Tertiary vocational colleges – an attractive education choice

Study by the Commission appointed by Royal Decree on 23 August 2013.
Submitted to The Ministry of Education and Research on 15 December 2014

To The Ministry of Education and Research

The Stoltenberg II Government appointed by Royal Decree on 23 August 2013 a commission to study the future of Norwegian tertiary vocational education. The Commission was tasked with tertiary vocational colleges' status, quality, connection to skills needed in working life and interaction with higher education. The Commission hereby submits its recommendation.

Oslo, 15 December 2014

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The Commission's appointment and mandate

By Royal Decree on 23 August 2013, the Government appointed a public commission to review the tertiary vocational education sector in order to examine how this sector can be further developed. The Commission was given the following mandate at its appointment:

**Background**

Tertiary vocational education provides vocational education founded on upper secondary education or equivalent prior learning and work experience, and comprises the equivalent of at least one-half and no more than two entire academic years. The Tertiary Vocational Education Act defines vocational education as "education that provides competence for working life without further general training measures". Pursuant to the Act, the tertiary vocational colleges shall provide education of high quality and equip students with satisfactory skills and conditions.

The county authorities are responsible for ensuring the provision of accredited tertiary vocational education that considers local, regional and national competence requirements within priority sectors. Tertiary vocational education is important in order to secure brief, vocational provisions in line with new skills needed and requirements set in working life. Tertiary vocational education and higher education are two different alternatives to education after upper secondary school, each with its own legislation and objective. The overarching goal of tertiary vocational education is that "approved tertiary vocational education shall be of high quality and provide students with quality-assured, flexible education programmes tailored to the job market", cf. draft resolution Prop. 1 S (2012–2013) for the Ministry of Education and Research.

All tertiary vocational education must be approved by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT). In order to be accredited, the education must satisfy national performance standards stipulated by regulation. NOKUT supervises tertiary vocational education and accredits tertiary vocational colleges' internal quality assurance systems. In 2012, there were a total of 115 tertiary vocational colleges, with a total of 15 852 tertiary vocational college students, which together cover a wide range of studies within many
disciplines.

**Tasks/scope**

There is a need for more, better and systematised knowledge concerning the tertiary vocational education sector in Norway. This report shall provide a solid basis for further work on tertiary vocational colleges and a better basis for considering how to further develop tertiary vocational colleges.

− The Commission shall assess the role and place of tertiary vocational education in the educational landscape and working life.

− The Commission shall assess how the quality, visibility and status of tertiary vocational education can be strengthened.

− The Commission shall assess the significance of vocational focus in tertiary vocational education. This includes studying how cooperation between tertiary vocational colleges and working life can keep tertiary vocational education up-to-date and relevant as regards the needs of employers, employees and of trade and industry in general.

− The Commission shall assess how to best enable students to appropriately manoeuvre between tertiary vocational colleges, university colleges and universities, including how to reinforce good transitional schemes from tertiary vocational college to higher education.

− The Commission shall examine the applicable admissions criteria, including trade certificate, qualification for higher education and prior learning and work experience, and assess whether these admissions criteria are appropriate based on the candidates' learning outcomes.

− It will be relevant to change the term tertiary vocational education credits, cf. the Tertiary Vocational Education Regulations, after the Commission has conducted a more thorough review.

− The Commission shall assess the current financing scheme for tertiary vocational colleges and suggest alternative models for financing tertiary vocational colleges.

**Important considerations in the Commission's work**

It is important that the Commission takes into account the need for progression and transitions between the different parts of the education pathway, flexibility in the system, and that it must be easy for education applicants to obtain an overview of the different opportunities. The Commission's assessments must also take into account the local, regional and national needs of working life, as well as international development and Norway's commitments within international cooperation in education.

The Commission shall assess and suggest alternative models for financing tertiary vocational colleges. At least one of the Commission's proposed models shall be based on unchanged use of resources. Proposed changes to the financing system must promote efficient public
administration.

It is up to the Commission whether or not it chooses to address additional and more detailed issues than those specified in the mandate. Financial, administrative and other significant consequences of the proposals must be assessed, cf. the Instructions for Official Studies and Reports.

Knowledge basis

As a background for its overall assessments, the Commission must obtain a good overview of the tertiary vocational education sector. It is presumed that the Commission will make use of available statistics, studies, evaluations, research and other existing knowledge basis that is relevant for its work. The Commission shall also obtain an overview of international studies, to the extent this is relevant.

The Commission must assess the need for outsourcing assignments in order to acquire the necessary knowledge to fulfil its mandate.

Time frame and form of work

The Commission shall submit a final report to the Minister of Education and Research in the form of an NOU no later than by the end of 2014.

The Commission shall have an open working method that invites dialogue and discussion with the sector and other relevant stakeholders. The Ministry shall be kept informed of the work in an appropriate manner.

Tertiary vocational colleges – an attractive education choice

Summary of the proposal for a new, comprehensive tertiary vocational college policy based on the Commission’s efforts.

The current tertiary vocational education sector – dormant potential

Tertiary vocational education is of great significance for Norway's welfare and value creation. Unfortunately, neither working life nor political Norway has so far been able to manage the tertiary vocational education sector as an important political topic, and the sector has suffered from this lack of political attention. This is the background for why the Commission sees a dormant potential in tertiary vocational colleges.

The primary strength of tertiary vocational colleges is that their educational provisions are operated and developed in close cooperation with working life. This yields good opportunities for tailoring programmes to the continuous needs for vocational competence in working life. The educational provisions are flexible in that a substantial part of the provisions are distance learning and on a part-time basis. Tertiary vocational colleges function as both an independent educational pathway and as a further education opportunity. The tertiary vocational education sector plays a
key role in both recruitment to and professional development in, for example, the health sector, shipping and industry.

Highly competent independent skilled workers have become a competitive advantage in the knowledge society. More stringent demands for adaptation and continuing and further education, play to the special strengths of tertiary vocational colleges.

The tripartite cooperation on technical and vocational education provides a good starting point for adapting tertiary vocational colleges to new challenges.

There is a lot of good tertiary vocational education in Norway, but there is still room for improvement. Many sectors and industries have a substantial demand for tertiary vocational candidates, whereas other parts of the labour market still have not realised the expertise provided by tertiary vocational colleges. The objective is an overall tertiary vocational education sector that is efficient, provides education with quality and relevance and which has an appropriate division of labour, both internally and in the context of the other parts of the education system. A boost for tertiary vocational colleges in line with this objective must come through the three key players, which all have roles and obligations that must be followed up. These three players are the authorities, working life and tertiary vocational colleges. Today, we see a sector that has not been developed according to a long-term strategic approach, a sector that, among other things, has an unfortunate line of governance, with an inappropriate financing system and structure that is not ideal with a view toward quality. The sector's main challenges must be solved through coordinated effort from the three players, and these challenges are as follows:

- The unclear position and weak status of tertiary vocational colleges in the Norwegian education system
- Working life's lack of ownership of tertiary vocational colleges
- The need for bolstering the quality of tertiary vocational education
- Inappropriate and suboptimal administration of the tertiary vocational education sector, including an inappropriate structure
- Inadequate financing through an unsatisfactory financing system

**The need for a more comprehensive policy**

Building a more effective tertiary vocational education sector will demand more political action and greater political vision. Only through strategic and comprehensive decisions will the Norwegian education system be able to deliver the necessary competence to the Norwegian labour market, which in turn will contribute to increased welfare and value creation.

One of the most important areas with room for improvement in the Government's education policy is to develop a policy for a comprehensive tertiary level in the education system. The Commission is of the opinion that all involved parties can realise substantial gains from viewing tertiary vocational education and higher education as two equal parts of the same tertiary level. An appropriate division of labour between the two, not competition, should be the guiding principle for further development, not competition. This means that the Commission believes the current division of labour is suboptimal for both the tertiary vocational education sector and the university and university college sector. A better division of labour will entail a greater
realisation of the dormant potential of tertiary vocational colleges through a significant reinforcement and consolidation of the sector's independent place and role in the education system.

The primary objective is to develop a tertiary vocational education policy based on the social mission of tertiary vocational colleges and their importance for welfare and value creation. In order to achieve this, we e.g. need much more firm and clear central government control of the structure, scale and division of labour. The State must set framework conditions and predictable ground rules that shape these three aspects to a far greater extent than today. This is also one of the reasons why the Commission is proposing state ownership for all public tertiary vocational colleges. The Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education's (NIFU's) report on assignment from the Commission clearly shows that the Public Administration Reform has not had the effect one envisioned for the tertiary vocational education sector. At the same time, state ownership is most appropriate when the Commission wants to see the development of a comprehensive national policy for the tertiary level in the education system. The State, along with the parties in working life, must therefore play an important role in defining the tertiary vocational colleges' new role in the future labour market.

The Commission's thoughts concerning the State's role are a guiding principle for the Commission's overall proposal. This, in turn, means that the Commission's report and proposed measures cannot be seen as an à la carte list where one can select and follow up individual measures, while disregarding the rest. Many of the measures are very closely related and will not yield the desired effect without implementing the associated measures. For example, the proposed financing system will not function as intended if the State is not willing to take a sufficiently active role in controlling the dimensioning.

**The students**

This study has focused significantly on the State, tertiary vocational colleges and working life. The place of tertiary vocational colleges in the authorities' strategy for the Norwegian welfare state is obvious, but education also has a strong inherent value and importance for the individual that must not be underestimated. The Commission has therefore been concerned with developing a tertiary vocational education sector that is not only adapted to society's needs, but naturally also the wishes and needs of the students.

It is difficult to achieve the correct balance between the students' demand for education and society's demand for competence. The Commission wants to stress the importance of the intrinsic value of education for the individual, but is also of the opinion that there is a need for stronger national control of dimensioning in tertiary vocational colleges, given the sector's social mission and its strong connection to working life. More control will also benefit the students, particularly when combined with the best possible information about opportunities in the labour market and potential further education.

As regards legal protections, student welfare benefits and student fees, the case is more clear. Tertiary vocational college students have experienced negative differential treatment. This e.g. concerns a breach of principle of equal rights to education, given the fact that tertiary vocational education today often presumes the ability to pay high tuition fees. Tertiary vocational college students have inadequate legal protections; they have few student welfare benefits compared to students in higher education, and in many contexts they have simply been overlooked. The
Commission therefore proposes to elevate tertiary vocational college students to the same level as university and university college students as regards legal protections and student welfare, for example through membership in the student welfare organisations. Satisfactory legal protections and normal student welfare benefits will affect the learning environment, which in turn will strengthen both the quality and status of tertiary vocational colleges.

**Roles and division of responsibility**

Good governance requires clear roles, responsibilities and delegation of tasks. The State must play an active role to set ground rules and framework conditions, but the concrete control to elevate the quality and relevance of the individual education must primarily be assigned to the tertiary vocational colleges and working life, both the parties and enterprises. This area has room for improvement. The State's main task is to govern the sector through legislation and financing. The State must not think it can control the quality of the education, but the State must facilitate quality development through legislation and financing. Part of this responsibility entails taking charge to ensure that the sector has an institution structure that allows policy, vocational disciplines and leadership to work well together. The current structure of the tertiary vocational education sector is not appropriate.

Policy must be controlled at the national level. The academic environments must develop both at each individual institution and together through the proposed tertiary vocational councils. Good leadership must also be exercised on the boards of each individual institution. The national tertiary vocational councils are envisioned to have a crucial role in the academic development of the sector. Experience from e.g. the public health service shows the importance of having an academically controlled entity between institutional administrations and policy. Such an entity can function as an academic glue between leadership and policy and thus contribute to both better leadership and better policy.

In this context, NOKUT is also an important body that should be given a role as an academic glue between leadership and policy. NOKUT's independent role must be preserved, but NOKUT's work should, to a far greater extent than today, be shifted from advance approval of provisions to institutional accreditation, supervision and quality development.

Day-to-day political control must be at an arm's length distance in order to give tertiary vocational colleges and parties in working life latitude and responsibility. It is important for the success of tertiary vocational colleges that working life is given substantial influence on the work that takes place at the individual institution, and the Commission therefore proposes that the public tertiary vocational college boards have a majority of external members and an external chair.

**Robust institutions**

The requirement to build and maintain robust academic environments must be followed up by tertiary vocational colleges within the framework set by the national authorities. When the political processes have staked out a clear course for the sector, the sector must follow this up itself. In this context it is important to distinguish between robust institutions and robust academic environments. Robust institutions will usually concern size, efficient operations and professional administration. For tertiary vocational colleges, robust administration can also
involve developing and maintaining a well-developed and close cooperation with working life. Robust academic environments have a much stronger qualitative character and can therefore be difficult to precisely define. The Commission has chosen to rely on a definition stating that the minimum requirement for a robust academic environment is that the environment will prevail if certain members leave, and that the environment is reinforced through synergies where the big picture is more than the sum of its parts. Given this definition, the Commission believes that many of the current academic environments cannot be considered to be adequately robust. This is a problem for the sector as a whole.

The tertiary vocational education sector has a need for consolidation. It is important to preserve diversity in the sector, but it is beyond doubt that the current tertiary vocational education sector is too diversified and lacks structure and control. This means that the sector as a whole cannot be described as fulfilling the goal of efficiency and appropriate division of labour. This also weakens overall quality in the sector, both as regards academics and particularly as regards administration. The Commission therefore proposes that the State initiates a process where the objective is to develop larger regional public tertiary vocational colleges based on the 46 public tertiary vocational colleges that are currently in place. The State should own these new institutions. Focus must furthermore be placed on building robust institutions through internal processes. The State should therefore not embark upon evaluations of the appropriateness of individual campuses; this must be resolved by the institutions themselves determine within their own framework. However, one cannot rule out the existence of good academic arguments for the national authorities to preserve certain campuses and certain provisions of particular importance.

More robust institutions can and should be given more responsibility. A transition to institutional accreditation is an example of such responsibility. Robust and institutionally accredited tertiary vocational colleges will be better equipped to fulfil their social mission because they can more easily adapt to dynamic competence needs in working life and simultaneously improve the efficiency of the sector by freeing up significant resources that are currently used to approve individual studies, both at the institutions and NOKUT. However, they must first document that they are prepared to take on this responsibility. The Commission therefore proposes that institutional accreditation should be an absolute requirement for all public tertiary vocational colleges.

Private institutions

What about the private tertiary vocational colleges? Private providers of tertiary vocational education must be expected to ensure that their educational provisions are developed in line with the tertiary vocational education sector's social mission. Education in Norway is primarily in the public sphere, but there is no reason to exclude private stakeholders that can complement the public provisions. At the same time, requirements must be set for providers that want to operate in a market with a public seal of approval, which, in practice, is what they do through public accreditation and using the title tertiary vocational college. The Commission cannot see any good academic grounds for setting different requirements for private tertiary vocational colleges than for the public colleges. Private institutions should thus be assessed according to the same criteria for institutional accreditation. One should endeavour to preserve a certain balance between the structure for the public and private tertiary vocational colleges.

A large and diverse sector always runs the risk of throwing out the baby with the bath water when
spring cleaning approaches. The Commission has made every attempt to avoid this. The Commission therefore proposes that providers that do not fulfil the requirements for institutional accreditation, or simply do not want such a status, be allowed to retain their right to provide tertiary vocational education, insofar as each individual provision is approved by NOKUT in line with the defined requirements.

**Funding and dimensioning**

Robust institutions require predictability and adequate financing. The Commission views as a paradox the fact that the Norwegian authorities, across the divides of party politics, have always stood firm in guaranteeing an equal right to education, while more than 50% of the financing of the tertiary vocational education sector consists of fees from students. The Government should not be satisfied with such a situation. The State must take financial responsibility for the educational provisions that fulfil a defined need in working life, and which thus fulfil an important social mission. Covering a defined need for competence in working life is, and should remain, an absolute requirement for all tertiary vocational education. The Commission thus concludes that all accredited tertiary vocational colleges, both public and private, should eventually be fully financed by the State.

In order for the State to undertake full financing of the tertiary vocational education sector, the institutions must be sufficiently robust for their financial management to be well taken care of and the need in working life must be clear. This is the only way the State can be entirely confident that tertiary vocational colleges manage society's resources in an optimal manner. This points back to the need for a new institutional landscape in the tertiary vocational education sector and that robustness is made an absolute requirement in the accreditation process.

At the same time, the Commission is of the opinion that the national authorities must be far more involved in dimensioning the tertiary vocational education sector. The number of admissions must be defined based on working life's demand for labour and somewhat less according to the students' demand for programme admissions. Such a policy will also contribute to elevating the status of tertiary vocational colleges, because the educational provisions will be far better adapted to defined needs for competence in working life, thus and will bolstering the tertiary vocational candidates' opportunities and position in the labour market. However, the State cannot define this need in a vacuum. Tertiary vocational colleges aim to cover local, regional and national needs for competence and it is therefore important to involve both tertiary vocational colleges and working life in the dimensioning issue.

The Commission proposes the establishment of national tertiary vocational councils subordinate to the National Tertiary Vocational College Council. These councils will be led by professionals from the relevant tertiary vocational colleges, but the parties in working life should be secured adequate influence. For example, the councils should be tasked with assessing local, regional and national needs for competence within their own vocational discipline and sector. The assessments from the tertiary vocational councils shall be compiled by the National Tertiary Vocational College Council, which will submit a joint recommendation to the Ministry, which, following its own assessment, will present proposals concerning dimensioning and admissions framework in the Fiscal Budget. In addition to this task, the tertiary vocational councils should work for coordination and quality development across the institutions so that the system provides the students with adequate predictability and consistent high quality.
Given that the State is taking such responsibility for dimensioning, the Commission furthermore proposes a financing system consisting of three components: basic grant, unit price financing per student and development funds. The basic grant and unit price financing, along with the politically controlled dimensioning, will primarily lead to the necessary predictability, efficient use of resources and appropriate division of labour in line with the competence needed in working life. The State's governance will also prevent inappropriate growth in educational provisions, clear tendencies of which have been seen in the university and university college sector. The development funds will contribute to consistent, high-quality studies, but should still be the smallest of the three components.

**Quality and relevance**

The individual tertiary vocational colleges and the tertiary vocational education sector as a whole must have primary responsibility for good quality. The legislation and financing system may facilitate quality, but can never guarantee quality. The tertiary vocational colleges must therefore develop their own quality assurance systems based on prime requirements stipulated by NOKUT. Such a quality system provides a far better and more systematic basis for evaluating, securing and developing quality in all tertiary vocational education. The system must be continuously followed up by the individual tertiary vocational colleges, and NOKUT should use the system actively in its supervisory activities. The Commission believes it to be far more appropriate for NOKUT to concentrate more of its tertiary vocational college activity around supervision and quality development when resources are eventually released following the transition from approval of each individual educational provision to institutional accreditation.

The qualifications of the academic staff are an important aspect of the quality work. A large number of skilled people are currently teaching in Norwegian tertiary vocational colleges. The Commission is nevertheless of the opinion that qualification requirements must be raised and clarified, which will ensure a national standard on a par with all other parts of the education system. Clear qualification requirements will also contribute toward raising the status of tertiary vocational colleges. This point is also linked to the previous discussion concerning robustness in the academic communities.

National authorities are the right stakeholders to accredit and finance tertiary vocational colleges, as well as own the public tertiary vocational colleges. The relevance of the education, defined as adaptation to competence needed in working life, must be developed and safeguarded in the interaction between tertiary vocational colleges and working life. Working life's ownership of the tertiary vocational education sector must therefore be strengthened. Working life, both through the parties and apprenticeship enterprises, must be clear requisitioners and users of tertiary vocational skills, involve themselves in the development of educational provisions, and on a voluntary basis contribute both as an arena for professional training, with project assignments, guest lectures, exchange programmes for teachers and so forth. From a strictly formal standpoint, working life should be ensured by law to have influence in all decision-making bodies, but the individual tertiary vocational college and relevant local, regional and national working life must also independently develop its structures for collaboration and interaction.

**A vision for the future of Norwegian tertiary education**

The future is always uncertain and difficult to predict, but by analysing trends and processes we
can establish a basis for listing alternative future scenarios.

The Government has initiated a number of processes that the Commission perceives as a desire and will to make considerable changes to the Norwegian education system. Of particular relevance for the Commission's work are the Vocational Education and Training Promotion, the white paper on the structure of higher education, the expert commission for supervision and governance of private university colleges and tertiary vocational colleges and the expert commission for review of the financing of the university and university college sector.

Based on these processes, one hypothetical future scenario could be that the Government embarks on an extensive reform of the tertiary vocational education sector with a focus on building fewer, but larger and more robust institutions. At the same time, the Government should focus on building robust tertiary vocational colleges that provide more dynamic and more relevant tertiary vocational education in line with different parts of working life and different societal and individual competence needs. This should be done in a close relationship with the Vocational Education and Training Promotion in order to contribute toward good recruitment and development of attractive career paths for graduates. This indicates that the range of tertiary vocational education will be substantially strengthened, and the education must have a clear and real place in the Norwegian education landscape.

The Government has initiated a process concerning the structure of higher education where the objective is a more robust structure for institutions and a clearer role in society for higher education. Over time, one can then envision a more comprehensive tertiary vocational education sector becoming an equal part of Norwegian tertiary education, with appropriate transitions between institutions at the tertiary level. Tertiary vocational colleges shall be knowledge-based and development-oriented institutions that are given a clear social mission to provide tertiary vocational education within defined vocational disciplines that are prepared in close association with the affected players in local, regional and national working life. The tertiary vocational colleges of the future shall be robust institutions that can respond quickly to changing needs for competence. The tertiary vocational colleges shall be drivers for professional development and innovation within their vocational disciplines, but not subject to requirements for research and research-based education.

Changes to the tertiary vocational education sector will give tertiary vocational colleges a more equal standing with higher education than is the case today, both as regards recruitment and as independent stakeholders. One important aspect here is that this equality is not achieved by making tertiary vocational education more like higher education in an inappropriate manner, but rather by lifting tertiary vocational education on its own strengths and merits.

**The Commission's complete list of measures**

The Commission is presenting a total of 49 proposed measures that are primarily aimed at the authorities, tertiary vocational colleges and working life. As the Commission has mentioned, these three stakeholders must all, both individually and together, take stronger ownership of the tertiary vocational education sector. A comprehensive tertiary vocational education policy must be developed for the three players to implement together. Below, the Commission will present its complete list of measures, sorted by the target of the measures. Several of the measures must be followed up in parallel by multiple parties and will therefore occur more than once. A newly developed and modern system to govern, dimension and finance tertiary vocational colleges is, in
practice, a comprehensive tertiary vocational education policy the sector sorely needs.

The State should:

- give accredited tertiary vocational colleges the authority to stipulate more detailed provisions concerning admission requirements, including Higher Education Entrance Qualification or trade/journeyman’s certificates in addition to Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). Tertiary vocational colleges with approved educational provisions should adhere to applicable admission rules.

- prepare national admissions regulations for tertiary vocational colleges.

- conduct a review of the Tertiary Vocational Education Act and the Student Welfare Association Act in order to strengthen students' rights, including considering the introduction of a right and obligation to membership for tertiary vocational colleges in student welfare associations.

- intensify governance and supervision of how the higher education institutions and the tertiary vocational colleges apply the national admissions regulations.

- ensure that the counselling service in primary, lower and upper secondary school and the regional career centres reinforce their competence in tertiary vocational education in order to contribute toward visibility and recruitment to tertiary vocational education.

- introduce additional points for tertiary vocational education with a duration of at least one year.

- consider amendments to statutes and regulations in order to protect titles for tertiary vocational candidates, which includes considering whether a two-year tertiary vocational education shall yield the degree tertiary vocational candidate.

- grant funds for cooperation projects to develop transitional schemes between tertiary vocational colleges and higher education institutions.

- consider whether admission to tertiary vocational colleges should be handled by the Joint Student Administration Service or other relevant bodies.

- take initiative for amendments to the Tertiary Vocational Education Act so that the tertiary vocational colleges issue diplomas documenting completed education.

- ensure that tertiary vocational colleges have adequate framework conditions to provide flexible educational provisions, including web-based education.

- bolster its efforts to promote tertiary vocational college as an attractive career path.

- initiate a process aimed at transferring ownership of public tertiary vocational colleges from county authorities to the State. The tertiary vocational colleges should be organised as state administrative bodies with special authorisations.

- initiate a process that will lead to a reduction in the number of tertiary vocational colleges in order to create robust academic environments and strengthen quality. The number of public tertiary vocational colleges should be reduced to roughly between five and nine.

- implement statutory and regulatory amendments with a view towards introducing institutional accreditation according to certain criteria for tertiary vocational colleges.
Such approval will be a precondition for the title of accredited tertiary vocational college. Accredited tertiary vocational colleges can create educational provisions themselves within the financial framework set by the authorities.

− prepare the terms for achieving accreditation so that private tertiary vocational colleges are also stimulated to develop robust entities.

− delegate accreditation authority to NOKUT.

− set statutory requirements stipulating that private tertiary vocational colleges seeking accreditation must be organised as a limited company, foundation or association. This measure must be coordinated with any conclusions from the expert commission for supervision and governance of private university colleges and tertiary vocational colleges.

− set national statutory requirements for all public tertiary vocational colleges to have a majority of external representation on their boards and external chairs. The private tertiary vocational colleges should be required to have external representation on their boards, but not necessarily a majority. Private tertiary vocational colleges that want to apply for public financing, must have an external majority and external chair in line with the rules for public tertiary vocational colleges.

− set statutory requirements stipulating that teaching staff and students shall be represented on the boards of both public and private tertiary vocational colleges.

− set statutory requirements stipulating that the rectors of all public tertiary vocational colleges shall be appointed by the board of the tertiary vocational college. The same should apply for private tertiary vocational colleges that receive public funds.

− commission an external evaluation of the National Tertiary Vocational College Council.

− revise the mandate and composition of the National Tertiary Vocational College Council with the goal of having the Council take on greater responsibility in order to compile the needs of working life for tertiary vocational competence, and otherwise strengthen the Council's contributions to policy development in the tertiary vocational education sector.

− as part of the revision of the National Tertiary Vocational College Council's mandate, ask the Council to create national tertiary vocational councils that advise in connection with dimensioning educational provisions within their own vocational disciplines, and be given a coordinating role for quality development, including enrolment and development of recommended national curricula. The State should ensure that the councils are led by leading professionals within their specific vocational discipline.

− require all tertiary vocational colleges to have a satisfactory quality system, and assign NOKUT to verify that the tertiary vocational colleges' quality systems fulfil requirements and check that the systems are used.

− set statutory requirements stipulating supervised professional training in all tertiary vocational education, presuming a broad definition of the term 'supervised professional training'.

− raise the requirement for approved teaching staff so that it includes technical expertise, relevant and up-to-date vocational experience and teaching/didactic competence.
provide training in vocational teaching subjects for teaching staff at tertiary vocational colleges.

- initiate a mapping of the extent to which businesses and enterprises have strategies and surveys of their need for continuing and further education.

- grant funds to strengthen the knowledge basis concerning tertiary vocational education through increased research efforts.

- coordinate all financing of tertiary vocational colleges under a single financing scheme for tertiary vocational colleges which is made a State responsibility under the Ministry of Education and Research.

- ensure that a new financing scheme for tertiary vocational colleges is founded on the principle of real cost coverage for tertiary vocational education, and conduct a thorough mapping of the costs associated with operation and development of different types of tertiary vocational education.

- introduce a financing scheme in line with the Commission's "candidate-student model with development funds". The system should consist of three main elements: a basic grant, result-based grants and development funds. The system should be based on differentiated categories with associated rates.

- inject new funds into the tertiary vocational education sector through a financing scheme that provides real cost coverage, and fresh development funds that should amount to about 15–20 per cent of the budget framework.

- include institutionally accredited private tertiary vocational colleges in public financing from when their application for financing is approved.

- introduce a separate programme category for tertiary vocational colleges in the Fiscal Budget.

- dimension the number of admissions to study programmes in the sector through the establishment of an admissions framework and assign places on the basis of documented needs for competence and input from the National Tertiary Vocational College Council and the national tertiary vocational councils. The dimensioning should be defined as a governance instrument for the State.

- allocate a share of strategic, and free, admissions that the tertiary vocational colleges themselves can distribute or use to establish new provisions as needed and in order to maintain a certain dynamic in the range of tertiary vocational education.

Tertiary vocational colleges should:

- bolster their efforts to promote tertiary vocational college as an attractive career path.

- actively contribute in a structural process with the objective of building more robust tertiary vocational colleges, both academically and administratively.

- make qualified academic staff available for participation in the proposed national tertiary vocational councils.

- design an exchange system that allows teachers at tertiary vocational colleges to further
their competence and experience with relevant working life.

− give teaching staff the opportunity to participate in vocational teaching education as needed.

The social partners, employee and employer organisations and apprenticeship enterprises should:

− bolster their efforts to promote tertiary vocational college as an attractive career path.

− increase their knowledge concerning tertiary vocational education. The National Tertiary Vocational College Council and underlying national tertiary vocational councils should play a key role in the information work.

− help ensure that businesses and enterprises step up as arenas for apprenticeship in order to satisfy the proposed practical experience requirement. Working life representatives in the National Tertiary Vocational College Council should have a special responsibility.

− in a clearer and more concrete way, communicate their future needs for competence to the tertiary vocational education sector. The National Tertiary Vocational College Council and underlying national tertiary vocational councils could be a relevant arena and contributor in this work.

− bolster their efforts to promote and embed tertiary vocational college as an attractive career path.

Universities and university colleges should:

− conduct more thorough assessments concerning recognition of tertiary vocational education in higher education based on the different educations' overall learning outcome.