

# The General Adult Education Programme

*The General Adult Education Programme is part of the public education system.*

The programme aims to provide education that will enable young as well as mature adults to improve or supplement their knowledge and skills within general subjects. It also aims to enhance adults' ability to improve their future job and educational possibilities.

General adult education at lower secondary level (in Danish *almen voksenuddannelse* or, in short, *AVU*) is provided as single subject courses. General adult education is equivalent to – but not identical with – the municipal primary and lower secondary school (the *Folkeskole*).

An exception is that the final level within general adult education is D, which is one level higher than the final level of the school-leaving examination of the *Folkeskole*. Level D provides good academic coherence to the Higher Preparatory Examination Programme (HF). Curricula and examinations are adapted to adults.

The teaching leads to an examination which qualifies for admission to continued education on a par with the school-leaving certificates obtained after the 9th and 10th forms of the *Folkeskole*.

The target group is young as well as mature adults who have never completed lower secondary education or who have a need to improve or supplement their basic education.



Every year, approximately 90,000 adults participate in general adult education. The number of students has been increasing in recent years.

## Legislation

The Act on General Adult Education no. 311 of 30 April 2008 from the Ministry of Education regulates the General Education Programme.

## Adult Education Centres

General adult education is offered at adult education centres (in Danish *voksenuddannelsescenter* or, in short, *VUC*) and a few other institutions. There are 29 VUCs in Denmark

with a large number of regional satellite departments spread geographically throughout the country.

Other kinds of general adult education are also offered at the VUCs:

- education for people with reading and writing disabilities (dyslexia)
- preparatory education for adults (FVU)
- higher preparatory examination courses (HF)
- supplementary examination courses at upper secondary level (GS).

The student can combine subjects from AVU with subjects from the other education programmes.

Since 1 January 2007, the VUCs have been self-governing institutions. The teaching is financed by the Danish state via a taximeter funding.

The Ministry of Education issues the rules according to which the adult educational centres work.

The VUC is headed by a principal who answers to the centre board, which has overall responsibility for the running of the school and its activity. The board makes decisions on a number of administrative matters of importance to the existence of the VUC.

All VUCs must have and utilise a system for quality development and results assessment of each individual programme and of the teaching. Within the general requirements, the VUC itself decides the methodology for self-assessment and quality assessment it wishes to employ. The school must be in a position to document its quality system vis-à-vis the Ministry of Education, which supervises the implementation of the education programmes and its results at the institutions.

Students at any VUC are entitled to appoint a students' council. The council will look after the interests of the students and appoint representatives to other councils and committees, including the centre board, which deals with general matters of importance to the students.

### **Structure**

The teaching on the General Adult Education Programme is based on a single-subject structure, and the subjects can be pieced together according to the individual's own requirements and needs. It is possible to study one or more subjects at the same time.

### **Admission**

Prior to being admitted, all applicants must see a guidance counsellor in order to secure the best possible entrance to AVU. Each applicant is admitted following a concrete assessment of whether they have qualifications corresponding to the requirements of the subject they wish to enter.

Students can then follow the teaching in different subjects at different levels according to their abilities.

### **Subjects and levels**

The programme consists of a broad range of subjects. As well as an introductory course, supplementary differentiated instruction and student counselling, the programme consists of two groups of subjects: core subjects and optional subjects.

The core subjects are:

- Danish
- Danish as a second language
- English
- French
- German
- history
- mathematics
- science and social studies.

The core subjects must be offered once a year at every adult education centre.

The optional subjects are:

- arts
- basic information technology (IT)
- cooperation and communication
- Latin
- philosophy
- physical education and sport
- psychology
- public speaking.

These subjects are optional for the VUCs to offer, and they are therefore not necessarily found at every VUC.

The subjects are offered at different levels: Basic, G, F, E and D.

A fixed number of teaching hours has been stipulated for each subject by the Ministry of Education.

### **Supplementary differentiated instruction**

In connection with the subjects, the student can choose to have extra teaching hours to comply with individual requirements and needs.

### **Introductory teaching**

In order to give an introduction to a subject and its working methods, introductory teaching can be established. Here, students also gain an insight into their own abilities within the subject and further education.

### **Curricula**

The Ministry of Education draws up curricula for all subjects. The curricula take into account the experience of adult students.

### **Number of weekly lessons**

Each student decides whether to take part in a single subject or more subjects at a time. The number of teaching hours varies from a few weekly hours to full-time.

In addition to the teaching planned by the teacher, the student must expect to spend time on homework with written assignments, preparation of texts, research etc. as well as time for the examinations.

### **Teaching methods**

Various methods of teaching are employed, for instance:

- teacher lectures
- classroom instruction
- project work
- individual and group based written work.

### **Examinations, marking and final assessment**

The student can take examinations in all subjects at the levels G and D. The examinations can be written or oral.

The Ministry composes all written examination assignments and

appoints external examiners.

Marks on a 7-point scale from -3 to 12 are given at the examinations.

It is possible to complete an education programme with a General Preparatory Examination which entitles the student to have a right of access to the two-year higher preparatory examination courses. In that case the examination must include the following five subjects:

- Danish or Danish as a second language
- English
- mathematics (all level D)
- science

plus one of the subjects history, social science studies, German or French (at level G or higher).

In all other cases the General Preparatory Examination must include five subjects:

- Danish or Danish as a second language
- English
- mathematics (all level D)
- and two more subjects as chosen by the student (at level G or higher).

In order to achieve the General Preparatory Examination each of the individual examinations of the five subjects must be passed with at least 02 marks after the 7-point marking scale.

The institution provides, upon application, certificates for students who have passed the examination in a single subject as well as for students who have passed the required examinations of the General Preparatory Examination.

The certificates are equivalent to the certificates offered at the School Leaving Examination except for the level D.

If a student decides not to enter for the examination, a certificate of attendance may be issued, provided that the student has participated and been active according to the rules made by the institution.

As a final assessment of the levels basis, F and E, the student is to answer specific assignments resulting in a product, which is presented by the student and evaluated by the teacher. This process, in Danish called faglig dokumentation, is meant to document the student's learning and give the student knowledge of his personal level of achievement in the subject.

### **Student guidance and counselling**

The VUCs are obliged to provide guidance for the student and to ensure that they are offered individual and collective guidance concerning completion of the education programme. The student can also receive educational as well as vocational guidance.

At all VUCs, there are counselling services. The guidance counsellor guides the student so that he or she can make the best possible entrance into VUC. The guidance counsellor advises the student on the subjects that are to be taken, on possibilities for subsequent education or on getting a job after the education programme.

### **Participation fee**

For each subject the student pays a small fee for participation. For the core subjects Danish, Danish as a foreign language, English, and mathematics the fee is DKK 110. For all other subjects the fee is DKK 300-900.

Except for the fee, the teaching is covered by the state and is free of charge.

### **Financial support**

Students have a number of possibilities of getting financial support.

The Danish State Educational Support for Adults (SVU) is directed at adults with little or no education at all.

Another possibility is to apply for a grant or loan from the Danish State Education Support (SU).

Unemployed people can study at VUC and still receive their unemployment benefits provided they are active job seekers.