Iceland

VET in Europe – Country Report

2010

This country report is part of a series of reports on vocational education and training produced for each EU Member State plus Norway and Iceland by members of ReferNet, a network established by Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training).

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The preparation of this report has been co-financed by the European Community.

Title: Iceland. VET in Europe – Country Report 2010

Author: ReferNet Iceland

Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Iceland. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General context – framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development – objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. VET in times of crisis
4. Historical background, Legislative and Institutional framework
5. Initial vocational education and training
6. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
7. Training VET teachers and trainers
8. Matching VET provision (skills) with labour market needs (jobs)
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
10. Financing:- investment in human resources
11. National VET statistics – allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2010 and its reference year is 2009. Similar overviews of previous years can be viewed at:
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/
More detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also be found at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/analysis.asp

Keywords:

vocational education and training (VET) systems; initial vocational training; continuing vocational training; lifelong learning; VET policy development; financial crisis and VET policies; VET legislative and institutional frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal education; teachers and trainers; anticipation of skill needs; vocational guidance and counselling; VET financing mechanisms; allocation of national VET programmes; national and international qualification systems.

Geographic term:

Iceland

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.1 POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Iceland is a representative democracy with an elected president. The current constitution came into effect on 17 June 1944, when Iceland achieved its independence from Denmark. The system of government is based on the principle of the tripartite division of power. According to the Constitution the parliament Alþingi and the president jointly exercise legislative power. The Prime Minister and other governmental authorities are entrusted with executive power and the judiciary authorities with judicial power.

Parliament consists of 63 members elected for four years. The Prime Minister forms the government and leads the cabinet. Coalition governments are the conventional form and never in the history of the Republic has there been a one-party majority government, and rarely minority governments. The President of the republic is elected for four years by a plebiscite and has functions similar to those of a constitutional monarch.

In January 2010 the country was divided into 77 municipalities. The municipal councils are elected by universal suffrage with four years interval, in municipalities with over 300 inhabitants by proportional representation, in others by simple majority. There is great disparity in population; the population of the largest municipality, the capital Reykjavík, had 118.427 inhabitants on 1 December 2009, while some of the smaller rural districts had population of fewer than 50 (Source: Samband íslenskra sveitarfélaga (The Association of Icelandic Municipalities: http://www.samband.is/template1.asp?Id=1876).

From around 2000 to 2008, there was a massive immigration to Iceland, which fell drastically in 2009 when Iceland saw the biggest net emigration ever in its history. At the end of 2009, the number of emigrants minus the number of immigrants was 4 835. Net emigration of men far exceeded the net emigration of women; the former was 3 689 against 1 146. The biggest group of emigrants was from Reykjavík. Most people moved to one of the other Nordic countries but Poland was the largest single recipient of emigrants from Iceland; Polish workers who were moving back home after having lost their jobs. However, there were 24 813 people with foreign citizenship living in the country in 2009 and immigration was still high. The far biggest group (around half of all immigrants) is from Poland but the immigrant community is from around 50 other countries (source: Hagstofa Íslands – Statistics Iceland).

The total number of immigrants living in Iceland is higher than the number of citizens with foreign citizenship because several hundred foreigners have been granted Icelandic citizenship in recent years (e.g. 914 people were granted citizenship in 2008 and 728 in 2009) (source: ibid).

No detailed information is available as to the educational status of the immigrant population. In the beginning, most immigrants stayed for short periods and did not bring their families but the number of foreign children and young people in need of education and training has gradually been growing. It now seems that the big group of men without families have mostly left the country but the number of immigrant families has remained stable or has even risen slightly. A massive effort has been put into teaching Icelandic to foreign children and grown-ups alike and both the state and social partners have allocated considerable amounts to fund this. There are several obstacles in this type of training:

- most immigrants speak only their mother-tongues;
- knowledge of their languages is limited in the native population;
- especially the smallest municipalities (responsible for compulsory education) have faced problems in getting trained teachers who can at least communicate with the foreign children;
- the immigrants often work very long hours;
- some of them intend to leave Iceland after a relatively short period of time and are therefore not very interested in learning the language.

Despite these difficulties, hundreds of immigrants have obtained some sort of a graduation exam in Icelandic and have repeatedly asked in the media for opportunities of using the language rather than Icelanders constantly switching over to English.

1.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Country size: 103.000 km2

The Icelandic population is small in any comparison and is only a fraction of the total European population as can be seen in the table below:

TABLE 1: TOTAL POPULATION (ON 1ST OF JANUARY), 2003, 2006, 2009. (2010 VALUES ARE FORECASTS)

GEO\TIME	2003	2006	2009	2010 (FORECAST)
EU 27	486 647 831	493 226 936	499 723 520(p)	501 259 840
IS	288 471	299 891	319 368	318 755

Source of Data: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics); Date of extraction: 02 May 2010

The growth rate in Iceland is however much faster than in the rest of Europe. While the total growh rate for EU 27 was just over 3% during these years, it was well above 10% in Iceland. This can be explained by three main things:

- the young average age of the Icelandic population
- the average number of children born to each woman
- the number of immigrants to Iceland from the rest of Europe.

As can be seen in the table below, the youngest cohort is still relatively big, even though the oldest cohort is the fastest growing and has been for many years. The large size group of people between 25 and 59 is among others things, due to immigration.

TABLE 2: AGE SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS 2009:

0-24	25-64	65+
113 807	168 388	37 173

Source: Hagstofa Íslands (Statistics Iceland): http://www.statice.is/

The population is still expected to grow as far into the future as the Statistical bureau is willing to predict.

Eurostat does not provide Projected old-age dependency ratio, 2010-2060 for Iceland and neither does Statistics Iceland. However, there is a prediction for the size of the population until 2060

TABLE 3: AGE SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS:							
	2010	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
0-24	112 347	111 816	111 914	115 877	117 194	118 074	129 571
25-64	166 972	168 914	175 269	179 929	188 711	196 188	181 159
65+	38 121	44 551	52 912	72 662	86 078	94 573	125 818
Source: Hagstofa Íslands (Statistics Iceland): http://www.statice.is							

As can be seen from this, the biggest growth is expected in the oldest cohort, just as in the rest of Europe. The number of young people is expected to remain stable while the number of people from 24 to 64 will grow slightly, thanks to the large number of the present youth. Iceland is thus less likely to have to cope with the same old-age dependency ratio as the rest of Europe. It will also help matters that the population works longer; starts earlier and often works until a very high age.

The massive immigration in recent years has greatly affected the Icelandic demography.

TABLE 4: IMMIGRANTS AS % OF THE OVERALL POPULATION					
YEAR	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
TOTAL POPULATION	253 785	266 978	279 049	293 577	313 376
% PEOPLE WITH FOREIGN CITIZENSHIP	1.9	1.8	2.6	3.6	7,6
Source: Hagstofa Íslands (Statistics Iceland): http://www.statice.is/					

When looking at the immigrant population in 2008, its young age is apparent when compared to the rest of the population. Over 73% of the group is of working age, whereas children and older people are very few. Even this does not give the full picture, immigrant seem to start working early as the rest of the population.

TABLE 5: AGE SPECIFIC TRENDS IN THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION 2009		
0-24	25-59	60+
6 735 (27.62%)	16 960 (69.56%)	684 (2.8%)
Source: Hagstofa Íslands (Statistics Iceland): http://www.statice.is/		

Iceland is very sparsely populated, which has great effects for its education and training. Especially people living outside the capital area cannot expect a great variety of educational offers, unless they migrate. During recent decades, schools' authorities have tried to increase their offer by e.g. distance education and offering students to take parts of their upper secondary education in their home villages, which postpones the decision of whether to migrate to the capital area or bigger villages. Tertiary education offers through distance education have greatly increased in recent years and parliament has earmarked more resources to that sector than was the case a few years ago.

1.3 ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS.

As in the rest of Europe, the majority of Icelanders work in some sort of services as can be seen in the table below:

TABLE 6: EMPLOYED PERSONS AGED 15+ BY ECONOMIC SECTOR OF ACTIVITY (IN THOUSANDS AND AS % OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT), 2009

	PRIMARY SECTOR AND UTILITIES		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT		BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES		NON MARKETED SERVICES	
GEO	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%
EU 27	15192.8	7.0	35068.2	16.1	17290.9	7.9	57470.5	26.4	38557.9	17.7	53201.2	24.4
IS	8.9	5.4	18.7	11.3	11.4	6.9	45.6	27.4	30.1	18.1	47.8	28.8

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 26-04-2010

The main difference between Iceland and EU27 is the high percentage of people working in non-marketed services, on the expenses of all other sectors. The most likely explaining factor for this is the high percentage of the population which works in public services, wither for the state or municipalities.

Employment rates for people living in Iceland are (or at least have been) much higher than in the rest of Europe, regardless of whether people have an education or not and at what age they are. Even for school students (down to the age of 14) it has been common to work in the summer time and even have a part time job along side school. Employment rates have not been much higher for people with university education than for those with as little as compulsory education (even for those who have not completed compulsory school).

The high percentage of people aged 15-24 on the labour market is especially noteworthy and can be explained by two main factors:

- high drop-out rates from upper secondary school
- high number of available jobs for uneducated people alongside school.

Table 7: Employment rates by age groups and highest level of education attained (%), 2003, 2006 and 2009										
	TIME	2003			2006			2009		
GEO	ISCED / AGE	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU 27	0-2	25.1 (i)	66.1(i)	41.9 (i)	24.8	66.9	43.5	22.8	64.1	43.3
	3-4	47.2 (i)	79.1 (i)	54.9 (i)	48.1	80.5	57.9	46.3	80.5	59.5
	5-6	62.0 (i)	88.0 (i)	72.4 (i)	60.5	88.5	74.2	58.4	88.2	74.5
	NO A.	14.9 (i)	72.6 (i)	39.1 (i)	5.1	76.0	5.6	5.5	75.6	63.9
	TOTAL	36.0 (i)	77.4 (i)	51.5 (i)	36.6	79.1	54.4	35.2	78.8	56.5
IS	0-2	71.4	86.0	81.2	73.8	83.5	83.8	59.5	75.8	78.9
	3-4	70.6	88.5	88.3	71.9	87.0	92.2	65.4	81.0	86.0
	5-6	:	93.9	94.4	:	93.2	88.0	:	87.8	89.8
	NO A.	:	:	:	67.6	88.5	84.4	:	:	:
	TOTAL	70.4	89.0	85.3	72.1	88.0	86.7	61.5	81.7	84.0

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); Extracted on 30-04-2010; Last update: 23-04-2010

(i): further information, see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/lfsq_esms.htm.

With employment rates as high as stated above, it is no surprise that unemployment rates are very low. For most categories however, Eurostat does not have any figures and neither does the Icelandic Statistical Bureau.

TABLE 8. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2003, 2006 AND 2009										
	TIME	2003			2006			2009		
GEO	ISCED / AGE	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU 27	0-2	20.2 (i)	11.6 (i)	7.2 (i)	21.2	11.2	7.5	25.9	14.8	9.1
	3-4	17.7 (i)	8.4 (i)	7.7 (i)	15.4	7.3	6.9	16.9	7.5	6.2
	5-6	12.0 (i)	4.8 (i)	3.7 (i)	13.4	4.3	3.6	15.4	4.8	3.4
	NO A.	13.9 (i)	7.8 (i)	7.4 (i)	20.1	:	:	22.0	7.5	:
	TOTAL	18.0 (i)	8.3 (i)	6.6 (i)	17.2	7.3	6.3	19.7	8.2	6.3

IS	0-2	12.6	:	:	9.9	:	:	18.0	10.2	:
	3-4	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	6.3	:
	5-6	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	4.2	:
	NO A.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	TOTAL	12.4	2.2	:	8.3	1.8	:	16.0	6.7	3.6

Source: Eurostat (LFS); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 23-04-2010

Iceland spends about the same percentage of its GDP on education and training as the rest of Europe as can be seen in the table below:

TABLE 9 A: TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2007

	ALL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)			GENERAL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)			VOCATIONAL AND PREVOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (ISC 2-4)		
GEO	ALL PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	GEN. PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	PV-VOC. PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE
EU27	200368.4	2.2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
IS	226.7	2.4	5.7	103.9	1.1	2.6	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection); Data as of April 26th 2009

Neither Iceland nor the EU seem to have separate figures for vocational education and training.

Iceland spends a considerably higher percentage of its GDP on secondary education and training than the rest of Europe as can be seen in the following table:

TABLE 9 B: TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS % OF GDP, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (ISCED 2-4), 2001-2006

GEO	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU27	2.27 (s)	2.32 (s)	2.35 (s)	2.29 (s)	2.25 (s)	2.23 (s)
IS	2.51 (i)	2.60 (i)	2.52 (i)	2.60 (i)	2.55	2.54 (i)

Source: Eurostat (UOE); extracted on: 04-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010

(s) Eurostat estimate

(i) See explanatory note: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/educ_esms.htm

The likeliest explanations for this is first of all the relatively young age of the Icelandic population (which means more people are of the regular upper secondary school age) and the fact that upper secondary education takes in average four years in Iceland whereas in most other countries it takes only three years.

Eurostat's information on expenditure on education and training are quite old but the Statistical Bureau of Iceland has newer data, but a bit limited. In 2008 the percentage of GDP public spending on education and training was 7.58, and the total amount was ISK 111 846 which at the time was around € 640 thousand. The % of the GDP spent on education and training fell drastically from 19.18% the previous year, even though the total amount had risen slightly, due to the large increase of the GDP due to foreign debt.

Information on private spending for education and training is not available. It is however known that this has increased considerably in recent years with the commencement of four private universities, some of which also operate departments on upper-secondary level.

1.4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

As can be seen in the table 10 below, a relatively high percentage of the Icelandic working- age population only have compulsory education when compared to the EU. There are several reasons for this:

- for the oldest group, upper secondary and tertiary education were by no means something everyone could expect to get; people had to be relatively talented, have parents who were reasonably well off and maybe to be ready to leave their homes at a young age;
- for the youngest population, the problem is almost the opposite; there have been numerous possibilities to choose from, not least the possibilities of getting a well paid job without having any education. This has especially been the case for young men;

- the third group are people with all sorts of learning difficulties, who gradually have been given more assistance and participate now, where possible, in general education and training rather then being in special schools (often dead-end) or drop out completely as formerly used to be the case;
- in repeated studies carried out by Professor Jón Torfi Jónsson and others one of the most prominent reasons for dropping out of school is simple boredom (Sources: Jónsson at al 1992 and 1992 a).

TABLE 10: EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS (%), 2002-2008

GEO/TIME	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
EU 27	17.0	16.6 (b)	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9
IS	28.8	20.3 (b)	24.9	24.9	25.6	23.2	24.4

Source of data Eurostat (LFS); Extracted: 30-04-2010; Last update 26-04-2010

The two tables below show that vocational studies are not nearly as popular in Iceland as in the rest of Europe, which will be discussed further in chapter 5.

TABLE 11: GRADUATES AT ISCED LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME ORIENTATION AND SEX (NUMBERS), 2005 AND 2007													
YEAR		2005						2007					
GEO	SEX	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC
IS	F	1393	52	975	0	0	159	1676	55	1059	0	0	164
	M	944	39	1168	0	0	171	1050	48	1206	0	0	254
	T	2337	91	2143	0	0	330	2726	103	2265	0	0	418
EU 27*	F	1015169	108171	984823	22749	0	215435	1298881	98757	1176169	25386	0	212113
	M	743694	157951	1157304	22432	0	189312	965600	134924	1374844	23488	0	177657
	T	1758863	266122	2142128	45182	0	404747	2264481	233681	2551014	48874	0	389770
Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection); Extracted: 01-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010													

It is not uncommon that students start first in general education and then move to VET. Since the 1970s it has been made easier to change paths or to graduate with double qualifications.

TABLE 12: STUDENTS IN GENERAL PATHWAYS AND IN VET 2008		
	TOTAL	%
Total	30 148	100.00
General studies ISCED 3AG	13 127	43.54
General studies ISCED 3CG	6 614	21.94
Pre-vocational training ISCED 3BP	707	2.34
Pre-vocational training ISCED 3CP	273	0.91
Vocational training ISCED 3AV	47	0.16
Vocational training ISCED 3CV	8 137	26.99
Vocational training ISCED 4CV	1 244	4.13
Source: Hagstofa Íslands (Statistics Iceland): http://www.statice.is/		

Strange as it may seem when looking at the low percentage of people graduating with upper secondary education and training, the number of people graduating from universities (ISCED 5 and 6) is unusually high in Iceland as can be seen in the table below:

TABLE 13: GRADUATES AT ISCED LEVEL 5 AND LEVEL 6 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME DESTINATION, 1ST/2ND STAGE AND SEX (NUMBERS), 2005, 2007													
YEAR		2005						2007					
GEO	S	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC
IS	F	1704	169	91	0	8	1972	1946	377	61	:	6	2390
	M	753	123	67	0	6	949	859	236	53	:	4	1152
	T	2457	292	158	0	14	2921	2805	613	114	:	10	3542
EU 27*	F	1189646	87526	403026	7709	39068	1993899	1114803	397431	332154	4448	40736	1891803
	M	876113	69567	270994	3441	50963	1439416	792381	249218	207117	3715	50700	1304118
	T	2113614	157093	677990	11150	92525	3494481	1960132	654480	545166	8163	93442	3264601
Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection); Extracted: 01-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010													

The main reason for this is the big influx of women into universities, where they now are the majorities of almost all study paths. From the two tables the main conclusion can be drawn that there is a big educational gap in Iceland, especially among men.

In recent years the interest in adult education and training has been immense in Iceland and seems to be able to grow endlessly. Compared to the EU, two to three times as many people seem to have participated in LLL in recent years. This is not only due to the fact that young people delay graduating from upper secondary schools or do not graduate at all; the people who have the best education are the ones keenest to add on to it.

TABLE 14 - LIFE-LONG LEARNING (ADULT PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING) - PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 25-64 PARTICIPATING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING OVER THE FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY									
	2002			2005			2007 (LATEST YEAR AVAILABLE)		
	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	7,2	7,8	6,6	9,8	10,5	9	9,5	10,3	8,6
ICELAND	24	27,7	20,4	25,7	29,8	21,6	27	32	22,4
Source: Eurostat									

The Leonardo da Vinci programme has been very popular in Iceland. There was however a drastic fall in the interest of both students and teaching professionals in 2006 and 2007 (contractual year 2006), due to the economic boom Iceland went through at the time. Since then, interest has been growing again. The reason for the two different tables below is that in the contractual year 2007, the grants changed names and partly characters.

TABLE 15A: NUMBER OF MOBILITY GRANTS FOR LEONARDO DA VINCI, SELECTED YEARS SINCE 1995:					
CONTRACTUAL YEAR	VOCATIONAL TRAINING	STUDENTS	YOUNG WORKERS	TRAINING MANAGERS	TOTAL
1995	36	5	9	11	61
2000	25	10	54	57	146
2005	72	10	54	118	254
2006	14	5	28	108	155
Source: Leonardo da Vinci Programme.					

TABLE 15B NUMBER OF MOBILITY GRANTS FOR LEONARDO DA VINCI, SELECTED YEARS SINCE 1995:				
CONTRACTUAL YEAR	INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING	PEOPLE ON THE LABOUR MARKET	VET PROFESSIONALS	TOTAL
2007	73	9	100	182
2008 (PRELIMINARY)	67	22	78	167
Source: Leonardo da Vinci Programme				

1.5 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions refer to education and training in Iceland:

- almenn menntun (general education): Education which is mainly designed to lead participants to a deeper understanding of a subject or group of subjects, especially, but not necessarily, with a view to preparing participants for further (additional) education at the same or a higher level. Successful completion of these programmes may or may not provide the participants with a labour-market relevant qualification at this level. These programmes are typically school-based. Programmes with a general orientation and not focusing on a particular specialization should be classified in this category. Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED 1997", Paris, November 1997

- undirbúningur undir starfsmenntun (pre-vocational education): Education which is mainly designed to introduce participants to the world of work and to prepare them for entry into vocational or technical education programmes. Successful completion of such programmes does not yet lead to a labour-market relevant vocational or technical qualification. For a programme to be considered as pre-vocational or pre-technical education, at least 25 per cent of its content has to be vocational or technical. Source: ISCED 1997

- starfsmenntun (vocational education): Education which is mainly designed to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade or class of occupations or trades. Successful completion of such programmes leads to a labour-market relevant vocational qualification recognized by the competent authorities in the country in which it is obtained

(e.g. Ministry of Education, employers' associations, etc.). Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED 1997", Paris, November 1997

- tæknimenntun (technical education): specialised vocational education and training dealing with technical aspects. This education usually takes place at post secondary level. Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture :

- háskólamenntun (tertiary education): University education of any type; Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

- háskólamenntun (higher education): Synonym with tertiary education

- framhaldsmenntun (further education): Education and training specially targeted for adults with any form of previous education and training; Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

- viðbótarmenntun (post-secondary non-tertiary education): Programmes that lie between the upper-secondary and tertiary levels of education from an international point of view, even though they might clearly be considered as upper-secondary or tertiary programmes in a national context. They are often not significantly more advanced than programmes at ISCED 3 (upper secondary) but they serve to broaden the knowledge of participants who have already completed a programme at level 3. The students are usually older than those at level 3. ISCED 4 programmes typically last between six months and two years. Source: ISCED 1997

- þjálfun (training): Usually referring to training taking place at work-places as part of apprenticeship programmes; Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

- grunnstarfsmenntun (initial vocational education and training): Initial vocational education and training (IVET) is defined as training undertaken after full-time compulsory education to promote the acquisition of the necessary knowledge, skills and competences for entry to an occupation or group of occupations. It can be undertaken purely within a school-based and/or work-based environment. It includes apprenticeship training. Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

- framhaldsstarfsmenntun (continuing vocational education and training): Education or training after initial education and training – or after entry into working life aimed at helping individuals to improve or update their knowledge or skills, acquire new skills for a career move or retraining or continue their personal or professional development. Source: Terminology of vocational training policy, Cedefop

- námsleiðir eingöngu í skóla (school-based programmes): In school-based programmes instruction takes place exclusively in educational institutions. Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

- skiptinám (alternance training) does not exist in Iceland;

- samningsbundið nám (apprenticeship): Systematic, long-term training alternating periods in a school or training centre and at the workplace; the apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation. Source: Terminology of vocational training policy, Cedefop;

- námsskrá (curriculum) a detailed list of material which should be covered by any part of education and training. This may be texts, theoretical or practical exercises and/or hands-on training; Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

- réttindi (qualification): A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Source: EQF, 2006

- hæfni (skills): The ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. Source: EQF, 2006

- færni (competences): The proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/ or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. Source: EQF, 2006

2.1 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OF VET

2.1.1. NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY

Since 2005, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti), on behalf of the government, has lead intensive work towards the formation and implementation of a comprehensive national lifelong learning strategy. This resulted in 3 Acts on pre-primary, compulsory and upper secondary education, which were passed by the Parliament in 2008. The main emphasis was on "co-operation and continuity between school levels, improved governance, increased decentralisation and autonomy, quality assurance and evaluation and the enhancement and improvement of vocational education and training as well as flexibility and second chance for those who drop out… [T]he main emphasis [is]on flexibility and to make it easier to combine academic and vocational education so that those who choose vocational lines will have easier access to Higher Education Institutions should they choose to do so. (Source: Joint Report Education and Training 2010 National Report Iceland, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/natreport07/ice_en.pdf).

The Act on continuous education and training was passed by the Parliament in the spring of 2010 (available in Icelandic at http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=48a5fa07-5935-4e2f-8cdc-359e4dbee78d) . Its main emphasis was on easing the access to education and training for those with limited education, although it was stressed that everyone should have the right to further training.

In the Upper Secondary School Act (nr. 92/12008, available in English at http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir//Upper_secondary_school_Act.pdf) puts VET completely on par with general education. Students graduating with a VET degree will have the same rights to university education as students from general programmes. Each university faculty defines exactly its access requirements, which may e.g. be a certain level of knowledge in certain subjects (e.g. mathematics, physics and languages). It will also be possible for schools to develop new degrees, combining VET and general education. For each new study programme the schools must have an authorisation from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

2.1.2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAIN VET POLICY AREAS

GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

There has not been any structural change in governance and funding of education and training at any level in Iceland since 1991, when the funding of compulsory schools was moved from the state to municipalities. Social partners have though increased their contribution to VET through the labour market training funds (see chapter 4.3.). They participate with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in decision making on VET

through the Occupational Councils, which give advice to the Ministry on new learning pathways or changing in curricula.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

The compulsory and upper secondary acts passed in 2008 give all students the right to counselling given by a specialist. In the Act on Educational and Vocational Guidance Counsellors (number 35/2009 – available in Icelandic at http://www.althingi.is/altext/136/s/0715.html) it is stipulated that only people who have specific permission from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture can use the title educational and vocational counsellors. In order to be granted such permission, candidates must have passed a university degree in counselling from an acknowledged university. People, who already worked as counsellors when the law was passed, can be granted an exemption from this rule.

In the Act on Continuous Education and Training , it (continuous education and training) is defined as "Any studies, strategies and guidance which is aimed at meeting the needs of individuals with short formal education and is not offered by upper secondary schools or universities" (Act on Continuous Education and Training, article 3a, translation and emphasis by this text's author). It is not defined further what guidance in this context means, but it is obviously one of the fundamental aspects of the Act.

TEACHER AND TRAINER TRAINING

According to the Acts on education and training (pre-primary, compulsory, upper secondary and the protection of the professional titles and rights of compulsory school teachers, upper secondary school teachers and compulsory school head teachers) 87/2008, all teachers will be required to have a master's degree either in teaching or in a certified trade (article 5. Source: http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/log-og-reglugerdir/). The Act is to be fully implemented by 1. July 2011, but after that, teachers who had already received an official recognition by the passing of the law (June 2008) will be able to continue teaching even though they normally only have a baccalaureate degree. Other teaching occupations are not regulated by law and teaching staff is referred to as instructors or trainers.

Teaching pupils with special needs is an integrated part of the training of all teachers. In recent years, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has promoted a policy called "one school for everyone", which means that students with disabilities are in "normal" school if this is at all possible. When necessary, these students get assistance from specially appointed staff (often teachers) that assists them with their class-work and homework. There are a few very small schools for children with extreme special needs where both the teachers and other staff have received further training in how to assist them in their learning process.

CURRICULUM REFORM AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Article 53 of the Upper Secondary School Act number 92/2008 deals with a Venture fund. It 'shall support the development and innovation in school activities according to official policy and National Curriculum Guides. The fund shall be common for preschools, primary schools and upper secondary schools. Contributions shall be made to the fund according to the annual national budget. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture administers the fund and issues a regulation for allocation of grants' (source http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir//Upper_secondary_school_Act.pdf).

Several institutions deal with innovative pedagogies:

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti) leads the work in both curricula development and innovations in teaching environments and methods at upper secondary level;
- The Occupational Councils (starfsgreinaráð) advise the Ministry on new and/or changed needs in educational settings;
- The Innovation Centre Iceland (Nýsköpunarmiðstöð Íslands), which was established in 2007, is to be at the helm of industrial development, including education and training;
- Several innovation centres have been established outside the capital area, often in close cooperation with local schools/universities and the Lifelong Learning Centres (símenntunarmiðstöðvar);
- In adult education and training, a few training centres (belonging to social partners or private bodies) have been opened which initiate new teaching methods, settings and training during working hours. The state has in many cases subsidised courses and services they offer.

As explained above, students with special needs get the same service as other students in regards to all innovation in both curricula and teaching methods. In the few schools for special needs students, teachers have followed closely all new teaching methods tested abroad. A new approach called Rapid Prompting Method (see http://www.halo-soma.org/learning.php?sess_id=e1227e0f333e6e019429dc3684e57c5e) for teaching autistic children has e.g. given good results in the United States and at least one Icelandic teacher is at present learning this approach and aims to bring it to Iceland and test it.

SKILLS NEEDS STRATEGY

There are two main methods used when anticipating skill needs:

- the formal approach which builds on interviews with selected people from the industry (employers and employees) on which the skills demands for each professions is later built. This is an approach which was developed through a Leonardo de Vinci project in 1998-2006 (see http://www.amazon.com/Employability-Skills-Non-Professional-Occupations-Four-Country/dp/9979544422);
- an informal approach where key people from the industry sit together and discuss trends and perspectives and likely scenarios.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti) uses both approaches in its work with the Occupational Councils (starfsgreinaráð) in formulating the National Curriculum Guide for each VET-programme.

Each VET school has full liberty in introducing new study material, which in many cases is developed by individual teachers in each profession as they see new needs arise. The industry makes constantly new and changed demands for different knowledge as new material and new technique is developed locally or imported. In order to survive in the competition for students, the schools are obliged to follow suit.

Iceland is leading a thematic network of 15 countries on New Skills for New Jobs (see http://www.newskillsnetwork.eu/), which has been received with enthusiasm both by government officials and social partners. It is hoped by all these people that the results from this work (expected in 2013) will give valuable input into developing new ideas for education and training.

VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The national curriculum for upper secondary schools stipulates that "Headmasters of upper secondary schools are responsible for assessing students' former education and training, whether formal or informal. Informal education and training here means skills and competences which have been acquired outside the formal school system, e.g. in private courses or through work experience. Such assessment can lead to students being exempted from studies if individual parts of their vocational studies and/or workplace training" Article 7.6, (source http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir//Upper_secondary_school_Act.pdf).

The new Act on Continuous Education and Training has validation as one of its main objectives (Article 2.f). The Act is available in Icelandic at http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/log-og-reglugerdir/).

Two centres work with the Ministry of Education, Science and culture in evaluating "real competences" which people on the labour market have, without having a certificate to prove it. The aim is to shorten study periods by giving credits for relevant experience.

There are two main objectives with this policy:

- to increase the number of skilled people on the labour market; and
- to enable individuals to add to their formally recognised skills and competences through either the formal school system or adult education on offer elsewhere.

The two training centres working on real competence assessments are:

- IÐAN (The Vocational Education and Training Centre) works with e.g. house builders and people working in the food sector who have completed parts of upper secondary VET but need to complete some courses in order to graduate.
- Fræðsluskrifstofa rafiðnaðarins (The Education Council for Electricity and Electronics) offers similar assistance to people with parts of the formal qualifications for electricians.

2.1.3. CURRENT DEBATES

Other VET issues and major debates currently taking place (even if no political decisions are made)

As new Acts for all levels of education and training have recently been passed, the main debate now is on how exactly they should be implemented. To take an example, the Ministry of Education, Science and Education recently decided that all upper secondary schools should allocate 45% of their study places to students living in their neighbouring areas. This means that the schools which have until now been able to select only students with top grades can no longer do so. This has caused quite a debate among school staff, parents and students and opinions vary.

2.2. THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN TOOLS

IMPLEMENTATION OF A NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF)

In tertiary education, a national qualification framework, based on learning outcomes, has already been implemented (available at http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=c784fcf9-f1c5-46a1-9668-88bf76f0dc4e).

The Upper Secondary School Act 92/2008 (available in English at http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir//Upper_secondary_school_Act.pdf) stipulates that such framework would be adopted at upper secondary level and the officials of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture were at the time of writing this input preparing it. Social partners have been asked for constant feedback, through a process which is called 'open method of coordination', which they have readily given. They will be given ample opportunity to agree on a final version of the NQF.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Upper Secondary School Act 92/2008 makes new provisions for both internal and external evaluations of school programmes. One of the main aspects to be internally evaluated is quality. Thus, article 41 states that "Each upper secondary school systematically evaluates the achievements and quality of school activities".

According to the Act on Continuous Education and Training, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture has to validate all curricula for this type of training. This validation means that certain quality standards have been met (Source: Act on Continuous Education and Training, 27/2010, available in Icelandic at http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=48a5fa07-5935-4e2f-8cdc-359e4dbee78d.)

STRATEGY AND/OR INITIATIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING A UNIT-BASED CREDIT SYSTEM

All credit systems in upper secondary and tertiary education are unit based. The university level uses the ECTS scale, where one year of full time study gives 60 ECTS. In upper secondary schools, a similar system exists where a year of full time study gives 60 credit units.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY IN VET

Because of the small size of many villages in Iceland, it is common for young people to leave their homes in order to study. VET is no exception from this. In some places, it is possible to take parts of a VET degree through distance learning but the young people may need to migrate to undertake at least the work-place training.

Mobility of Icelandic students for studies abroad is mostly common through the Leonardo da Vinci programme, where students take some weeks of training in another country (see chapter 1.4).

3.1 OVERVIEW

The global financial crisis has had dire consequences in Iceland. In a country where unemployment has been almost non-existent since the 1960, in July 2010 registered unemployment was in average 7.5% or around 13.600 people (Source: Directorate of Labour). Many of these people use the time of unemployment to add to their education and training as is further discussed below.

The sectors most affected are:

- the banking sector where a lot of people have lost their jobs and, especially managers, have see a huge pay cut;
- the building sector, which has almost come to a standstill with the consequent loss of jobs;
- service in general (e.g. retail and public service).

The highest unemployment rate in Iceland is among three specific groups:

- 12.8% among people living in the Reykjanes peninsula the end of 2009 (source: ibid);
- 16.4% among young people (especially those with no formal education and training) in April 2010 (source: ibid);
- immigrants. According to the Directorate of Labour, people with foreign citizenship were 12.8% of registered unemployed people at the end of 2009. (Source: http://vinnumalastofnun.is/files/Ríkisfang_568945111.xls). At the same time, people of foreign citizenship were 7.6% of the population according to Statistics Iceland (source: Statistics Iceland). Staggering as this difference may seem, the real difference is even bigger; 69.56% of immigrants at the end of 2009 were aged between 25 and 59 (source: ibid), e.g. the vast majority of them is of working age. Thus, their unemployment rate should theoretically be much lower than it is among the population born in Iceland.

3.2 EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS ON VET AND CORRESPONDING MEASURES

The main difference in learners' behaviour is the big increase in any form of education and training. Thus, there were 2 % more students in upper secondary education in the school-year 2009-2010 than in the the previous year and there was an increase of 6.5% in the number of university students (source: Statistics Iceland). Drop out from upper secondary school has never been as low as it was in this school year. Most upper secondary schools and all universities have also seen an increase in the number of registered students for the autumn semester of 2010 and several of them have not been able to accept all these students.

There has been an insignificant shift between VET and general education. There is however a slight shift between pathways in VET, mainly due to difficulties with getting apprenticeship places, especially in the building sector. According to the Annual Report of Iðan fræðslusetur, apprenticeship contracts in the building sector fell from 169 in 2008 to a mere 95 in 2009 and the number of students in this sector fell by 44% between years

(Source: Iðan: Annual Report 2009). There was also a drop in the number of students in the automotive industry (not stated how high) but a slight increase in the number of students in mechanical engineering and wood turning.

Also at training centres offering CVET, the Lifelong Learning Centres and at all private training providers the author of this report has been in contact with, the number of students has grown by double digit percentages. To take an example of the growth of the demand for CVET, Iðan fræðslusetur, the biggest such provider, reports that in 2009 the number of its students increased by 12% from 2008 (Source: Iðan: Annual Report 2009). In the report it is also pointed out that the interest by companies of in-service training has grown considerably.

The demand for counselling services has multiplied both in schools, at the Lifelong Learning Centres and in Unemployment Services. Most of these providers have hired more counsellors but even so, they have been swamped with request for assistance.

3.2.2. TRENDS IN ENTERPRISES' BEHAVIOUR

No scientific survey has been carried out on what has happened in all companies in Iceland but the following can be seen:

- applications by individuals for funding from the Social partners' training fund (see further on these funds in chapter 4) Starfsafl (for unemployed people) grew by 48% in number and 77% by amount from 2008 to 2009;
- at the same time, applications from companies to train their employees grew by 15%;
- even though unemployed people are around 10% of the applicants, the main reasons for applying for funds seem to be more time (working overtime has almost completely disappeared) and the constant debate on the need for further training. (Source: interview with Sveinn Aðalsteinsson, director of Starfsafl).

The big increase in funding towards training contradicts the falling number of people who say they have undertaken some form of training in the last 4 weeks before the survey (see chapter 6.1.2.). The most logical reason for this contradiction seems to be that before the financial collapse, individuals undertook training at their own costs and/or companies invited their employees to attend some form of training paid for by the companies. This is probably no longer the case.

The shift in apprenticeship places in companies was mentioned above.

3.2.3. MEASURES TAKEN AT GOVERNANCE LEVELS (NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL)

The government has called on all institutions offering education and training to greatly increase their intake of students, so that they may use time of unemployment to increase their competences for the future. Contributions to Lánasjóður íslenskra námsmanna (Icelandic Students' Loan Fund) were increased in 2009 and the amount of 600 million IKR (approximately € 3.5 million) was allocated specifically to those who wish to study throughout the summer.

Iceland does not receive any funding from the ESF.

The Ministries of Education, Science and Culture and Social Affairs and Social Services joined their forces in the beginning of 2010 to increase the support of unemployed people, specially the group aged 16-24. The support was offered through the Lifelong Learning Centres and the unemployment offices of the Directorate of Labour and several schools participated by offering various courses. The main objective of the initiative was to increase the groups' participation in both education and training and in some sort of work (source: http://www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/frettir/frettatilkynningar/nr/4720).

No change has taken place has taken place concerning the role of social partners.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is cooperating with social partners in efforts to solve the problem of increasing difficulties in finding work placed training. VET schools have been called upon to take in more students and they have received an increasing number of applications from students who were already on work-place training but lost their places

No change has taken place concerning teachers and trainers.

As mentioned above, there has been a great increase in applications for training support both from individuals and companies from the social partners' training funds. These funds have the main objective of supporting employees towards further training which may benefit them in their present job or help them get a better position. The individual or courses that have been supported are therefore more of an informal nature than giving credit that can be used within the formal school system.

No change has taken place concerning revision of existing programs or curricula

All VET schools have increased their intake of students to the limit. There is however the bottleneck of apprenticeship places in some sectors discussed above and students have therefore tried, as far as possible, to finish all the subjects they can complete at school and leave only the work-place training. This, and decreased drop-out, means that VET schools experience a period of unusually full classes and regular attendance by all students.

In many vocational sectors, it has been possible in the last few years to go through raunfærnimat (real competence assessment) which may shorten the route to the journeyman's exam. Iðan fræðslusetur (the Vocational Education and Training Centre), which is a training centre operated by social partners, has offered various assistance in this, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Both Iðan and other training institutions have also offered a variety of re-training courses for vocational professionals.

3.3 LONGER TERM CONSEQUENCES AND FUTURE RESPONSES

An oracle would be needed to foresee the long term consequences of the crisis on VET. Naturally, the government (with the support of the International Monetary Fund), expects that sooner or later things will go more or less back to what they were before the crisis. Several things are however likely to affect at least the near future:

- enough accommodation and offices have been built in the capital area to last for many years. Therefore, it is not likely that the building sector will reach its former number of employment for quite some time and therefore fewer people are likely to be trained in that sector;

- difficulties with getting foreign loans and investment may postpone further building of e.g. power plants and large scale industry with similar consequences for people with the relevant competences;
- already, there has been quite a big emigration from Iceland. This is not least among the group of young people who may otherwise have gone into vocational training or have children who might have done so.

The measures already taken or on the planning board all go towards the direction of fighting the main cause of the economic difficulties rather than trying to "fix" individual sectors. Social partner have e.g. repeatedly called on the government and municipalities to increase public spending to e.g. roads etc. but at least the government insists that with the present level of foreign dept, this is not possible. First, this has to be solved before spending any more money.

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The vocational education system grew from different roots and independently from the general education system. Several attempts have been made to merge the two, but they have only been partly successful.

Before the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the only possibility of vocational training initial training abroad (mainly in Denmark) and later through an Icelandic apprenticeship system, where the apprentice depended on his/her master for food and lodging.

The first vocational school was established in 1869. In the beginning, industrial vocational schools were only evening schools which the trainees attended alongside workplace training they received from a master craftsman. The first legislation was adopted in 1893, stipulating that formal tuition at a vocational school was the prerequisite for taking the journeyman's exam. Schools were gradually established all over Iceland and by World War II some 50 100 apprentices graduated each year.

In 1966 the option of a 1 2 year basic studies at school, including both the theoretical and the practical part, was introduced. However, it proved difficult for students to get the necessary apprenticeship contracts to complete their studies and in some cases the schools therefore started offering supplementary courses.

In the 1970s the comprehensive schools emerged. These were based on a modular system (each unit giving a credit) offering a core of general subjects to all students. Additionally each student would choose a path leading either to a general or vocational certificate. The latter requires hands on training, usually outside the school. It is also possible to graduate with both types of certificates. This type of school is particularly convenient for the smaller villages, where it has become common that former vocational and grammar schools merge.

Since the 1970s, some 15 20% of young people (here very loosely defined as many graduates may be in their 30s or even older) have annually received vocational qualifications. General education, especially university education, has always held a much higher status, even though salaries within the VET sector have been considerably higher. Several attempts have been made, both by social partners and the state to change this, but so far, not successful. Trends also indicate that vocational education is more popular outside the capital area than within.

However, it must also be mentioned that an unorganised offer of new training possibility has gradually emerged. Many courses on offer (often within the private sector) do not give a formal qualification, even though they do increase students' likelihood of getting better paid jobs. Thus, it may appear that while the regulated sector is shrinking, the unregulated is growing.

4.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IVET

Two laws set the framework for IVET policy:

- in the Compulsory School Act number 91/2008 it is stipulated that students have the right to partake in individual subjects at upper secondary level if they have shown the necessary skills (article 26) (source http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/log-og-reglugerdir/);
- the Upper Secondary School Act (lög um framhaldsskóla – number 92/2008) gives the right of any pupil who has completed compulsory or equivalent education or is 16 years of age to enter upper secondary school (which includes IVET), where they have the rights to study for at least two years (source Upper Secondary School Act 92/2008 article 32. In article 25 it is stipulated that Occupational Councils for different professions make curricula suggestions to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti) for each profession. (article 2) (Source: http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/log-og-reglugerdir/).

4.3 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET ORGANIGRAM

The EU does not play any direct role in IVET as Iceland is not a member of the Union but the EU's Lifelong Learning Policy obviously affects it as all other education.

The central government is in charge of all upper secondary and tertiary education (giving specific framework to private institutions). Different ministries roles can be seen in the table below:

TABLE 1 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIFFERENT PARTNERS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MINISTRY	RESPONSIBILITY
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmála-ráðuneyti)	Bears the overall responsibility for both decision making and implementation for all lower secondary, almost all upper secondary education and training, including apprenticeship training, post-secondary education and tertiary education. This means that the Ministry is in charge of drafting and billing different acts on education and training, it coordinates the input of all other relevant actors and that it is responsible for passing the necessary regulations, etc. for the acts to be relevant. The Ministry furthermore bears the responsibility of overseeing quality in education and training and is in charge of distributing funds to the schools and training centres.
Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services (félags- og tryggingarmála-ráðuneyti)	Bears the formal (legal) responsibility for training in the labour market according to *lög um starfsmenntun í atvinnulífinu* - the Act on Training in the Labour Market number 19/1992. In real terms this means mainly education and training of the unemployed, where Vinnumálastofnun (The Directorate of Labour) and the local employment offices are responsible for implementing training offers or guiding their clients to such offers which other training bodies may initiate.
Ministry of Transport, Communication and Local Government (samgöngu- og sveitarstjórnarráðuneyti)	Deals with the both decision making and implementation of education for pilots and other professionals on the transport sector
The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights	Is responsible for both decision making and implementations of training of the police force

(dóms- og mannréttindaráðuneyti)	
Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture (sjávarútvegs- og landbúnarðarráðuneyti)	Is responsible for the policy and implementation of training of people in the fishing industry

Regional and local authorities play no role in IVET as they are responsible for compulsory education only and at that level, no IVET is on offer.

The Occupational Councils (starfsgreinaráð) are the strongest link from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to the industry. Article 24 of the Upper Secondary School Act stipulates that: The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall appoint, for four years at a time, Occupational Councils for occupational groups or individual occupations. Each Occupational Council shall be comprised of five to nine representatives out of which two to four shall be nominated by federations of employers, two to four by federations of employees from the relevant occupations and one representative jointly nominated by the Association of Icelandic Upper Secondary Schools and the Icelandic Teachers' Union. Alternates shall be appointed in the same way.

The Occupational Councils shall elect a chair and a vice-chair from among the representatives for a two year term. The nominating parties shall bear the cost of participation by their representatives in the Occupational Council. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture shall bear the cost of specialist assistance in compiling curriculum guides.

Article 27 states that: "The role of the Occupational Committee shall be to advise the Minister of Education, Science and Culture regarding policy making and implementation of vocational education, to serve as platform for collaboration and coordination for the Occupational Councils, and to provide opinion of categorisation and division of occupations between Occupational Councils".

Employers also bear the responsibility of giving their apprentices a complete hands-on experience (placements) in their respective fields.

Non-governmental organisations play no role in IVET.

Schools and other educational institutions (including workplaces which strain apprentices) bear the final responsibility of implementing the official policy of education and training.

4.4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

As all education and training in Iceland, continuous vocational education is open to all and therefore special provisions for people over a certain age are not necessary.

The Act on Continuous Education and Training was passed by parliament in the spring of 2010 (available in Icelandic at http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=48a5fa07-5935-4e2f-8cdc-359e4dbee78d). According to the Act, the main objectives are to:

a. give people on the labour market who have limited formal education increased study opportunities and ease their way into further education;

b. make it easier for everyone to enhance their competencies and to increase their responsibility in doing so;

c. increase the possibilities for everyone's active participation in society;

d. spread the acknowledgement of the value of informal and non formal education and training;

e. enhance the formal recognition of education and experience obtained outside the formal system of education and training; and

f. heighten the general level of education and training in Iceland.

Each regulated profession has its own demands for continuous education, where market demands and the need of upgrading lead the way rather than a formal set of rules.

In several labour market agreements between labour unions and employers signed since 2000, it was decided that each employer on the labour market is obliged to pay 0.05% of his/her salaries towards an education and training fund and all employers must pay 0.15% of the same amount. The state contributes to these funds through the Unemployment Security Fund (Atvinnuleysistryggingarsjóður).

Several such funds exist, classified according to occupations and/or skills. Employees can apply for training funds according to certain rules and employers can also apply for funds to give specific courses at the work-place. These funds have not only given a colossal boost towards continuous training but also made it an accepted fact that people resume their education and training at any age.

TABLE 2: OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL PARTNERS' TRAINING FUNDS:

NAME	FOR WHOM	ESTABLISHED IN YEAR	WEB ADDRESS
Landsmennt	Unskilled workers outside the capital area	2000	http://landsmennt.is
Starfsafl	Unskilled workers in the capital area	2000	www.starfsafl.is
Starfsmenntasjóður verslunar- og skrifstofufólks	Office and shop employees	2000	www.starfsmennt.is
Starfsmennt fræðslusetur	State employees in the capital area	2001	http://smennt.is/
Sjómennt	Seamen	2002	www.sjomennt.is
Ríkismennt SGS	State employees outside the capital area	2005	www.rikismennt.is
Sveitamennt SGS and LN	Municipalities' employees outside the capital area	2007	www.sveitamennt.is

4.5 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

The EU's role in CVET is more indirect than direct as Iceland is not a member of the Union. Some of the EU's policies, especially the lifelong learning policy have however influenced the interest in CVET and is expected to influence the continuous education and training bill tabled in Parliament in 2008.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture was involved in what is called "open method of coordination", where hundreds of relevant partners were called in for debating how a lifelong learning strategy, in similar lines with the one adopted by the EU, could be put in place. The final finding of this method was presented at a conference in February 2009 and will form part of future educational policies. The report is available at http://bella.mrn.stjr.is/utgafur/ET_2010_Iceland_english_translation.pdf.

TABLE 3 - THE MAIN PLAYERS FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ARE:	
The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is)	In charge of policy development in CVET and of the curricula for officially recognized continuous education and training
The Occupational Council (http://www.starfsmenntarad.is), into which social partners also nominate representatives	Award grants for vocational training and act in an advisory capacity to the authorities on policy and methods in the field of vocational training
The Ministry of Social Affairs (félagsmálaráðuneyti - http://www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/). The Directorate of Labour serves under the Ministry	Officially in charge of education and training on the labour market but in real terms only for the unemployed.
The Directorate of Labour (http://www.vinnumalastofnun.is/)	In charge of unemployment registration and public employment offices
Fræðslumiðstöð atvinnulífsins (Education and Training Service Centre)	Responsible for the daily operation of the Vocational Training Fund, to which training institutions can apply for funding.
Social partners	Responsible for planning and implementation courses for their clients. Ideas for relevant courses can be suggested both by employers and employees and the final decision is reached by consensus within the occupational counsels.
Training providers	Responsible for carrying out the courses decided upon by their owners

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture coordinates the work of all public actors in education and training and makes sure that there is no overlapping in the work of different partners,

Municipalities may assist indirectly with CVET when they offer subsidised housing for courses.

Various interest groups often offer e.g. lectures and seminar in their fields. Many social partners have established formal training centres for different fields. Iðan fræðslusetur is the biggest of those, offering CVET for the building, transport, food, metal and IT sectors.

NGO´s offer courses in e.g. handicraft and leisure courses.

5.1 BACKGROUND TO THE INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Education in Iceland has traditionally been organised within the public sector, and there are very few private education institutions. For each student in private institutions, the Ministry of Finance pays the same amount as to public institutions. Municipalities are responsible for compulsory education and the state post compulsory education. They also monitor that educational laws and regulations are followed.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory education extends to primary and lower secondary levels and includes in principle children from the ages of six to sixteen. It is divided into ten grades.

Compulsory education provides school leavers with no formal qualifications, but they may enter the labour market after completion, usually for occupations requiring no specific qualifications such as working in shops and fast food places, factories, assisting in gardening and with caretaking of children and the elderly through the social services. There used to be a substantial market for such unskilled labour but after the collapse of the banking system and consequent unemployment, young unskilled people find it increasable difficult to find such jobs. Most school leavers (around 95% of each cohort) enter upper-secondary schools straight after the completion of compulsory education. This percentage has increased since the beginning of the financial crisis and was up to 97.5% in the spring of 2010 (Source: Hagstofa Íslands).

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Upper secondary schools can be divided into two main types; those who offer some sort of vocational education and training and those who do not (grammar schools).

IVET usually begins at upper secondary level, even though there are a few courses that, for statistical reasons, are classified as lower secondary education (e.g. the licence to drive trucks or other heavy machinery). The most common IVET form is apprenticeship where 1/4th to 1/3rd is of total study time is spent at a work-place.

Despite numerous efforts by both the government and social partners, VET is not as popular as general education as can be seen in table 1 below and it is not uncommon that students start first in general education and then move to VET. Drop out from VET is not more common than from general education. Since the 1970s it has been made easier to change paths or to graduate with double qualifications.

TABLE 1: STUDENTS IN GENERAL PATHWAYS AND IN VET 2009		
	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	%
Total	13 924	100,001
General studies ISCED 3AG	13 924	45.68
General studies ISCED 3CG	45	0.15
Pre-vocational training ISCED 3BP	663	2.18
Pre-vocational training ISCED 3CP	5 863	19.24
Vocational training ISCED 3AV	362	1.19
Vocational training ISCED 3CV	8 592	28.19
Vocational training ISCED 4CV	1 3924	3.38
Source: Statistics Iceland		

The main providers of VET are schools which offer a combination of general and vocational education and training, where students can graduate with a general degree, a vocational degree or both. Graduates with general education (Matriculation exam) can enter universities but do not have direct rights to certain jobs.

Those who graduate with vocational education and training can be divided into two groups: those with legally recognised certified qualifications and those who have not. In the former case, graduation is a pre-requisite to getting a job as a skilled journeyman. In the latter, anyone can take up the trade in question, although those who graduate from these studies have priorities over those who do not. In reality, it is rare for an unqualified person to get such a job. In order to enter universities, vocational students must add on to their general education. Where the schools do not offer the possibility of taking the Matriculation exam, students can add the necessary addition in other schools.

Curriculum development in IVET is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, which publishes new curricula for each certified trade on a regular basis. The curricula are developed by input from the Occupational Councils (appointed by the state, social partners and VET schools), which are meant to keep a close eye on the need for changes and further development in their respective fields. For non certified trades, each learning institution can develop its own curricula but the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for giving each of them the permission to operate as such institutions. By looking at the big variety of courses and diploma available in ICT, it is obvious that there is great liberty in the field and in the end it is the number of customers which determines which curricula lives and dies.

In certified trades, the curricula are aimed at providing students with the necessary skills for their trades. Due to the small size of the labour market, most trades are based on a broad level of competences so that graduates have a wider possibility of employment. The journeyman's exam at the end of the studies validates whether this is indeed the case.

[1] If percentages below are added, the total is only 99.91. The reason is that here, only two digest are given after the decimal point. If the total number of decimal points was given, the total would be 100%.

Thus, the studies can rather be termed output based than input based, even though studies are defined in the hours it takes to complete them.

In uncertified trades the main emphasis is on shorter courses aimed at giving students some work-related skills (even though full four year study programmes exist in e.g. multimedia, which is not certified). Again, the studies are more output then input based.

Teaching methods vary but can be roughly divided into the following categories:

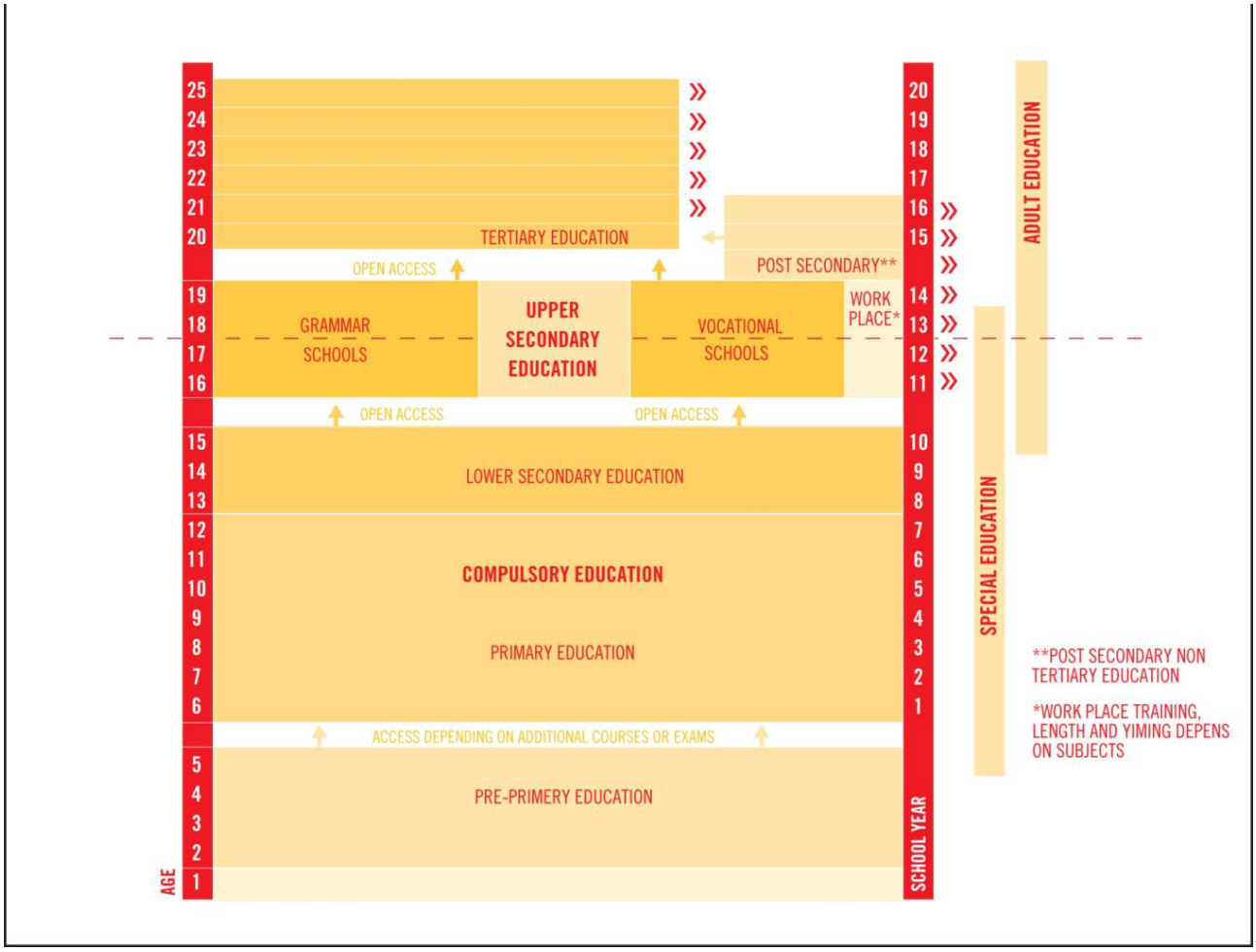
- regular classes in a normal classroom (e.g. languages, social studies, mathematics and theories about the trade in question);
- classes at workshops in the school (teaching the basic skills of the trade);
- work-place training (which are an integrated part of all apprenticeship training, where students work for several months under supervision from a master of trade).

Similarly, teaching material varies from books to tools of the trade and relevant material.

All VET schools have shown great initiative in education their teachers in innovative pedagogies and adopting new methods, material and disciplines from abroad. The Leonardo da Vinci has given huge support to this and has e.g. recently signed a big contract with the largest VET school in the country to this effect.

The Upper Secondary School Act 92/2008 makes new provisions for both internal and external evaluations of school programmes. One of the main aspects to be internally evaluated is quality. Thus, article 41 states that "Each upper secondary school systematically evaluates the achievements and quality of school activities ... with active participation from school personnel, pupils and parents as relevant".

DIAGRAM OF THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING



5.2 IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Several courses that can be classified as lower secondary education are on offer. They all fall outside the official system of education and training and complete information on these does not exist and statistics has not been gathered. These courses could also be classified as continuous education and training. The following are some examples:

TABLE 2 – EXAMPLES OF COURSES OFFERED AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL AND ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
Licences to drive heavy vehicles and operate heavy machinery. Students must be at least 21 years old and have a regular drivers' licence. The qualification obtainable are the necessary prerequisite for handling the vehicles in question	Transport	II	Depending on the licence in question	Depending on the licence in question	Depending on the licence in question	Not possible
Courses offered by Nýsköpunarmiðstöð Íslands (the Icelandic Innovation centre), mostly tailor-made for different companies, e.g. teaching workers e.g. to use new technology. The courses do not give formal qualifications but the companies may put them as a prerequisite for getting or maintaining a job. The Centre also offers courses	Trade and industry	II	Depending on the course	Depending on the course	Depending on the course	Some of the course give credits which can be used for upper secondary education

open to everyone in issues such as project management or personal leadership. Students tend to be university graduates who feel the need of adding their degree. Students' age varies a lot, and is between 20 and 65						
Stóriðjuskólinn (The Heavy Industry School) offers workers at the aluminium smelter in Straumsvík which leads to increase in both responsibilities and salaries. Students are of all ages (25-60) and both sexes and the studies are conducted at classrooms (theoretical), at different stations of the workplace and by visits to companies which work in cooperation with the smelter.	Trade and industry	II	Three semesters, part time for the first step and another three semesters part time for the second.	80% of the classroom training is theoretical	2x4 hours a week in a classroom, the rest of the time in workplace training	The course give credits which can be used for upper secondary education
Private courses of various lengths in e.g. IT which give some limited rights on the job market.	IT	II	Depending on the course	Depending on the course	Depending on the course	Usually these courses do not give any possibilities for a continuation.

5.3 IVET at Upper Secondary level (school-based and alternance)

As most IVET is based on apprenticeship training (see 5.4.), the courses described below form only a small percentage of IVET:

Table 3 – Examples of courses offered at upper secondary level

Type of educational programme	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED level/orientation	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance between school-based and work-based training	Average duration of studies	Transfer to other pathways
Vocational education that is formally recognised but does not confer a monopoly to a certain trade.	A wide variety of study programmes e.g. agriculture and horticulture; livestock and fish farming; drafting, computer studies; design; massage; travel services; and commercial, secretarial and office studies.	III	Varies according to subjects	There is usually no on-the-job training at a workplace.	2-4 years	In some fields (e.g. computer studies, art and agriculture), several possibilities are open, in others (e.g. drafting and design), there are no further possibilities

Admission requirements

Anyone who has completed compulsory or equivalent education or is at least 16 years old has the right to enter upper secondary school. There, they have the rights to study at least for two years (Upper Secondary School Act 93/2008 article 32). Students over 18 years old are admitted to the school as space allows. During the present financial difficulties, there have not been enough places for all those who applied and therefore, some older students may have to wait a semester or two before they can commence their studies. The duration of study programmes can be between two semesters and four years.

Registration fees

There are low registration fees for all upper secondary schools.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti) regulates the national curricula for all upper secondary education and training which is regularly revised. Individual schools will gradually take on more responsibilities in this field, once the new Upper Secondary School Act is fully implemented (in 2015).

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRICULA

In all upper secondary schools, it is obligatory to pass some points of Icelandic, English and mathematics. According to the previous Upper Secondary School Act, additional subjects such as Danish, a third foreign language, social skills were also obligatory. At the time of writing this input, schools were still teaching according to these old rules, while new curricula was being developed. The bulk of VET however consists of relevant vocational subjects, both theoretical and hands-on. The emphasis is assisting students with acquiring necessary key competences relevant for their future professions.

TEACHING METHODS AND MATERIAL

Teaching methods and material are under constant development. There is:

- innovation in curricula (general as well as specific skills);
- innovation in teaching and learning methods (changes in pedagogy and the utilisation of ICT for example); and
- innovation in education settings (not just schools but rather training centres and companies).

In VET there has been a great development in all these aspects during the last two decades as new technology has pushed forward in all areas of the industry. The development has been increasing in speed and since the beginning of this century there has been a great progress in the access to education for adults.

ASSESSMENTS, PROGRESSION, CERTIFICATION AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

Each course/training module finishes with some sort of an assessment, either theoretical or hands-on. Final examinations are generally not as well defined as in the regulated professions (see under apprenticeship training).

Only a few possibilities of progression to further training exist for graduates from this type of training, but they can use the credit points they have obtained and add to them in order to get the matriculation exam (admission requirements for university). Students get graduation certificates but these give only few formal rights. It is difficult to tell whether the adaptation of a national qualification framework will alter this situation. However, most students find it easy to find jobs in their profession.

STATISTICS

Note that the statistics below is both for school based training and for apprenticeship training, which counts for the bulk of the students.

The percentage of students in vocational programmes is much lower than in the other Nordic countries but on parity with the percentage in Greece and Spain. The percentage of

female students in VET is one of the lowest in Europe (just over 30%), whereas male VET students are just over 40% of the cohort.

The reasons for low interest in VET are many. To name a few:

- there is a great interest in university education, especially among girls (who were in 2009 63.44% of university graduates (source Statistics Iceland)). Girls do much better in schools, from the earliest classes in compulsory schools through upper secondary schools and therefore have greater possibilities for a university education;
- general education has a higher social esteem than VET;
- many of the traditional women's subjects (e.g. nursing and social care) have been moved from upper secondary to tertiary level, which means that they are no longer classified as VET.

TABLE 4 - STUDENTS IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2006 2

	TOTAL ISCED3	ISCED3GEN	%	ISCED3PV	%	ISCED3VOC	%
European Union (27 countries)	22205390	10723395	0,48	1185480	0,05	10296515	0,46
European Union (25 countries)	20782183	10183168	0,49	1185480	0,06	9413535	0,45
Iceland	23345	14766	0,63	357	0,02	8222	0,35

Source: Eurostat

5.4 APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Apprenticeship training is the most common form of VET in Iceland.

TABLE 5 – EXAMPLES OF APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING COURSES

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL/ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
Apprenticeship	Building and construction, Transport and vehicles Food,	III	Varies between subjects	1/4th to 1/3rd of overall study time	4 years	A few post secondary non tertiary possibilities

[2] Iceland is not included in Eurostat's statistics for 2007.

	catering and tourism, Metal, machinery and production, Information and media, Health and social services, Design and handicraft, Personal services (hair and beauty), Electrics and electronics, Maritime and navigation.			spent in work-place training		exist and gradually it will become possible to access tertiary education

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Anyone who has completed compulsory or equivalent education or is at least 16 years old has the right to enter upper secondary school. There, they have the rights to study at least for two years (Upper Secondary School Act 93/2008 article 32). The duration of study programmes can be between two semesters and four years. School time is often divided into a basic part, which is common for several studies in similar sectors and specialisation in a number of trades. To take an example, training for the building sector starts with combined courses for house builders, furniture makers, painters, masons, wall-papering and technical drawing. After the first term of such common studies, students specialise.

The age scope of students in apprenticeship training is wide, from 16 to over 40, where most students are between 20 and 25 when they graduate.

REGISTRATION FEES

There are some registration fees for all upper secondary schools and for most VET students there is also a fee for materials, which varies greatly between subjects. Thus, training in subjects such as making jewellery or hairdressing are much more expensive than general education.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti) regulates the national curricula for all certified trades. It is developed in cooperation with social partners in each profession, through the Occupational Councils, and is regularly

revised. Individual schools will gradually take on more responsibilities in this field, once the new Upper Secondary School Act is fully implemented (in 2015).

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRICULA

In all upper secondary schools, it is obligatory to pass some points of Icelandic, English and mathematics. According to the previous Upper Secondary School Act, additional subjects such as Danish, a third foreign language, social skills were also obligatory. At the time of writing this input, schools were still teaching according to these old rules, while new curricula was being developed. The bulk of VET however consists of relevant vocational subjects, both theoretical and hands-on. The emphasis is assisting students with acquiring necessary key competences relevant for their future professions.

APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACTS

According to the Upper Secondary School act 92/2008 (amendment from 2010) a training contract is to be made at the beginning of the work-place training which stipulates the rights and obligations of the work-place and the student are stipulated, as well as the objective of the training, quality control and the handling of possible disputes. If needed, a specific contract is signed between the student and employer, stipulating the student's/employee's salaries (according to labour market agreements) (Source: Upper Secondary School Act 92/2008 article 28, amendment from 2010 is available in Icelandic at http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/log-og-reglugerdir/). A regulation, issued by the Minister for Education, Science and Culture, contains provisions concerning contracts for on-the-job training.

TEACHING METHODS AND MATERIAL

Teaching methods and material are under constant development. There is:

- innovation in curricula (general as well as specific skills);
- innovation in teaching and learning methods (changes in pedagogy and the utilisation of ICT for example); and
- innovation in education settings (not just schools but rather training centres and companies).

In VET there has been a great development in all these aspects during the last two decades as new technology has pushed forward in all areas of the industry. The development has been increasing in speed and since the beginning of this century there has been a great progress in the access to education for adults.

ASSESSMENTS

Each course/training module finishes with some sort of an assessment, either theoretical or hands-on. The training ends with a skills demonstration test (the journeyman's exam).

PROGRESSION

Students can choose to complete their studies with a Matriculation exam, granting access to university, as well as their journeyman's exam (which may take a slightly longer time). For those who do not take the Matriculation exam, it is possible to take a bridging course

which grants access to university. With the Upper Secondary School Act from 2008 the state aims at making VET students' access to university more on pair with general students but it remains to be seen how this will work in reality (some of the universities have stated that they will not admit students who have less general education than the present Matriculation exam guarantees).

CERTIFICATION

Apprenticeship training finishes with the journeyman's exam, which gives formal rights (monopoly) to work in the trade in question.

ACCESS TO LABOUR MARKET

Until the end of 2008, access to the labour market was easy and all graduates got jobs immediately (many with their training company).

5.5 OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

There are not many possibilities of alternative youth programmes in Iceland.

TABLE 6 – FJÖLSMIÐJAN: AN EXAMPLES OF AN ALTERNATIVE YOUTH PROGRAMMES

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL/ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
Work-centres for young people (Fjölsmiðjan)	Car cleaning, cooking, general education, electric appliances repair, carpentry, computing and printing and design.	None	The main emphasis is on developing vocational skills but students are also assisted with getting back into mainstream education.	Main emphasis is on workplace training	8 months	Students have the same possibilities as any other citizens over 16 years old of getting into upper secondary education.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students must be at least 16 years old. They are at cross-roads in their lives, often after dropping out from schools or giving up in the open labour market. Some of them have been

drug-addicts and even petty criminals but they have to be “clean” before being allowed into the programme.

REGISTRATION FEES

There are no registration or training fees and students get paid for their time at work.

MAIN CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULA, TEACHING METHODS AND MATERIALS

Fjölsmiðjan works with students on an individual basis. The focus is on trying to find something at which each individual is good and then help him/her to develop their competences. Therefore curricula are tailor-made and vary a lot. It is developed on sight and the students themselves are involved in its process. Teaching methods are very informal and students work in groups. Older students teach younger ones and trained tradesmen are in charge of each vocational activity and assist the students and make sure they deliver the expected quality of work.

ASSESSMENTS AND CERTIFICATION

Assessments are also very informal. Each task a student undertakes is thoroughly checked and (s)he complimented on a job well done. If the task is not adequately carried out, the student is assisted in re-doing it until it is deemed good enough. It is possible to conduct part-time studies at upper secondary schools from Fjölsmiðjan and then students must undertake the same assessments as other students at such schools. There is no formal certification at the end but students get a letter of recommendation to future employers.

PROGRESSION TO FURTHER STUDIES AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

Students do not obtain any formal qualifications but are given an opportunity to train for the labour market or to conduct further studies. Many students to some sort of training jobs (from which they can return if it does not work out) and only gradually enter the labour market. A few choose to go back to school.

STATISTICS

No statistics has been gathered so far.

5.6 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

Post-secondary education and training is still fairly limited, but growing. Different courses are offered at various institutions, all of which are public and vocational and provide certification for well-defined professions (see below). The age of students varies because many students have spent some years on the labour market before recommencing their studies.

TABLE 7 – EXAMPLES OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL						
TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL/ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
Certificates for a master of trade in regulated professions. Students must have completed the journeyman's exam and have worked as journeymen in their trades for at least a year. The master of trade exam gives right to train journeymen and operate a company in the trade in question.	Certified trades (see 4.4. for details	IV	The studies are general and business oriented and the focus is on providing students with the knowledge needed to oversee large projects and operate businesses and to train apprentices.	Entirely school based	2 semesters	Additional studies are necessary to be able to enter universities
Assistance nurses for the elderly. Students must have completed the exam as assistance nurses and the matriculation exam. Final exams are taken at the end of each course, either at the school or a demonstration test at the	Health	IV	General subjects and the theoretical part of the training are the components taught at schools	The programme is 2 semesters at a school and some months in different institutions for the elderly	2 semesters + a few months	The studies do not give additional rights to further studies

training hospital. Students graduate with a certificate that qualifies them to work in these institutions.						
Marine engineering and captains 4th grade. Students must have completed 3rd grade and additional sea time. Certification gives unlimited rights to become a captain or a chief engineer. Final exams are taken at the end of each course, either at the school or a demonstration test on board a ship	Marine	IV	The studies at school involve subjects such as mathematics and assimilated work at sea, the time spend at sea is entirely vocational.	At school, students learn both the more theoretical part of their profession and work with simulators and more sea time must be added.	4-6 months	It gives the right to enter university.
Tour guides. Students must be at least 21 years of age and have completed the matriculation exam and have an extensive knowledge of at least one foreign language. Graduation certificate is necessary to	Tourism	IV	Around 50-50	At a school, subjects such as geology, flora, fauna, culture and communication are taught, with visits to e.g. museums and exercise trips in busses.	2 semesters	This does not give additional rights to commence tertiary education.

become a certified tour guide. Final exams are taken at the end of each course at the school						
Industrial technicians. Students must have completed at least half of an upper secondary education in science. Final exams are taken at the end of each course at the school	Industry	IV	Around 50-50	Entirely school based	Two semesters	Industrial technicians can progress to university.
Some degrees in agriculture are also registered as post secondary education, even though the matriculation exam is not a prerequisite. Final exams are taken at the end of each course at the school or at the training farm	Agriculture	IV	Around 50-50	Entirely school based but each school has access to a farm for part of the training	Most often 4 semesters plus several months' hands-on training at e.g. a farm.	No further training possible

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

See above for each type of programme.

REGISTRATION FEES

Students must pay registration fees for all the programme but their amount varies greatly from programme to programme.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning is available for some subjects, e.g. in the training to become a Master of craft.

CURRICULA ELEMENTS, ASSESSMENTS, MAIN PROGRESSION AND CERTIFICATION

See above

STATISTICS

In 2008 1 244 were registered for this type if training and only 1 031 in 2009, which shows that these programmes enjoy very little popularity.

5.7 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Seven universities offer tertiary level education. Four of them are run by the state, the others by private companies with state support. Most university education is classified as theoretical, meaning that it would be under categories 5A. There are however a few diploma degrees (meaning that they are lower than bachelor degrees) which are classified as 5B. They are:

- teacher of music;
- teacher of song;
- art studies which do not result in bachelor degrees;
- system analyst
- business management and
- pedagogical studies for masters of craft.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to have passed the Icelandic matriculation examination, have finished other equivalent education or have, in the view of the university in question, acquired equivalent maturity and knowledge. Universities can if needed impose further admission requirements, including admission tests.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION FEES

All students at university pay a registration and/or a tuition fee, but its amount varies between schools and programmes. Thus, the private universities are far more expensive than the public ones and subjects involving great costs (e.g. dentistry) are more expensive than those who do not (e.g. languages).

TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND LEVELS OF STUDY

All Icelandic universities operate in line with the Bologna process. Degrees on offer are diploma (1 year) bachelor (2-3 years), master (additional 2 years) and doctorate

(additional 2-3 years). Training in almost all university sectors is available, even though many students still study abroad for very specialised subjects.

Distance learning

Distance learning is often available in a variety of programmes, even though it is not complete and not constant. The nine Lifelong Learning Centres play a key role in this respect by offering students lectures through the internet and/or video links.

Curricula development

The universities have in recent year been opening up their departments so that students can study cross sectors and subjects and almost make their own individual degrees. For this to be possible, rapid and constant curricula development has been necessary. The competition between universities to get the best students has been fierce, which has also increased innovation and rapid development.

Assessments

Assessment is continuous through the studies but must students complete their degree with a thesis, which increases in importance with higher degrees. Each university awards its certificates but all universities follow the EU's Bologna procedure and award the (Europass) diploma supplement in line with most other countries in Europe.

Progression towards lifelong learning

All universities offer continuous education and learning, both for university candidates and for the general public. The attendance to these courses grows steadily year by year and in some cases, lectures have to be moved to bigger halls in order to accommodate everyone interested.

Certification

All graduates from university get a certificate which is according to the Bologna standards.

Statistics

Eurostat does not provide statistics for Iceland in this category. But according to the Icelandic Statistical Bureau 16 851 students were registered at ISCED 5 level and 283 at ISCED 6 or 17 134 in total in 2008. This was 5.43% of the entire population, which is much higher than in any other European country. Two main reasons for this high participation are possible; the relatively young age of the population means that a greater percentage of it is of "normal" university age and the fact that university education has become extremely popular. In a press release from the Icelandic Statistical Bureau, dated 14.4.2009, it can be seen that university candidates have increased in numbers by 70% from 1997 to 2009. At that time, it was apparent that 74.6% of young people attend some form of university education (source: Statistics Iceland).

6.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

6.1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

The Icelandic Parliament passed the Act on Continuous Education and Training in the spring of 2010. Its main objectives are to:

a. give people on the labour market who have limited formal education increased study opportunities and ease their way into further education;

b. make it easier for everyone to enhance their competencies and to increase their responsibility in doing so;

c. increase the possibilities for everyone's active participation in society;

d. spread the acknowledgement of the value of informal and non formal education and training;

e. enhance the formal recognition of education and experience obtained outside the formal system of education and training; and

f. heighten the general level of education and training in Iceland.

The Act is available in Icelandic at http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=48a5fa07-5935-4e2f-8cdc-359e4dbee78d.

Participation in all forms of adult education and training has multiplied in the past decades. Numerous private education and training institutions and non-profit institutions owned by social partners have been established, aiming specifically at adults. To name a few:

- Fræðslumiðstöð atvinnulífsins – The Education and Training Service Centre
- Iðan fræðslusetur – The Vocational Education and Training Centre
- Rafiðnaðarskólinn - Retraining and Technical Training Centre for Electric and Electronic Technicians.

These training institutions serve the main purpose to upgrade already acquired skills, e.g. following new technology or material. Usually their courses do not give direct formal rights on the labour market but often they make it easier for people to ask for a promotion.

Almost all employees have the right to an annual assessment at their work and in such assessment the already acquired upgrading of skills and the wish to continue adding on to their training definitely gives people some points. Employers encourage their employee to undertake further training and often give them some support e.g. in the form of taking at least part of the training during working hours.

Added to those are several privately owned schools which offer e.g. language tuition and IT training.

The state co-finances nine Lifelong Learning Centres, which offer a wide scope of training possibilities, such as Icelandic for foreigners, university degrees through distance studies in cooperation with universities and courses found relevant to their local communities (e.g. in tourism or fisheries). In many cases they e.g. offer the possibility of adding on to qualifications through distance learning and a combination of on campus and distance learning.

All of the universities also offer similar possibilities and use both e-learning and more traditional approaches.

Training at workplaces has increased since the financial crises started setting its mark on Iceland. In chapter three, this is discussed in details.

6.1.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL CVET

Each sector sets its own demands for the continuous upgrading of skills which vary a lot. Mostly, the market regulates the supply of training where courses on e.g. new technology, materials and tools are regularly on offer. Each training course gives some sort of a diploma which most often is the pre-requisite to work with these things. It is possible for craftsmen to get financial support from the social partners' training funds for these courses so there is a strong encouragement to do so. Employers also encourage their staff to undertake further training and it is not uncommon that they get paid study leave. The training received can however not be classified according to e.g. ISCED levels.

The two main training centres are operated by social partners, with some funding from the state:

- Iðan, fræðslusetur (the Vocational Education and Training Centre) is the largest training intuition in Iceland, offers courses for a variety of sectors (food and catering; metal and machines; building and constructions; printing technology; auto mechanics; computer supported design and hair styling). Each year, representatives from each of them are contacted and asked about training needs and the courses are planned accordingly.
- Rafiðnaðarskólinn - Retraining and Technical Training Centre for Electric and Electronic Technicians offers continuous training for electricians and electronic specialists.

A few public institutions offer CVET for certain target groups:

- Nýsköpunarmiðstöð Íslands (the Icelandic Innovation centre), a public institution belonging to the Ministry of Trade and Industry offers courses in issues such as project management or personal leadership. Students at these courses tend to be university graduates who feel the need of adding their degree. Students' age varies a lot, and is between 20 and 65;
- Special vocational schools are e.g.
  - The National Police College (Lögregluskólinn) is an independent institution under the Minister of Justice, responsible for CVET for the police;
  - The Iceland Fire Authority runs the Fire Service Technical College (Brunamálaskólinn), which is responsible for CVET for fire fighters;
  - School for Air Traffic Controllers (Þjálfunardeild Flugmálastjórnar) is operated by the Icelandic Civil Aviation Administration;

- o The Icelandic Flight Academy (Flugskóli Íslands) offers training for pilots but the airlines are responsible for their own CVET and that the training of personell follows European standards (JAR).
- The Committee of Vocational Education in Fisheries (Starfsfræðslunefnd fiskvinnslunnar) is responsible for CVET in fish processing.

All schools which offer vocational education and training are also open to anyone interested in up-grading their skills.

As can be seen from the variety of these training institutions the curricula varies a lot. In most cases, the focus is on new technology and hands-on training is very common, even though the studies may require the reading of e.g. manuals. Duration of training is equally different but in most cases, courses are short and concentrated. Distance training is usually not on offer.

As most of the institutions are operated by social partners, they make sure that the training meets the quality standards they require.

The courses mentioned above are all for people who already have VET qualifications. Those who do not, are able to study at vocational schools at upper secondary level at any age. The average age of VET students is higher than students in general education due to three main reasons:

- some students complete a general education and then commence VET;
- during times when it was easy to get a job as an un-qualified worker, many (especially men) postponed taking a formal education;
- with the real assessment validation process (see below), people who had dropped out of school due to e.g. dyslexia have been able to go back and complete a degree.

Planning and forecasting mechanisms have been lacking, probably because of the great expanse in the sector in a short time. Mostly what is on offer depends on the need as it is seen at the current time, the availability of teachers and trainers and the possibilities of finding teaching locations.

Eurostat does not provide statistics for Iceland but as can be seen in the Icelandic statistics below, around 1/3rd of employees have participated in some form of training during the last 4 weeks before the survey was made. But the number and the percentage of participation in such training has fallen from 2007. This is interesting in light of the information in chapter 3.2.2. on the increased number of applications for funding to undertake training. The most logical explanation for this seems to be that in 2007 people were able to pay for training out of their own pockets but now they have to seek financial support.

TABLE 1 - NUMBER AND % OF EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATING IN ANY EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE LAST 4 WEEKS BEFORE EACH SURVEY

YEAR	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE
2004	43.800	28,1
2005	48.900	30,3
2006	54 400	32,1
2007	56.400	31,8

2008	51.400	28,8
2009	47.700	28,5
Source: Hagstofa Íslands		

6.2 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

6.2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

The field of non-formal continuous education and training is vast, varied and detailed information does not exist. In the Act on Continuous Education and Training mentioned in 5.1.1., no distinction is made between formal and non formal education, even though it is specially stipulated that individuals will be assisted with getting non formal education validated in a formal manner. Even though increased employability is seen as a positive thing, the psychological growth of each individual and his/her active participation in society is also regarded as equally important.

In past years, access to continuous education and training has grown considerably (see further below) and it can now be safely said that everyone should be able to find something which is of either professional or personal interest. As described in chapter 3, training in work-places has increased a lot during the financial crisis as has the demand for funding to take training elsewhere.

6.2.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-FORMAL CVET

The access to lifelong learning has seen a colossal expansion in the past decades and numerous private education and training institutions and non-profit institutions owned by social partners have been established, aiming specifically at adults. To name a few:

- Institutions owned by social partners:
  - Fræðslumiðstöð atvinnulífsins – The Education and Training Service Centre;
  - Iðan fræðslusetur – The Vocational Education and Training Centre;
  - Rafiðnaðarskólinn - Retraining and Technical Training Centre for Electric and Electronic Technicians;
  - Mímir, símenntun;
- privately owned schools which offer e.g. language tuition and ICT training;
- nine Regional Centres for Lifelong Learning, which offer a wide scope of training possibilities, such as Icelandic for foreigners and courses found relevant to their local communities (e.g. in tourism or fisheries);
- the universities have also been offering non formal courses to everyone interested. The courses range from literature to travelling, languages to basic knowledge in business self-empowering to IT, only to name a few.

The status of non formal education has been growing in recent years since the “real competence evaluations” started (see chapter 3.2.3.).

The characteristic of the non formal education offer differs greatly but it has several aspects in common: it does not confer formal rights, has no admission requirements, courses are short (1-10 45 minutes sessions) and the objectives are simply to satisfy a need for more personal knowledge and strength.

Participants pay registration fees in all cases, which vary according to the courses' length and cost of teaching material. If the courses are deemed relevant to a person's job, (s)he can get a subsidy from his/her labour union.

Some of the continuous education providers offer their courses through e.g. video links to the Lifelong Learning Centres. As technology improves, the variety of these increases. A detailed overview does not exist.

Raunfærnimat (Real competence validation) is a good example of an initiative to validate non formal and informal learning. People who have learned some skills at e.g. workplaces can get them validated through a formal process, which may shorten their study periods towards a journeyman's exam in a trade. They also get valuable assistance (counselling and study aid) if they e.g. deal with dyslexia. Real competence validations are available in several trades and social partners and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture are working on expanding the offers.

Eurostat does not provide any statistics for Iceland in the participation in non formal and informal education and training and no Icelandic statistic exists.

6.2.3 Measures to help job-seekers and people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market

There are three main vulnerable groups on the labour market:

- unemployed people who find it difficult to get back into labour. This has been a growing problem in the last few years (see chapter 3);
- immigrants;
- people who are mentally or physically disabled.

Unemployed people

Because unemployment has been very low for a long time, there have not been many possibilities of education and training for the unemployed that are not open to everyone else as well. Since the collapse of the financial system, officials from the state and municipalities have tried to develop new possibilities for training this group, with a special emphasis on people aged 16-24. They have been offered formal training in upper secondary schools and informal training in e.g. learning to make something by hand (e.g. artefacts). A similar initiative was starting for people aged 25-60 at the time of writing this input but no experience of it had been recorded yet.

No Eurostat statistics is available for Iceland, but as can be seen in the Icelandic statistics below, the percentage of unemployed people participating in education and training seems to rise and has reached almost half of the group. This seems to indicate that people believe that education and training will increase their likelihood of getting a job.

TABLE 2 - NUMBER AND % OF UNEMPLOYED PARTICIPATING IN ANY EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE LAST 4 WEEKS BEFORE EACH SURVEY		
YEAR	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE
2004	1 900	38,6
2005	1 800	40,9
2006	2 400	47,1
2007	1.900	45,4
2008	2.600	47,2
2009	4.700	35,9
Source: Hagstofa Íslands		

As can be seen from this table, the number of unemployed in education and training has risen sharply in the last two years, which is not a surprise with all the new possibilities available and the increased pressure to undertake training. The percentage has however not risen as the total number of unemployed has increased drastically.

IMMIGRANTS

Unemployment among immigrants is higher than among people born and bred in Iceland (see chapter 3). The most likely explanation for this is their difficulty with communicating in Icelandic. Even before the economic crisis hit the country, the state, municipalities and social partners had joined hands to assist the immigrants in learning the language and understanding the society. No survey has been made on how they fare but an informal observation reveals that there is a growing number of young immigrants (especially women) who are the bulk of the labour force in low price shops and speak excellent Icelandic. Their parents find life much more difficult and especially all the men who have lost their jobs in the building sector find it almost impossible to find new occupations.

DISABLED PEOPLE

The group most vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market are people with physical or mental disabilities. In times of great employment, they have often been able to find jobs, sometimes even part time, even though that is not easy in Iceland. With falling unemployment rates, it is to be expected that these people will be one of the first groups to lose their jobs. However, according to an interview with Professor Stefán Ólafsson, from the University of Iceland, who has studied this group thoroughly for many years, this was not the case in the middle of June 2010. He however expected that this might still happen, that people were still using up their sick-day allowances and would only later go on disability pensions (Source: Harðgrýti fátækar – fatlaðir og öryrkar (The Extreme Difficulties of Poverty – disabled people and peopled on disability pensions) –Ríkisútvarpið 19. June 2010).

In 2009, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture asked the Statistical Bureau to make an analysis how one group of disabled people had fared in the education system. The group selected as deaf and hearing impaired people at the age of 25. The Icelandic Statistical Bureau analysed how 65 deaf and hearing impaired students had managed to acquire some sort of education and training. 62 of them had studied something after

compulsory school (the remaining three ad been living abroad during “normal” upper secondary school age”). 45 (69.2%) had completed some training, thereof 33 the matriculation exam, 5 the journeyman’s exam and 8 the first degree of university (source: Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti http://bella.mrn.stjr.is/utgafur/heyrnarsk_nem_24_ara_2010.pdf). It seems in other words, that this group, for some reasons or another, fares better in the education system than do people who have no such problems!

There are also specific work-places and/or training centres operated by the Ministry of Social Services for handicapped people. There, they are taught new skills and receive a small salary. Most of these places are very small and each individual gets the help he or she needs.

A special fund (Virk Starfsendurhæfingarsjóður) was created in 2008 to assist people with disabilities in getting training and other assistance. Its main objective is to decrease the probability that employees loose their jobs due to incapacity and sickness, by increasing their activities, promoting rehabilitation and other interventions (Sourse: http://www.virk.is/page/english).

7.1 TYPES OF TEACHER AND TRAINER OCCUPATIONS IN VET

7.1.1 TEACHING AND TRAINING OCCUPATIONS IN VET

According to the Act on education and training (pre-primary, compulsory, upper secondary and the protection of the professional titles and rights of compulsory school teachers, upper secondary school teachers and compulsory school head teachers) 87/2008, all teachers will be required to have a master's degree in teaching or in a certified trade (article 5. Source http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/log-og-reglugerdir/). The Act is supposed to be fully implemented by 1. July 2011, but after that, teachers who had already received an official recognition by the passing of the law (June 2008) will be able to continue teaching even though they normally only have a baccalaureate degree. Other teaching occupations are not regulated by law and then those teaching are referred to as instructors or trainers.

TABLE 1 – TYPE OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

TYPE OF TEACHER/TRAINER	ROLES	SETTINGS
PRACTICAL SUBJECT TEACHER	Curriculum development, assessments, theoretical and general tuition in schools	Classrooms
VOCATIONAL THEORY SUBJECT TEACHER	Curriculum development, assessments, theoretical and hands-on tuition in schools	Workshops
GENERAL SUBJECT TEACHER (E.G. LANGUAGES AND SOCIAL SKILLS)	Curriculum development, assessments, theoretical and general tuition in schools	Classrooms
WORK-PLACE TRAINERS	Hands-on tuition at a work-place	Work-places
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	Curriculum development, assessments, theoretical and general tuition in schools	Classrooms
SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAINERS	Theoretical and hands-on tuition in schools	Classrooms and workshops
TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR	As this field is completely unregulated, detailed information on their roles do not exist but many of them would deal with curriculum development, assessments, theoretical and general tuition	Classrooms, workshops, work-places

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti) is responsible for regulating teachers' education and training, bears the overall responsibility for the curricula of their studies and regularly assesses the quality and relevance of their education and training.

Certified VET teachers receive higher salaries than both trainers and average employees in their sectors. Many trades are based on working long hours and the work is physically demanding and therefore many (especially) elderly tradesmen choose to undertake the additional studies which are necessary to become a certified teacher.

7.1.2 Responsible bodies and organigram

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for the training arrangement for teachers and trainers. It approves the curricula set by the universities offering such training and accesses and monitors that quality standards are met.

7.1.3 Recent reforms to VET teacher/trainer training

The Act on education and training (pre-primary, compulsory, upper secondary and the protection of the professional titles and rights of compulsory school teachers, upper secondary school teachers and compulsory school head teachers) number 87/2008 was passed in 2008. The main difference from previous acts is that from 2011 all teachers must have a masters' degree either as teachers or as masters of certified trades (VET teachers). The latter must add on 60 ECTS in educational psychology to become fully qualified teachers.

7.2 Types of teachers and trainers in IVET

7.2.1 Types of teachers, trainers and training facilitators in IVET

The table below lists all types of teaching occupation within the Upper Secondary Level School System and their place of work:

Table 2 - Type of teachers and trainers in IVET	
Type of occupation	Place of work
Practical subject teacher	Schools offering VET
Vocational theory subject teacher	Schools offering VET
General subject teacher	All upper secondary schools
Work-place trainers	Enterprises
Special education teachers	All upper secondary schools
Special education trainers	Schools offering VET

7.2.2 Pre-service and in-service training of IVET teachers and trainers

Table 3: Training of teachers and trainers		
Type of occupation	**Pre-service training**	**In service training**
Practical subject teacher	General training in a particular subject and professional training in educational and instructional methodology at a university	According to the latest labour agreement between the Union of Upper Secondary School Teachers and the state, each teacher should use 80 hours a year for further training (source http://www.ki.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?itemid=836). Training is available at universities in Iceland and abroad
Vocational theory subject teacher	Vocational qualifications in the field in question plus professional training in educational and instructional methodology at a university	According to the latest labour agreement between the Union of Upper Secondary School Teachers and the state, each teacher should use 80 hours a year for further training. Training is available at specific institutions owned by the industry and abroad
General subject teacher	Teachers' education from a university.	According to the latest labour agreement between the Union of Upper Secondary School Teachers and the state, each teacher should use 80 hours a year for further training. Training is available at universities in Iceland and abroad
Work-place trainers	Masters of craft in their profession	No official demands are made but masters of trades need to keep abreast of new technology if not to go out of business. Training is available at specific institutions owned by the industry and abroad
Special education teachers	Vocational qualifications in the field in question plus professional training in educational and instructional methodology at a university	According to the latest labour agreement between the Union of Upper Secondary School Teachers and the state, each teacher should use 80 hours a year for further training.Training is available at universities in Iceland and abroad
Special education trainers	Some vocational qualification in the field in question but no teachers' licence	No official demands for in-service training but trainers who do not follow the development in their professions will quickly find themselves out of a job.

7.3 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

7.3.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN CVET

In CVET the scope of teachers and trainers is very wide and mostly unregulated. Most organized CVET is conducted by training centres owned by the social partners in each respective certified trade. The centres do not have any formal requirements for the employment of teaching staff, although professionals in the profession in question are the most usual staff. These training centres sometimes act as a part of the official vocational education system, for example when the training institute carries out all or part of the training and assessment for the master's certificate in a trade.

TABLE 4 – TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET	
	TYPES OF SCHOOLS OR INSTITUTIONS
TEACHERS	Vocational schools and (social partners') training centres
TRAINERS	Vocational schools, training centres and enterprises

7.3.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF CVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

In CVET the scope of teachers and trainers is very wide and mostly unregulated. Most organized CVET is conducted by training centres owned by the social partners in each respective certified trade. The centres do not have any formal requirements for the employment of teaching staff, although professionals in the profession in question are the most usual staff. These training centres sometimes act as a part of the official vocational education system, for example when the training institute carries out all or part of the training and assessment for the master's certificate in a trade.

TABLE 5: TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET		
	PRE-SERVICE TRAINING	IN-SERVICE TRAINING
TEACHERS	Same as teachers in IVET, i.e. university degree in education and specialisation in a general or vocational field	Same as teachers in IVET, i.e. no official demands are made but possibilities are many
TRAINERS	Usually experts in their fields but do not have a degree in education	No formal demands and training is voluntary and very individual

8.1 SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS (IN SECTORS, OCCUPATIONS, EDUCATION LEVEL)

When assessing future skills needs, the Occupational Councils (starfsgreinaráð) are the strongest link between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the industry. Article 24 of the Upper Secondary School Act stipulates that: The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall appoint, for four years at a time, Occupational Councils for occupational groups or individual occupations. Each Occupational Council shall be comprised of five to nine representatives out of which two to four shall be nominated by federations of employers, two to four by federations of employees from the relevant occupations and one representative jointly nominated by the Association of Icelandic Upper Secondary Schools and the Icelandic Teachers' Union (Source: The Upper Secondary School Act, available in English at http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir//Upper_secondary_school_Act.pdf).

Article 27 states that: The role of the Occupational Committee shall be to advise the Minister of Education, Science and Culture regarding policy making and implementation of vocational education, to serve as platform for collaboration and coordination for the Occupational Councils, and to provide opinion of categorisation and division of occupations between Occupational Councils (Source: ibid).

The Councils try to forecast future need for training, both in general terms and in finer details. The best known example of this is when the Icelandic Travel Agency Association made a needs analysis in 2005 for the training of their members (available in Icelandic at http://www.saf.is/saf/upload/files/pdf/utgafa_saf/tharfagreining/lokaskyrsla101005.pdf) where the need for further training of all kinds is emphasised. This analysis resulted in an increased offer of training courses, mainly at the Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi but also at the Lifelong Learning Centres. Other such sectroral analyses are not publically available.

There are two main methods used when anticipating skill needs:

- the formal approach which builds on interviews with selected people from the industry (employers and employees) on which the skills demands for each professions is later built. This is an approach which was developed through a Leonardo de Vinci project in 1998-2006 (see http://www.amazon.com/Employability-Skills-Non-Professional-Occupations-Four-Country/dp/9979544422);
- an informal approach where key people from the industry sit together and discuss trends and perspectives and likely scenarios.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti) uses both approaches in its work with the Occupational Councils (starfsgreinaráð) in formulating the National Curriculum Guide for each VET-programme.

Each VET school has full liberty in introducing new study material, which in many cases is developed by individual teachers in each profession as they see new needs arise. The industry makes constantly new and changed demands for different knowledge as new

material and new technique is developed locally or imported. In order to survive in the competition for students, the schools are obliged to follow suit.

8.1 PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION WITH SKILL NEEDS

QUALIFICATION DESIGN

The Occupational Councils (starfsgreinaráð) are formally responsible for providing the Ministry with advice on skill needs for their respective trades/industries, which involves making recommendations for new/altered qualifications. According to article 25 of the Upper Secondary School Act, the Occupational Councils can also make proposals for study programme descriptions for individual study programmes which upper secondary schools can use as guidelines.

The Upper Secondary School Act also makes the provisions for setting up advisory committees from the industry towards the schools (article 30). It varies between fields and between schools how active these committees are but there are examples where they show great initiatives and have suggested new pathways and/or curricula. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has in many of these cases granted its approval for such pathways.

With the Upper Secondary School Act from 2008, it will also be possible for the schools themselves to suggest new pathways (possibly by combining parts of existing ones) and seek the Ministry's permission to offer them. It is too early to tell how common such practice may become.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In regulated professions, the curricula are developed by VET schools on the basis of guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti). These are in turn drawn up in cooperation between the above Ministry and the Occupational Councils (starfsgreinaráð), which are appointed by social partners and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. In unregulated professions, the Occupational Councils make curricula suggestions to the Ministry of Education which, if agreed, become part of the schools' curricula.

Demand for new elements in the curricula come both from the Occupational Councils and from the labour market at large. It would be fair to say that a school or training centre that did not offer tuition in the latest technology would quickly go out of business.

The clearest trends for upgrading skills are related to the use of ICT, more or less necessary in all professions now. Students must learn the utilisation of constantly updated software related to their profession and former graduates who do not follow such trends gradually loose their place on the labour market.

TEACHER TRAINING

According to the Upper Secondary School Act (article 11) a teacher at upper secondary school, who has worked for at least five years, can request a special study leave for the purpose of improving his/her knowledge and teaching ability. The Ministry may grant him/her a study-leave of up to one year with full salary. This applies both for VET-teachers

and others and is utilised a great deal by Icelandic teachers to seek innovative pedagogies in their fields of action and to get acquainted with the latest development in their fields.

Teachers can also apply for study grants from a specific 'Upper secondary school teachers' re-training fund' to attend special courses given by the University of Iceland. Each year, an amount is allocated to this fund through the financial law.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments in IVET have not changed considerably in the last decades. According to the Upper Secondary School Act (lög um framhaldsskóla) nr.92/2008, general assessments are carried out by individual teachers (article 24). Continuous assessment is however increasingly being used in recent years. The schools are responsible for assessing their part of the education and the work-places their part. It is however still the final skills exam (the journeyman's exam) which is the most important one of all assessments. In each trade a journeyman´s examination committee, nominated by the Occupational Councils and appointed by the Ministry, designs and supervises the journeyman's exam.

In CVET the major change which has taken place in the last few years has been that the assessment has become more flexible and not as examination oriented as in general schooling. Students in retail e.g. get their final grade by displaying a shop window and in tourism by serving 'customers'. For students with e.g. dyslexia or bad experience from past schooling, this can be a major improvement. Recognition of non formal learning in now commonly used when planning learning pathways for individual adults, a process which has called for more flexibility in assessments.

The learning outcome based approach has been practiced in structuring all new curricula for VET which makes it easier for example to use varied form of assessment and to formulate accreditation standards.

9.1 STRATEGY AND PROVISION

Educational and vocational guidance has developed rapidly over the last two decades. Counselling and guidance within the educational system has been the most prominent factor but vocational guidance and guidance on the labour market has grown considerably in recent years.

According to the Compulsory School Act and the Upper Secondary School Acts (both from 2008), all students have the right to counselling by professional staff. It is however left up to the schools how exactly this is carried out but according to a survey among counsellors in 2007 (source: Kjarakönnun náms- og starfsráðgjafa 2007), most schools seem to offer a combination of group counselling and individual counselling. Group counselling can involve issues like teaching the students how to apply for a job or for further education (e.g. through the annual visits of compulsory school children to upper secondary schools of their interest) and how to live in the modern society in general. Individual counselling concentrates more on special issues each student wishes to raise and links to his/her families.

In the broad sense, guidance has mostly been the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti), but the Ministry of Social Services (félagsmálaráðuneyti) has developed vocational guidance within the Directorate of Labour. The Ministry of Social Services is responsible for providing information, guidance and counselling through this Directorate to all those who seek assistance, unemployed or otherwise in transition. The Directorate supervises and co-ordinates a network of nine Employment Services located in the main regions in Iceland.

Other actors who have influenced the development of guidance are e.g.

- municipalities through increased emphasis on guidance in compulsory schools;
- experts in the field of guidance, by developing teaching material for the department of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland, which teaches counsellors and by holding several information meetings and conference on relevant topics every year,;
- trade unions, by demanding guidance at work-places;
- employers, by establishing their own human resources / staff development departments and hiring people (in many cases trained counsellors) to lead this work; and
- the Icelandic Educational and Vocational Guidance Association (Félag náms- og starfsráðgjafa) which has been in the forefront of the debate on the content and length of education and training for counsellors and keeps its members regularly informed about new trends in the field. It operates a website (http://fns.is) into which it frequently puts information on new trends and a mailing list to all members is used for the same purpose.

The role counsellors play in the process of real competence assessments is crucial according to a final thesis from the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland (source: Sigurðardóttir, 2010). Two training centres owned and operated by social partners offer guidance on how to get ‘real competences’ evaluated and certified. Their work is closely followed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, which participated in setting up the original standards for the evaluation:

- The Education and Training Service Centre (Fræðslumiðstöð atvinnulífsins) - established in December 2002 -offers guidance at the workplace carried out by the Lifelong Learning centres in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. This evolved from a Leonardo da Vinci project called Workplace guidance and counselling (see http://workplaceguidance.eu). The main emphasis is on low skilled workers;
- The Vocational Education and Training Centre (Iðan fræðslusetur) established in 2006. Iðan puts more emphasis on assisting those who have completed parts of education for regulated professions but need additional (most often general) education in order to get their journeyman's exam.

The division of guidance affairs is based upon different clients, different subjects, different settings and different ways of funding. No formal channels exist in the co-operation of all the actors responsible, but most innovations in the field of guidance have occurred when ministries, professionals and the social partners combine resources as can be seen in the example on real competence evaluation mentioned above.

The guidance services within the educational system and the Directorate of Labour are free and state funded. Guidance and counselling in other settings is contracted, subsidised or free, apart from privately run profit organisations. Guidance counsellors work in all these environments but with different job titles at times.

A report on 'the enhancement of educational and vocational guidance in compulsory and upper secondary schools as a resource to hinder drop-out' was published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in 2007 and tabled in parliament in 2008 as part of the background material for a new law on educational and vocational counsellors (see 9.3.). In the report, it is stated that many studies indicate that good counselling increases the likelihood of a successful choice of studies and careers and may prevent drop out from schools. A special reference is made to such studies carried out by the OECD and the EU. There, it is also stated that it is important that Iceland participates in the work of the Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, which it is now doing (source: Skýrsla nefndar um eflingu náms- og starfsráðgjafar í grunn- og framhaldsskólum sem úrræði gegn brottfalli nemenda, 2007).

9.2 TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

The main target groups for guidance are:

- students at primary, secondary and tertiary level. All schools offer guidance and according to a survey among counsellors in 2007 (source: Kjarakönnun names- og starfsráðgjafa 2007), they offer a combination of group counselling and individual counselling;
- people on the labour market. Guidance is offered at workplaces, at centres owned by social partners and at the Lifelong Learning Centres. The most common method used is individual counselling.

Specific groups have been given particular attention:

- the unemployed are offered counselling at local labour offices, by the Directorate of Labour. Both group and individual counselling is on offer;
- people with learning difficulties due to physical or mental disabilities have the right to counselling offered by the Ministry of Social Services. The Ministry employs specific agents for the persons with handicap who work in different

corners of the country and to which people can turn to for advice and counselling. The Ministry also operates a number of specific workplaces for handicapped people.

Iceland has lead two Leonardo da Vinci project on guidance which specifically look at how guidance can prevent school dropout. The latter of these, PPS (see http://p-p-s.org/) has received several awards as best practice project, both at Icelandic and European level.

9.3 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

Act 35/2009 (available in Icelandic at http://www.althingi.is/altext/136/s/pdf/0715.pdf) deals with educational and vocational counsellors. According to the Act, only people with a relevant university education are allowed to use the title educational and vocational counsellor, both in initial and continuous education and training. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture evaluates whether each applicant's education is relevant. People who worked as counsellors at the time of passing the law but had not obtained the relevant education, can apply for an exemption from this law and each such application will be evaluated by the same Ministry.

According to the Compulsory School Act (Lög um grunnskóla) (91/2008) all students in compulsory school have the right to educational and vocational counselling, carried out by specialists in the field (article 13. Source: http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir//Compulsory_school_Act.pdf). In bigger schools (especially in the capital area) there tend to be formally qualified counsellors but in smaller schools in the country-side they can still be teachers or other staff, who have in some cases received training in the field.

In the Upper Secondary School Act 92/2008 it is also stipulated that 'Students have the right to educational and vocational counselling carried out by specialists in the field' (article 37. Source: http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir//Upper_secondary_school_Act.pdf). In regulation 5/2001 it is stipulated that counsellors at upper secondary schools must have completed at least four years of university education, of which at least one year must be in educational and vocational counselling. The main tasks of the guidance counsellors is then described in seven categories and this kind of legal identity is believed to offer quality and necessary benchmarking for the guidance profession.

A master's degree in educational and vocational counselling is offered within the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland. Applicants must have one of the following degrees:

- BA in education or psychology;
- B.Ed; or
- BA in other fields of studies and a teacher's certificate.

In service training tends to be in the form of e.g. individual courses offered by the University of Iceland or the Icelandic Educational and Vocational Guidance Associations or mobility grants abroad from e.g. the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

10.1 FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The funding structure for VET, as for other education and training, has not changed considerably for many decades. The basic principle is that almost all funding for IVET comes from the state, through the Ministries of Education, Science and Culture and is paid to the school according to the number of students who sit for an exam each term. Even private schools thus receive their funding in part from the state. School fees (varying from one school to the other) form the rest of their budget.

There are no laws regarding contribution of the social partners to VET but with growing demands for CVET, their contribution has multiplied in recent years through the labour market training funds (see 0502).

TABLE 1 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TYPES OF IVET	INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDING	PAY FOR*
REGULATED PROFESSIONS	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti)	Education and training at schools
	Social Partners	Apprentices' salaries
	Individuals	School fees and study material
HEALTH AND WELFARE PROFESSIONALS	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture	Education and training at schools
	Ministry of Health (heilbrigðisráðuneyti)	Salaries for trainees at hospitals
	Individuals	School fees and study material
POLICE OFFICERS	Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs (dóms- og kirkjumálamálaráðuneyti)	Education and training at schools plus salaries of trainees
PILOTS	Individuals	Pay all costs
NON-REGULATED PROFESSIONS	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture	Most of the training at schools
	Individuals	School fees and study material

**Precise information is not available on each partner's share of funding contribution.*

The main changes which have occurred during the last few decades are both that overall funding has increased rapidly and that individuals gradually pay more for their training than before because there are now more private institutions.

10.1.1 Funding for publicly provided CVET

The total public expenditure in CVT has risen rapidly over the last decade or so, and no accurate figures are readily available at the moment.

Table 2 - Funding for CVET and adult learning		
Types of CVET	Institutions responsible for funding	Pay for*
Publicly provided CVET	Ministries of Education (mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti)	Education and training at schools. Contributes to vocational training funds operated by social partners
	Social Partners	Training at their own institutions
	Individuals	School fees and study material
Enterprise-based CVET	Social partners (enterprises or vocational study funds that belong to the employees –see below)	Subsidise employees towards training and employers' courses
	Individuals	Pay remaining costs

**Precise information is not available on each partner's share of funding contribution*

10.1.2 Funding for CVT in enterprises,

No overall information exists on CVET in enterprises.

10.2 Funding for training for unemployed people and other groups excluded from the labour market

Until recently funding for training of the unemployed has been limited because of the low level of unemployment. The Directorate of Labour, which falls under the Ministry for Social Services, is responsible for providing some funds through the local unemployment offices, where counsellors value whether or not training may help a person to get a job. Usually such training is partly paid for by the unemployed and there are strict rules as to who can get a subsidy.

The Ministry of Social Services is responsible for the funding of training for people with disabilities, who are the most vulnerable group on the labour market. According to statistics from Hagstofa Íslands (http://www.statice.is/), funding towards training of people on disability pension rose steadily from 1993 to 2006 (latest year available). Thus the total funding in 1993 was 1.702 million IKR but was up to 5.623 million in 2006.

Added to this is the funding which goes through the Virk rehabilitation fund. All employers pay 0.13% of all salaries into the fund and in 2009 (its first year of full operation), it allocated some 1.5 million IKR (around € 9 500) to specific courses. This allocation of funds started in the autumn 2009 and already in June 2010, the director of Virk told the writer of this report that this had increased.

10.3 General funding arrangements and mechanisms

Most, if not all, sectors in Iceland have established their own training funds. In several labour market agreements between labour unions and employers signed since 2000 it was decided that each employer on the labour market is obliged to pay 0.05% of his/her salaries towards an education and training fund and all employers must pay 0.15% of the same amount. The state contributes to these funds through the Unemployment Security Fund (Atvinnuleysistryggingarsjóður).

Several such funds exist, classified according to occupations and/or skills. Employees can apply for training funds according to certain rules and employers can also apply for funds to give specific courses at the work-place. These funds have not only given a colossal boost towards continuous training but also made it an accepted fact that people resume their education and training at any age.

Table 3: Overview of social partners' training funds:			
Name	For whom	Established in	Web address
Landsmennt	Unskilled workers outside the capital area	2000	http://landsmennt.is
Starfsafl	Unskilled workers in the capital area	2000	www.starfsafl.is
Starfsmenntasjóður verslunar- og skrifstofufólks	Office and shop employees	2000	www.starfsmennt.is
Starfsmennt fræðslusetur	State employees in the capital area	2001	http://smennt.is/
Sjómennt	Semen	2002	www.sjomennt.is
Ríkismennt SGS	State employees outside the capital area	2005	www.rikismennt.is
Sveitamennt SGS og LN	Municipalities' employees outside the capital area	2007	www.sveitamennt.is

No tax initiatives exist for people who participate in education and training.

11.1 CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL VET PROGRAMMES

11.1.1 MAIN CRITERIA USED TO ALLOCATE VET PROGRAMMES

Iceland fully complies with the ISCED scale.

11.1.2 VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

TABLE 1: VET LEVELS IN ICELAND

LEVEL	EQUIVALENT IN ISCED	MINIMUM DURATION	MAXIMUM DURATION	AVERAGE DURATION	TYPICAL STARTING AGE OF PUPILS
Example:					
Lower secondary	*2*	*a few weeks*	*2 semesters*	*a few months*	*Information is not available*
Upper secondary	*3*	*2 years*	*4 years*	*3.5 years*	*16-30*
Post secondary	*4*	*2 semesters*	*4 semesters*	*3 semesters*	*Information is not available*
Higher education	*5b*	*2 years*	*2 years*	*2 years*	*Information is not available*

11.2 FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TABLE 2: FIELDS OF EDUCATION/STUDY IN ICELAND

LEVEL	FIELDS OF EDUCATION/STUDY
Upper secondary VET studies	building and constructions; transport and vehicles; food, catering and tourism; metal, machinery and production; pedagogy and leisure; information and media; health and social services; design and handicraft; personal services (hair and beauty); electrics and electronics; maritime and navigation; retail and offices.
Upper secondary general studies	general programmes education

	humanities and art social science, business and law natural science, mathematics and computing engineering, production and construction agriculture health and welfare service.

11.3 LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CLASSIFICATIONS

a) A National Qualification Framework has been adopted in tertiary education (available in Icelandic and English at http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=c784fcf9-f1c5-46a1-9668-88bf76f0dc4e) and the new Upper Secondary School Act (92/2008) makes the necessary provisions for adopting such framework. At the time of writing this input, officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture were working on its preparation.

b) In higher education, the NQF takes its point of departure in learning outcomes and covers three subsequent cycles of training: Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate degrees. The milestones in the upper secondary NQF have not been set.

c) University degrees refer to ISCED levels 5 and 6, upper secondary levels to ISCED 3 (see mapping on page 3 of the document mentioned under point a above).

d) Because the Icelandic NQF was developed before the European Qualification framework, it only makes a reference to its development but does not built on it. It will be revised in the near future and one of the things taken into consideration will be the EQF. The upper secondary NQF will take their point of departure in the EQF.

12.1 AUTHORS

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12.2 SOURCES, REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

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- Sjávarútvegsráðuneyti (Ministry of Fisheries) http://www.sjavarutvegsraduneyti.is
- Landbúnaðarráðuneyti (Ministry of Agriculture) http://www.landbunadarraduneyti.is
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- http://www.domsmalaraduneyti.is
- Vinnumálastofun (Directorate of Labour): http://www.vinnumalastofnun.is/
- Samband íslenskra sveitarfélaga (The Association of Icelandic Municipalities)
- http://www.samband.is.
- Starfsmenntaráð The Vocational Training Councils http://www.starfsmenntarad.is,
- Fjölsmiðjan http://www.fjolsmidjan.is
- Fræðslumiðstöð atvinnulífsins – the Education and Training Service Centre http://frae.is
- Iðan fræðslusetur – the Vocational Education and Training Centre http://idan.is
- Félag náms- og starfsráðgjafa – the Icelandic Educational and Vocational Guidance Association http://fns.is
- Virk – starfsendurhæfingarsjóður http://www.virk.is/

LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

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12.3 LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

No acronyms or abbreviations are used.