages depends on performance. Pupils receiving vocational training can normally take a trade or journeyman's examination. The County Examination Board accredits vocational qualifications. National tests in basic skills are conducted during the first year as part of formative assessment.
Schools	Public or private. No fees are payable for public upper secondary education, but pupils may be required to pay for textbooks and other learning materials. Private schools may issue fees.