

ANED country report on equality of educational and training opportunities for young disabled people

Country: Norway

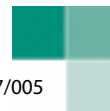
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The information contained in this report was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in May 2010.

The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the Thematic report on the implementation of EU Equality of educational and training opportunities in European countries with reference to equality for young disabled people.

The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation on equality of educational and training opportunities for young people, and in particular the National Strategic Reports of member states from a disability equality perspective in education and training, and provide the Commission with useful evidence in supporting disability policy mainstreaming.



Section 1: Executive summary and conclusions

In primary education, inclusive practices have been a political issue for decades and most of the main structures were established by the mid 1990s. In this report some of the main policies and findings are outlined, but the focus of the report is older children/youth. The developments in secondary education came later, whereas in higher education, most concrete initiatives are quite recent.

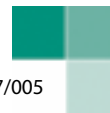
The growing interest in higher education for disabled people has two sources. On the one hand is the principle of equal opportunities. One has realised that there are a number of barriers to higher education for disabled people. On the other hand, research shows consistently that higher education is a very important path to employment. People with higher education are more likely to be employed among all groups of people, but among disabled people, this impact is twice that among other people (odds ratios, Molden et al. 2009). In such a context it is worrying that fewer disabled people have higher education, according to the survey cited in this report, 23% vs. 37% among nondisabled people (age 20-67). The difference is consistent across age groups, and applies also to the “student age”, that is 20-25.

It is also the case that more young disabled people are neither in employment nor education than other young people. Among people aged 20-25, twenty-five percent of disabled people have neither work nor education, compared to 3% among nondisabled peers.

The main initiatives to promote equal opportunities to higher education include:

- Obligations for higher education institutions to have an action plan and a contact person for disabled students
- Requirements that a certain amount of the maintenance budget is used for the purpose of universal design
- Regulations of responsibility for reasonable accommodation
- A national promotion unit (see section 5, good examples)
- Assistive technology
- Audio books
- Exam accommodation
- Etc.

There exist few reliable statistics on the number of disabled students, to what extent they finish on time, how many leave without passing all exams, etc. The issue of financial support is subject to debate between the government and disabled people’s organisations, because disabled students 1) run the risk of having a higher loan burden than other students because they need more time, and 2) experience more problems in the labour market. Thus higher education involves a higher risk for disabled students, which is not in keeping with the principle of equal opportunities.



Section 2: Legal and policy context

Inclusive primary education for disabled children has been a subject for policy developments in Norway for decades, since the 1960s. Secondary education developments came later, and for higher education: it has been part of the vision of disability policy for a long time, but all concrete policy initiatives are quite recent.

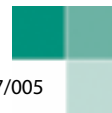
Today primary and secondary education is regulated according to the same law (Opplæringslova, 1998, the Education Act) and under the authority of the same Ministry (Ministry of Education). Higher education (Universities/ Colleges) is regulated by the 'Lov om universitet og høyskoler' (2005, Act on Universities and Colleges) and is also the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, but with a different cabinet minister (Minister of Research and Higher Education). In the following text, we will therefore separate issues regarding primary and secondary education on the one hand, from higher education on the other.

Primary and secondary education

The following quote from Wendelborg & Tøssebro (2008) describes the main ideas and developments related to inclusive education:

Pijl and Mejer (1991) identified three different models or approaches in educational policy related to children with SEN; a 'two track' approach characterised by a distinct division between the regular and special education system, a 'one-track' approach where policies and practice favour inclusion of all children, and a 'multi-track' approach which has a variety of options ranging from inclusion to special schools. During the 1970s, '80s and '90s Norway changed from a two-track to a one-track model. Before 1975, the state ran the special schools, whereas municipalities were responsible for general primary education, that is, all other children. In 1975, a legal and administrative integration took place. The Special School Act was embodied into the general Education Act, and municipalities became responsible for the education of all children. However, special schools did not disappear. Some were transferred to municipalities whereas others continued to be run by the state, providing education that was purchased by municipalities. However, inclusion policies and ideology were gradually strengthened. In the late 1980s, legislative changes gave every child the right to attend their local school and to belong to a regular class together with their peers, but parents could apply for or accept other options. In 1992, all state run special schools were closed with the exception of schools for sign language students. The ideology was that special education should take place in a classroom setting together with peers at the local school.

The Education Act (section 9a) "entitles pupils to certain rights connected to their impairments or learning difficulties and creates obligations for the school owners to ensure that the physical, social and educational environment is suited to all children and adolescents (section 9a)" (Legard 2009).



The act has paragraphs on accessibility at school and also states that all pupils have the right to a “working environment” accommodated to their needs and that pupils with disabilities have the right to individual accommodation. This includes accessible learning materials and special education. The regulation applies irrespective of age as long as we talk about primary and secondary education.

As for individualised support, the act requires that “Pupils who do not or cannot receive adequate benefits from ordinary adapted education or training are entitled to special education (section 5-1).” The education aims should be adapted to the child’s needs and abilities, and the total number of school hours should be the same as for other children of the same age. Section 5-5 requires that a child that has special education needs also should have an individualized education plan, set up in collaboration with the child and his/her parents. Twice a year, the school is required to make a written report on the activities related to the individualized education plan.

Especially for upper secondary education:

- In Norway, all children (disabled and not disabled) that have graduated from compulsory lower secondary education (10 years) have the right to three years of upper secondary education. Students with special education needs can have this extended by two more years in order to fulfill their individualized education plans. This possibility of two more years is a right for children using sign language or Braille.
- “Students who, after an expert assessment (by the Educational-Psychological Service), have been classified as having “sensory or movement defects, strong learning difficulties, emotional or social problems, strong multiple disabilities or other disabilities” have the right to admission to specially prioritized programs in the first level (Vg 1) in upper secondary education (section 6-18 to 6-21). This might be a special education program or an ordinary program if the student cannot attend other programs. The same students have the right to be admitted to levels 2 and 3 (Vg 2 and Vg 3) without having achieved the same grades as their fellow students. The admission is then based on an individual assessment (section 6-22 to 6-24).” (Legard 2009)
- There applies special regulations for the practical part of vocational upper secondary education, including financial support for employers who have apprentices with disabilities.

Other issues:

- “The Education Act specifies that disabled or temporarily ill pupils in both primary and secondary education can get free transportation back and forth from school, regardless of the distance between the home and school (section 7-3).” (Legard 2009)

- “According to the Education Act (section 2-1), the Patient Rights Act (section 6-4) and a Regulation on Children in Health Care Institutions (Forskrift om barns opphold i helseinstitusjon), pupils who are frequently absent from school due to illness have the right to tuition in hospitals, at home or at other institutions.” (Legard 2009)
- The Education Act, Section 4A-3, states that all adults aged 25 or above who have not yet completed upper secondary education and training have the right to receive it.

Recently a public committee has recommended some amendments to the regulations of special education and accessibility (NOU 2009: 18 Rett til læring (Right to education)) but the basic structures of the rights and system will not change (except that some national expert centers may be closed and the resources transferred to local units).

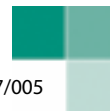
Higher education

The efforts to accommodate higher education to the needs of disabled people have been less systematic than in primary and secondary education. The following points could however be highlighted:

- The Government Action Plan for Disabled (1994-97) introduced the regulation that higher education institutions spend 5% of “operating costs for real estate” to improve accessibility.
- From 1999 all institutions were required to have a contact person for students with disabilities, and also an action plan for accessibility (White paper (St. Meld) 8, 1998-99). This was a part of a national plan for accessibility.
- White paper (Stortingsmelding) 40 (2002-03) aimed at increasing the number of disabled people in higher education to the same proportion as the rest of the population. New initiatives included:
 - National initiative-taker: A unit was established at one of the Universities to initiate changes in order to promote accessibility and learning environment for students with a disability (described in section 5: Good practice)
 - A council for disabled people in higher education, as a consultative unit for the Ministry of Education (actually established in 2000)
- From 2006 (disabled) students who need special accommodation (regarding housing, services, or other things requiring unusual planning time) can have “early admittance”, that is, you can have your admittance confirmed early. This applies only to students who are qualified by March 1st, and thus not students leaving upper secondary school the same year.¹

The Higher Education Act (Lov om universiteter og høyskoler 2005) defines students’ rights to appropriate accommodation.

¹ cf. www.universell.no



The Act states that all universities and colleges are instructed to take the necessary steps to ensure that disabled students have the same access to education as their non-disabled peers. The Act also requires that the students' learning environment is developed according to the principles of universal design (§ 4-3 nr. 3). Section 4-3 also points to the responsibility of the educational institutions for accommodation for students with special needs "as far as possible and reasonable". What is meant by this qualification is not clear and might be dependent on discretionary judgments at the institution.

In 2009 the Norwegian Anti-discrimination and Accessibility Act (Lov om forbud mot diskriminering på grunn av nedsatt funksjonsevne 2008), which prohibits discrimination based on disability, was introduced. This Act also emphasizes the responsibility of universities and colleges to ensure equal opportunities in education for disabled students.

NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) carries out quality assurance evaluation of higher education and tertiary vocational education in Norway. It is an independent organisation that was established in 2002 and it also accredits tertiary vocational education (ISCED 4).

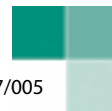
Adult Education

In Norway, all adults have a right to access primary and lower secondary level education, which is arranged by municipalities. Unemployed people may receive labour market skills training for occupational qualifications under the Government's labour market strategy (under the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion), which is funded by the State and which is not just for young people.

All education

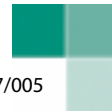
It is not easy to be clear about where the new ideas have originated. Haug (1999) claims that most reforms in general education come from the Ministry, the Parliament and the teachers' associations, whereas reforms in special education tend to come about as a response to initiatives from below (parents, organisations) or externally (media, individual politicians). As for higher education, some of the disabled peoples' organisations have been active, and public committee reports have pointed out the need for action.

Norwegian educational policy tends in principle to comply with the UN Convention. As for practice, this is disputed. Children do however have the right to go to the local school and there are "work environment" articles in the legislation requiring individual accommodation. The Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation Strategy, (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), concerned with education policy in international development, refers to support for the coexistence of specialized and integrated school programmes for disabled children. Importance is also attached to vocational training and lifelong learning, although there is no mention of disabled people in these contexts.



The Programme for Basic Skills in Working Life was established by the Norwegian government in 2006, to support businesses and education providers. This initiative built on the Competence Development Programme (1999-2006), which suggested that best results, especially for people with low levels of education, were obtained when training and education were combined with paid jobs (Eurybase, 2007/08) A government organisation, VOX – the Norwegian Institute of Adult Education - (which was established in 2000 after the reorganisation of an older body), has a responsibility for analysing, developing, and disseminating knowledge about adult learning. In particular, the organisation works to improve basic skills, informal learning and competence in IT.

For adult education there is a low level of central organisation and a wide range of providers, including NGOs, although Adult Education Associations and Folk High Schools have a long tradition (Tikkanen, 2007).



Section 3: Evidence of outcomes and progress towards inclusion

Primary and secondary education

There have never been a large number of pupils in special schools/arrangements in Norway. Evidence suggests that the number of all pupils in segregated facilities has declined from about 0.8% in the 1960s to about 0.5% from the mid 1990s (NOS, 1994; Skårbrevik, 1996; Tøssebro, 1997; Wendelborg, 2006). This has been considered low in European comparisons (Vislie 2003). After 2005, the number of pupils in special groups or schools increased, to more than 1% in 2006-07 and 1.3% in the year 2008-09 (Source: The information system of compulsory education, see link in reference list). It is disputed to what extent the changes are due to new reporting routines and to what extent they reflect real changes. The number of pupils in segregated facilities has anyhow been rather stable over the last decades, irrespective of a clear inclusion policy.

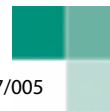
It also seems to be the case that special education very frequently is provided “out of class”. In 2008-09 44,525 pupils received special education (some for a few hours, others for many), of whom 7,900 were alone with a teacher during special education and 26,300 were in a small group with other students with special educational needs. Thus, about $\frac{3}{4}$ were “out of class”.

On the other hand, one has seen a development of more accessible local schools, making inclusion of pupils with mobility difficulties easier. But there are still many old school buildings with poor accessibility standards (Norges handikapforbund, 2003; Wendelborg 2006; Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2008).

Children with disabilities have a right to primary and secondary education in Norway and even though there are disputes about both effectiveness and inclusion, exclusion from a mainstream school as such is unusual.

As for the consequences of inclusion for educational outcomes, the following quote from Myklebust & Båtevik 2005, (quoted by Legard 2009, cf. also Myklebust & Båtevik 2009) is illuminating:

Although we have fewer studies of the relation between special education and employment, there are indicators that education in ordinary classes is more beneficial in terms of later employment. A longitudinal study of 500 youths (2001-2002) with different types of impairments concluded that class placement has an effect on the transition to work: [Surprisingly] [...] class placement has an independent effect on occupational attainment, in addition to its previously documented effect on competence attainment. It should be noted that this independent effect does not apply to those having attained formal competence. However, class placement has a decisive effect on adolescents who do not attain competence. This effect is especially strong among those leaving school without formal qualifications.



Those adolescents dropping out of a regular class have far better vocational prospects than those staying the allotted time in upper secondary school but without achieving formal competence. This relationship remains even when the analysis controls for the effects of several other covariates – e.g. the functional level of the young people.

Higher education

There is no really good registration of numbers of disabled people in higher education. However, Knarlag & Jacobsen (2000) estimates that 4.5% of students need substantial accommodation and about 8% some accommodation. There is no registration of disabled students quitting higher education, but anecdotally, according to disabled people's organizations² it is much too common, because of the difficulties people face.

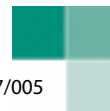
The best data on higher education outcomes is probably from the 2007 study of the Living Conditions of People with Functional Limitations (Molden, Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2009) (data gathered by Statistics Norway). According to this:

- 23% of disabled people have higher education, compared to 37% among people without disabilities.
- Among young people aged 20-25, the figures for educational attainment for disabled people was (N=55): 46% only compulsory education, 44% upper secondary education, and 9% higher education. Among non-disabled people the corresponding figures are: 30%, 48% and 21%.
- More women than men have higher education and this also goes for disabled people (26% of disabled women vs. 18% of disabled men).
- 19% of disabled people chose another course of study than they would have preferred, and the most important reason for this was inaccessibility (48%).

As for the question of the proportion of young disabled people that currently are in employment, education or none of them, the figures according to the 2007 Living Conditions Study (age 20-25) were (information on main daily activity):

	Disabled people	Non-disabled people
Employed/self-employed	51%	64%
In Education	24%	30%
None/unemployed	25%	3%
Other (military etc)	0%	3%
Number of subjects	55	777

² <http://universitas.no/news/53777/demands-extra-scholarships-for-students-with-disabilities/>

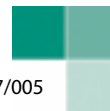


The 2008 Labour Force Survey (Bø & Håland 2009) does have data on employment rates, but not people in education. The figures for employment for 15-24 year olds are however in keeping with the above table: 48% disabled being employed (at least one hour a week).

Vocational education and training mainly lead to a craft or journeyman's certificate, usually after two years in school and one or two years of in-service training in a business. However, training may last anywhere between 6 months and 2 years. Vocational training programmes are offered in Building and Construction, Design, Arts and Crafts, Electrics and Electronics, Health and Social Care, Media and Communication, Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry and Restaurant work and Food Processing. In 2007 there were about 110 vocational rehabilitation enterprises in Norway, the majority being jointly administered by employers and an industrial body, and approximately 35,000 people participated. Also in 2007 there were reported to be 226 "growth enterprises," employing 13,000 persons. With the aim of providing an active vocational life rather than reliance on benefits, they provide more in the way of permanent sheltered employment.

Aakvik's (2003) research showed that although people participating in vocational rehabilitation were 8% more likely to find a job compared with those who did not participate, controlling for the non-training effects on the likelihood of finding a job resulted in a training effect that was close to zero. Aakvik et al (2005) report that vocational training programmes are selective in their recruitment strategies and recruit candidates most likely to be successful in securing a job (skimming). In comparison with the total eligible population, successful applicants for vocational rehabilitation were more likely to have characteristics associated with higher employment: being young, having no children, being educated and having more work experience. Given the presence of children, those with older children were more likely to participate. In addition, the study demonstrated that those participating were people who were least likely to benefit from what was offered. The authors recommend an improvement in the selection practices in favour of those less advantaged.

Overall, there is a lack of data on outcomes of the transition from school to work and from higher education to work. Although there are a few programmes concerned with the latter, these are few in number and little is known about the outcomes. Legard (2009) concludes that at a county level, co-operation between municipalities, counties and employment services appear to be more significant, although the extent to which these focus on reducing 'drop-out' rather than on securing work is unclear.



Section 4: Types of support for students and trainees

Disability issues in the curriculum of university training for school teachers

The training of general school teachers does not have much on disability issues, if anything. Haug (2004) discussed two tracks in teachers' curriculum: the normal track and the special track. In the normal track disability issues are not present, whereas in the special track teachers are expected to be special education teachers – which involve questions about disability, mostly typical teaching methods related to specific types of disability (or learning problems).

Teacher qualifications

The formal requirement for becoming a special education teacher is further education in special education, but in some areas of the country, people with this education are in short supply. There are no requirements for becoming a teacher's assistant (except a certificate of conduct from the police).

Supports

In primary and secondary education there is a right to special education for children "that do not benefit from ordinary adapted education". The right is based on an individual assessment.³ Children do also have the right to technical aids, at home and at school, which is necessary for school work (section 4b). This is the responsibility of the Centre for Assistive Technology which is a part of the Work and Welfare Administration (NAV) (state level).

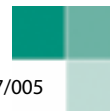
In higher education there is no established national norm for the services offered to disabled students by Norwegian universities and colleges.⁴ The institutions are all required to make necessary accommodation in order to ensure that disabled candidates have equal access to education, but it is up to the institutions themselves to define which services they can offer their students. All institutions are required to have an appointed contact person for disabled students as well as a plan of action on how to include this group of students.

Soon after the year 2000, a national network on disability services was formed between the universities and colleges.⁵ Because of this, the services offered to disabled students became more similar across higher education institutions. Different institutions will, however, to some degree offer different services. Many of the services offered to disabled students require that the students document their disability.

³ Assessed by some of the existing educational support services, typically the PPT (Educational Psychology Services) that exist in all municipalities. Parents' points of view are expected to be taken into account.

⁴ www.universell.no

⁵ www.universell.no



Students who need adjustments have to contact their institution as soon as possible to find out which services are available and apply for the necessary adjustments. This applies to both Norwegian and foreign students. All disability services are free of charge.

Detailed information about services offered by some universities and colleges in Norway can be found in the [Higher Education Accessibility Guide \(HEAG\)](#).

Support that is available when applying for higher education:

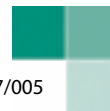
- Counselling in upper secondary school, from a rehabilitation unit or the Work and Welfare Administration (NAV). The quality depends on the knowledge of disability on the part of the counsellor (Magnus, 2009). It is also known that counsellors tend to recommend higher education of shorter duration (bachelors rather than masters degrees, college rather than university) (Anvik, 2006; Berge, 2007; Magnus, 2009; Sørheim, 1998).
- Educational institutions can guide disabled students in their choice of career, but this is most often a short term project. There appears to be a need for this type of counseling since many disabled young people have limited labour market experience and their natural supports often know little about disability and work. There is increasing activity at higher education institutions regarding career counseling, for all students.

We know little about the experiences of young persons in the transition from education to work (Legard, 2009). The support system is most often the general system for inclusion of people at the margins of the labour market, such as described by Legard (2009): "Support services in employment basically involve following the individual employee/potential employee with impairment. This is the case for assistive technology, accommodation of workplace, assistance, transportation and other practical forms of supported employment. Employers are responsible for providing work equipment and making accommodations to the physical infrastructure of the workplace, but they might receive some practical advice from the NAV Center for Assistive Technology or Working Life Centres. Incentives to employers for hiring persons with impairments normally come in the form of wage subsidies or compensation during sick leave."

Other measures include careers guidance, job experience while studying, apprenticeships in private companies and chances to complete higher secondary education at a lower level of achievement.

Co-ordination of services is however reported to be a major problem for young people, especially in regard to the transition from school to work, despite careers guidance and NAV vocational rehabilitation. Legard (2009) reports that vocational rehabilitation services do not have a focus on assisting young people to enter adult life.

Overall, there is a lack of data concerning transition.



Section 4a: Financial support

Almost all study programs in Norway are free of tuition fees. Thus, financial support includes costs of daily living, books and study material, but also medical expenses, transportation, technical aids, personal assistance, childcare, etc.

There are two tracks to support for daily costs: loans/grants or rehabilitation benefits. Most students apply for loans and grants from the State Educational Fund (Statens Lånekasse) to finance their living costs while studying. For students not living with their parents, the loan/grant-ratio is 60/40. The grant is first given to students as a loan and then converted into a grant when they have passed their exams. Students can have 8,900 NOK (1,100 Euro) each month. If they study part-time, the loan/grant is reduced. The students make the application online. The loan/grant goes to the student. There are different forms of student funding and scholarships and an overview can be found at: <http://www.studyinnorway.no/sn/Tuition-Scholarships>. There are no alternative sources of funding for disabled students from other countries.⁶

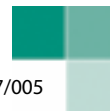
Young people with disabilities can apply for the rehabilitation benefit to cover daily expenses during education. When someone applies for this benefit, they must be 26 years or older (the age restriction was raised from 22 years in 2004). The reason for the age limit is that rehabilitation is a way to work, not to education. Thus, if you are at an age where education is typical, then you are supposed to use the normal system, that is, loans/ grants. Beyond the age of 26, education can be regarded as vocational rehabilitation. One is then supposed to follow an educational plan set up in agreement with the Work and Welfare Administration (NAV). According to disabled students, they feel that this kind of funding is a bit uncertain because they are not always able to follow the plan (Berge, 2007; Magnus, 2009).

According to the Living Conditions Survey (2007), the distribution of means of subsistence among disabled students is: 39% loans/grants, 41% rehabilitation benefits, 20% employment. 22% report financial difficulties.

As for the debate on financial arrangements, Legard (2009) maintains:

“There are no funding arrangements in the State Educational Loan Fund or elsewhere to cover extra expenses that students with impairments might have in higher education, but there are provisions to counterbalance the incentive to complete studies in the prescribed time frame. It is, for example, possible for students to be delayed in their studies for one year without losing their right to receive grants and loans from the State Educational Loan Fund. If the reason for the delay is illness or impairment, it is possible for students to delay their studies further without losing this right.

⁶ www.universell.no



If the student must take leave from his or her studies because of sickness, the loan may also be converted into grants. In the study year 2007-2008, the State Educational Loan Fund gave sickness grants with a total value of NOK 15 568 000⁷ (this includes all students on sick leave, including those with loans and grants in upper secondary and other forms of education). If, however, the illness occurs before the student begins studying, the loans will not be turned into grants. This might affect students with impairments such as chronic diseases.

The study financing provision has been debated for many years by parliament and in the disability movement, and there seems to be a consensus that the provision works to the disadvantage of students with impairments and learning difficulties⁸. A student using more than the prescribed time to pass one or more exams will accumulate a higher debt burden than others if the reason for the delays is not long-term sickness. There exist several indications that students with impairments or learning difficulties are using more time to complete their studies due to lack of accessibility, badly coordinated support services, frequent “bad periods” and lack of adapted learning aids (Brandt 2005; Kessel 2008), and hence the study loans and grants provision might have a negative effect for students experiencing these obstacles. One solution for a student with impairment might be to apply for a disability pension after completing his or her studies, which might convert the loan (or parts of the loan) into grants. A precondition is that the student has not been receiving vocational rehabilitation or medical rehabilitation benefits during his or her studies.

Disabled students claim that since they need more time to finish their education, they end up with more loans than their peers (Magnus, 2009).

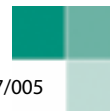
Other expenses:

- Medical services, technical aids (including sign language interpretation), personal assistance and transportation belong to the public services offered by the local governments.
- The student welfare associations offer student housing and child care centers for students, and in many cities they also offer supplementary health services for students⁹.
- Students with rehabilitation benefits can apply for extra expenses for housing.

⁷ Statens Lånekasse www.lanekassen.no (accessed 20.07.2009)

⁸ Deliberations in the National Assembly (Stortinget) 22.04.2004

⁹ www.universell.no



Section 4b: Personal assistance, equipment and adaptations

Main supports are listed below, with a heading referring to the agency responsible for the service:

Higher education institutions:

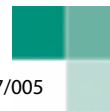
- Contact and counselling service. They do the assessment by talking to the student.
- Special technical aids. This is primarily the responsibility of NAV, but universities and colleges also have some equipment for students and they use part of their operational budget on accessibility measures. This division of labour between NAV and higher education is unclear (Knarlag 2007).
- Accommodation for exams. This could be extra time, using another site, oral presentations of the task, oral exams, writing assistance etc.
- An office or some other quiet place for studying at the university.
- Careers advisory centers exist at some institutions. However we have limited experience with this.
- And sometimes: a student assistant (taking notes, help in the bathroom, making copies, transport at campus etc.) Some institutions cover this. If the student has benefits from NAV, they will cover it.

Municipal (local authority) social services:

- Basic medical treatment, physiotherapy, occupational therapy
- Personal assistant (BPA). For persons with extensive needs for help in the home and during leisure time, and in combination with a student assistant.
- Practical assistant at home, help with shopping, cleaning, etc.
- Home nursing care
- Coordination of services. In principle there could be a coordinator from the social service agency of the local authority, but many disabled students experience that they have to coordinate services themselves, and that this is a demanding task (Magnus, 2009).

The Work and Welfare Administration (NAV):

- Assistive technology – the student has to apply for this themselves. The assessment is made by professionals at the NAV Center for Assisted Technology. This implies also assistive technologies for learning and interpretation.
- Transportation.
- Benefits to compensate for extra expenses (health, accommodations, etc.)



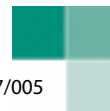
Other:

- Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille (NLB). There are some requirements concerning visual limitations on the right to have the course material in an oral form, which appear to exclude some students that need oral books (Fossestøl & Kessel 2000). Among people who have the right to oral books, the production time is a problem – course material is often not available until too late. This is described as the main problem for visually impaired students (Brandt, 2005; Fuglerud & Solheim, 2008; Hauge, 2003).
- Housing (Student welfare organisations). There are shortages of accessible student housing. 2.9% of all residences were accessible in 2006 (Nasjonalt dokumentasjonssenter for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne 2007)
- Student health service
- Advanced medical treatment
- Medical rehabilitation
- NGO peer support

It is reported that personal assistance is of vital importance for disabled students because it makes higher education possible (Anvik, 2006; Magnus, 2009).

Exportability: Students who have educational support through NAV or the municipality cannot automatically keep the support if studying abroad (but neither is it impossible). Students coming to Norway have the same rights as Norwegian students according to the Act on Higher Education (but not necessarily other supports).

The criticisms concerning financial support for higher education have been summed up like this by Legard (2009): “Research and documentation show that most of these special provisions work poorly or unsatisfactorily. The special admission criteria can impede the admission of students with impairments, the production of learning aids is slower than the pace of studies, adaptations of exams are ineffective and the loans and grants provision confers a higher debt burden on students who take longer to complete their studies because of obstacles related to their impairment.”



Section 5: Evidence of good practice

About “Universell”

Universell is the Norwegian national coordinator of accessibility in higher education. It started as a project called “LINK – Centre for accessibility” in 1999. It grew out of the student counselling service at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim. The aim is to:

- Gather, analyse and disseminate information about services for disabled students
- Promote inclusion in higher education
- Disseminate information to educational institutions
- Address the total situation for disabled students
- Establish a network of experts among people working with disability and higher education.

It was funded as a project from 1999-2000, and formally established by the Ministry of Education in 2003. The assignment was to:

- contribute to the educational institutions' action plans for disabled students
- offer support-on-demand to the universities
- develop a website – www.universell.no – for cooperation and knowledge about universal design and inclusive strategies in higher education
- organize seminars and conferences for employees working with universal design and disability matters
- represent the higher education sector in different committees
- From 2007: Project management (several assignments from the Ministry of Education on universal design)

Universell has two full-time employees and is located at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim¹⁰. Links for more information:

- [Services for students with disabilities in Norway](#)
- [Norwegian network](#)
- [Nordic network](#)
- [Contact information](#)

One of the main tasks of Universell has been to initiate a network for cooperation and exchange of best practice between disability counselling staff in higher education institutions. Contact information to the contact persons at each institution is posted on the web site (www.universell.no), and all contact persons subscribe to an email list which is used to exchange questions and advice.

¹⁰ www.universell.no

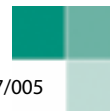


A similar network is beginning to develop between the members of the institutions' learning environment committees.

Nordic Network NNDC

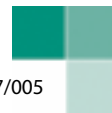
Nordic Network for Disability Coordinators/Equivalent (NNDC) is a network represented by all the Nordic countries. In 2007 the Norwegian National coordinator (Universell) of accessibility in higher education got funding from NSH (The Nordic collaboration council on disability) in order to establish a Nordic network and arrange a Nordic conference. The Nordic network established a board and arranged the first meeting in Oslo in 2008.

The vision of the Nordic Network: *"An inclusive Higher Education for students with disabilities in the Nordic countries"*. Every other year the NNDC arranges a Nordic conference. All Nordic disability coordinators in higher education are invited to the conferences. For more information about the Nordic network, check out the NNDC web pages: www.universell.no/nndc.



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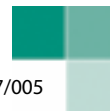
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