

# FACT SHEET

## **White Paper on Teacher Education “The teacher – the role and the education” (Report to the Storting No. 11 (2008-2009))**

### **Principal elements**

The Government is proposing a new teacher education programme for primary and lower secondary education with a stronger emphasis on subject knowledge and teaching skills, quality of studies and research orientation.

Its principal elements are as follows:

- Two equal programmes geared to the different levels of schooling
- *Pedagogy and pupil-related skills (PPS)* – a new, expanded educational science subject
- Improved quality of practical training
- Mentoring for all newly qualified teachers
- Increased recruitment – new paths to the teaching profession
- Centres of teaching excellence
- National research school

### **Challenges facing primary and lower secondary education and teacher education**

The Norwegian school system has many good sides and the majority of pupils enjoy school and develop a strong sense of self-confidence. At the same time, international surveys and national tests have shown that Norwegian pupils possess weaker subject-matter knowledge than could be desired. There is little systematic use in the school setting of new knowledge about learning and school development. Teacher education also faces challenges that need to be addressed.

In the White Paper on Teacher Education entitled “The teacher – the role and the education”, the Government is putting forward proposals for action aimed at further improving the school system and teacher education by:

- Improving the quality of teacher education
- Increasing recruitment to the teaching profession and to teacher education
- Providing closer follow-up of and support to newly qualified teachers
- Conducting more R&D relevant for initial training and teacher education

### **The teacher**

The teacher is instrumental to the learning of pupils in school and expectations placed on today’s teachers are more comprehensive than ever before. The primary task of the teacher is to prepare and guide the pupils’ learning process in a systematic manner. Good teachers possess sound subject knowledge, give relevant and fair responses and adapt instruction to their pupils and the subjects taught.

The White Paper sets out the fundamental areas of competence essential for all teachers:

- Competence in school subjects and in how subjects may contribute to the learning of basic skills
- Understanding the school’s purpose and its significance to society at large

- Ethical awareness in line with the school's value base
- Educational theory and subject didactics, i.e. insight into how children and young people learn, and the ability to plan, deliver and assess instruction to promote pupil learning
- Authority and skills in guiding learning processes in a diverse, complex group of pupils
- Ability to cooperate and communicate with pupils, parents, colleagues and other partners inside and outside the school
- Change and development skills and the ability to reflect critically on their own and the school's practice.

It is the sum total of these various areas of competence that forms the basis for exercising the teaching profession. Teaching competence must be developed during initial teacher education and further developed and renewed throughout the entire teaching career.

### **New, dual-level teacher education for primary and lower secondary education**

Primary and lower secondary education needs teachers with more specialised skills in the subjects and the level taught. The Government proposes to reorganise the existing general teacher education programme into a new system of primary and lower secondary teacher education split into two equal streams:

- Grades 1- 7: emphasis on beginner-level instruction, normally four school subjects, among which Norwegian and mathematics are compulsory; at least one subject must consist of 60 credits (1-year full-time studies);
- Grades 5-10: normally three school subjects consisting of 60 credits, no compulsory subjects; with the option to specialise in a specific area, e.g. science subjects, language subjects or practical-esthetical subjects
- Both streams: a new compulsory educational science subject – pedagogy and pupil-related skills (PPS) – consisting of 60 credits; subject didactics and practical training in all subjects; a structure securing a focus on the teaching profession and coherence between the various parts of the programme.

The Qualifications Regulations stipulate a requirement of 60 credits to be qualified to teach in Norwegian/Sámi, mathematics and English at lower secondary level. The White Paper opens a hearing process on the proposal to further increase the requirements set out in the Regulations. The proposed reorganisation of teacher education will mean that teachers at lower secondary level will normally have 60 credits in three school subjects, whereas teachers at primary level will normally have at least 30 credits in at least three school subjects and 60 credits in one subject.

### **New subject: *pedagogy and pupil-related skills (PPS)***

To strengthen the role of the teacher and teacher education, the Government is proposing a new, expanded educational science subject – PPS - comprising 60 credits. The new subject is intended to fulfil three main functions: ensure the necessary subject-knowledge platform, provide methodological competence and develop skills in addressing relational and social issues. Staff teaching this subject must work more closely with other lecturers and teaching practice supervisors. The subject will continue to form the scientific basis for teacher education, but should also be practice-oriented. It is meant as a tool to develop the ability for critical reflection on and renewal of own practice for student teachers, teachers and teacher educators. Emphasis is to be placed on the importance of ensuring that pupils learn basic skills.

The content of PPS must reflect the challenges of guiding learning processes in an inclusive school environment involving a great diversity of pupils. The subject should enable future teachers to respond to their pupils' social problems and other issues impeding the learning process. Student teachers must be given insight into how the school may contribute, in collaboration with other bodies, to resolving such problems.

### **Reinforcing teaching practice**

The quality of teaching practice and the relationship between working experience and other parts of the education programme must be reinforced.

The Ministry will:

- Establish a system of quality assurance for teaching practice schools, supervisors and of the practical training given, setting out well-defined criteria and requirements that must be met
- Establish requirements for partnership agreements between teacher education institutions and school owners
- Draw up clear-cut goals for the individual periods of teaching practice, incorporating progress requirements between such periods
- Draw up a common frame of reference for the assessment of students' learning in practice
- Link topics of working experience to the activities of the subjects/educational science subject, as well as to the bachelor's thesis in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the programme.

### **Gradual enlargement of master's programmes**

#### **- conducting a study on a 5-year master's programme for primary and lower secondary school teachers**

Increasing the number of teachers in primary and lower secondary education holding a master's degree is desirable. The objective is to be able to offer 800 places at master's level for primary and lower secondary school teachers by 2014. In the interim period, efforts will be made to enhance the quality of the 4-year primary and lower secondary school teacher education programme, expand the research expertise of academic staff, develop a sound structure of cooperation between institutions and design a master's programme that meets the needs of primary and lower secondary education. To ensure that master's programmes are developed to meet the needs of the school system and to satisfy the subject-specific requirements of master's degree studies, the Ministry will appoint an Expert Committee. Its terms of reference will include a study of the need for cooperation between the different teacher education institutions, including the challenges facing the smallest university colleges, and consider if and when it would be appropriate to implement a full transition to a 5-year master's programme for all teachers in primary and lower secondary education.

### **Enhanced quality of education and research**

Teacher education must be research-based, development-oriented and adaptable. The new teacher education is to hold a high standard and place exacting demands on the students who complete the programme. Increasing the quality requirements of the school system presupposes teachers who contribute to school development and who are capable of improving their own teaching practice through professional self-improvement.

Teacher education institutions must apply the quality assurance system to achieve targeted development of the education given. Instruction and R&D activities must incorporate new national and international knowledge about schools and teacher education, about pupils'

learning and development and about changes in the school system and society at large. Hence teacher education institutions will be required to establish good arenas for academic discourse and interaction with the professional community. Teacher education must be updated on and contribute to research on teaching and the school system and on teacher education itself.

To improve the quality of education, the Ministry will establish a pilot project with Centres of teaching excellence for teacher education and a national research school for teacher education.

### **National supervision and control**

Implementing the measures set out in the White Paper will require concerted action on the part of all players involved. Education institutions will be responsible for working continuously on the academic quality and relevance of education and research. School owners will be responsible for working together with teacher education institutions to establish good arenas for teaching practice. School owners must state explicitly what their expectations are in terms of teachers' subject combinations and in-depth subject knowledge.

The Ministry will assume clear overriding responsibility for supervising and controlling the quality of education. This will require a set of policy instruments *inter alia* linked to curriculum regulations, policy dialogue, activity requirements, capacity design, performance measurements, indicators, institutional cooperation and division of work.

The Ministry will appoint a follow-up group commissioned to compile necessary information over a period of years to provide a clear overview of the situation and to assess developments at national as well as local level in terms of processes, quality and results. The follow-up group will provide advice to the Ministry and to institutions.

### **Increased recruitment**

The coming years will see the need for an increased supply of motivated teachers with high subject-knowledge and pedagogical skills in all parts of the country. Estimates by Statistics Norway show that there may be a shortage of teachers in the years to come unless action is taken.

Increasing the number of applicants to teacher education is a prerequisite for improving the supply of teachers. Sound and relevant teacher education is the most effective means of securing the school system the necessary supply of qualified teachers. It will also contribute to enhancing the status and standing of the teaching profession. Furthermore, elevating the status of the teaching profession will increase the chances that more will choose the profession and make a career there.

In the short term, the Ministry has allocated funds in this year's budget for 180 new student places in the 1-year programme in educational theory and practice, which has attracted a large number of applicants. The Ministry will determine the capacity of teacher education in the annual national budget. To increase the supply of competent, motivated teachers the Ministry has decided to launch a national recruitment campaign. A special scheme has also been adopted for the write-off of student loans for teachers in certain subjects. Furthermore, the Ministry aims to test a scheme for adjunct lecturers (*lektor II-ordning*) and a trainee programme for especially competent candidates.

The Ministry will closely follow trends in the number of applicants and take a closer look at the question of admission requirements. The Ministry expects teacher education institutions to implement measures to reduce the number of drop-outs and improve completion rates.

### **Mentoring for all newly qualified teachers**

The first years of a teaching career are important ones. It is during this period in particular that the teacher develops his/her professional identity. Positive experience has been gained from a scheme of follow-up and mentoring of newly qualified teachers. Hence the Ministry would like to see that all new teachers are offered mentoring through the established scheme. Allocations to the scheme will be doubled in 2009 to a total of NOK 33 million, which should result in a significant increase in the number of teachers in primary and lower and upper secondary education to whom such mentoring may be offered.

The Ministry has entered into a cooperation agreement with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities aimed at offering mentoring to all newly qualified teachers in primary and lower and upper secondary education as from the 2010-2011 academic year.

Prepared by:  
The Ministry of Education and Research  
February 2009-03-01  
[www.kunnskapsdepartementet.no](http://www.kunnskapsdepartementet.no)