

# The Danish Teacher Education Programme

B. Ed. programme for primary and lower secondary schools

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# 1. Introduction

The objective of the B. Ed. Programme for primary and lower secondary school teachers is to educate teachers for the primary and lower secondary school and to provide a basis for continued professional development.

With a view to their profession-oriented function as primary and lower secondary school teachers, the programme is to:

*Provide the students with the knowledge and skills necessary to function as academically, didactically and pedagogically competent teachers in the Danish school system (Folkeskolen).*

Graduates of the teacher education programme have the right to use the title of Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.). The education is placed at level six within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The programme provides a general qualification for teaching in the primary and lower secondary school. However from 2020, the goal is for the teachers to teach their main subjects only. Approximately two thirds of qualified teachers work in the primary and lower secondary school. The final third are mainly involved in other education such as at private schools, vocational colleges, folk high schools, adult education and social institutions. Some teachers are employed in private enterprises.

The programme opens the doors to different opportunities for continued professional development, inter alia through

- Modules leading to qualifications in main subjects
- Further education as teaching practice tutors
- Educational diploma programmes
- The Master of Education degree
- Other relevant Master's programmes

To the greatest possible extent, the teaching of the programme should include the results of national and international research and experimental and innovative work relevant to the teaching profession and suited to contributing to the development and application of new professional knowledge.

## Who offers the programme?

The teacher education programme is institutionally situated at one of the seven university colleges in Denmark:

- University College of Northern Denmark ([www.ucnorth.dk](http://www.ucnorth.dk))
- VIA University College ([www.viauc.com](http://www.viauc.com))
- University College of Southern Denmark (<http://www.ucsyd.dk/international>)
- University College Lillebaelt ([international.ucl.dk](http://international.ucl.dk))
- University College Zealand (<http://ucsj.dk/english>)

- University College Capital ([www.ucc.dk/international](http://www.ucc.dk/international))
- Metropolitan University College (<http://www.phmetropol.dk/English>)

University colleges are non-profit institutions under public administration. University colleges offer professional bachelor programmes as well as in-service education and further education in connection with this, which ensure that the region is covered geographically.

The university colleges are encouraged to engage in cooperation with universities, academies of music and other relevant institutions of higher education with a view to the implementation and development of the teacher education programme.

## 2. The structure of the programme

The Teacher Education is a four year programme, corresponding to 240 points in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS points). A student's fulltime work for one year corresponds to 60 ECTS points.

The programme consists of the following four main elements:

- The teacher's foundational competences (60 ECTS points).
- Main subjects (140 ECTS points)
- Teaching practice (30 ECTS points)
- Bachelor of Education project (10 ECTS points)

The structure of the teacher programme allows for the substitution of up to 20 ECTS points from the main subjects by placing them under 'The teacher's foundational competences' and/or the Bachelor of Education project (see the table below), in order to allow for different kinds of teacher profiles or specializations. Irrespective of this, the total number of ECTS points in the teacher training programme is always exactly 240 ECTS points.

| (In ECTS points)              | Basis | Flexibility |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------------|
| Teacher's foundational comp.  | 60    | Up to 80    |
| Main subjects                 | 140   | Down to 120 |
| Bachelor of Education project | 10    | Up to 20    |

The building blocks of the teacher programme are modules of 10 to 20 ECTS points (5 – 15 ECTS for teaching practice modules). These modules involve either: (a) specific subjects, (b) interdisciplinary subjects or (c) cross-professional subjects.

There is no standard curriculum defining the content of the teacher education programme. Instead, the programme is centrally defined through output-based areas of competence, each constituted by a number of practice oriented skills and corresponding knowledge objectives.

The student's mastery of the teacher competences is based on a three level taxonomy:

1. At the most basic level, the student is expected to be able to reproduce and identify relevant knowledge and skills and explain basic processes
2. At the intermediate level, the student is expected to be able to establish connections between coursework and practice, and to analyse educational situations and challenges through the application of acquired knowledge and skills and, on the basis of this, act in pedagogical practice
3. At the advanced level, the student can reflect on and evaluate new educational situations and challenges that demand independent assessments and alternative ways of action in pedagogical practice

## The teacher's foundational competences

'The teacher's foundational competences' is subdivided into two clusters: 'Pedagogy and the teaching profession' and 'General education'. *Pedagogy and the teaching profession* prepares the student for developing the fundamental teaching competences needed to ensure the pupils' learning, development and well-being. *General education* prepares the student for implementing the mission statement of the Danish school system: to develop professional ethics and to deal with complex challenges within the teaching profession in the context of cultural, value-based and religious pluralism.

This part of the teacher education programme is mandatory for all students; however there is a possibility for different kinds of profiles and specializations.

'Pedagogy and the teaching profession' consists of four areas of competence:

- Pupils' learning and development
- General teaching proficiency
- Special needs and remedial training
- Danish as a second language

'General education' consists of one area of competence:

- Studies of Christianity/philosophy of life/citizenship (KLM)

## Main subjects

The main subjects provide the student with subject-specific knowledge and skills. They constitute the students' primary areas of teaching competence vis-à-vis the Danish schools.

The student is expected to qualify to teach at least two main subjects, with three main subjects being the norm. A student with only two main subjects is expected to have significant specialized knowledge of their chosen subjects.

All main subjects in the teacher education programme correspond directly to the core subjects taught in Danish schools.

The students choose their main subjects among the following options:

- Art
- Biology
- Studies of Christianity and other religions

- Crafts & design
- Danish (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Danish (4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grade)
- English (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade)
- English (4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grade)
- French
- Geography
- German
- History
- Mathematics (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Mathematics (4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Music
- Natural science/technology
- Nutrition knowledge (home economics/domestic science)
- Physical education (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Physical education (4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Physics/chemistry
- Social studies

All main subjects are based on subject specific knowledge, didactics and pedagogy. In addition, the main subjects each include subject specific knowledge and skill objectives aimed at inclusion, information- and communication technology as a teaching tool, teaching bilingual pupils, innovation and cross-professional cooperation.

To ensure a uniform standard, admission to modules under the main subjects is conditional on the student having adequate academic qualifications in the specific subjects based on their upper secondary degree. A student can also be allowed admission based on an individual evaluation of other forms of qualifications.

## Teaching practice

The main objective of the teaching practice is to strengthen the student's understanding of and ability to link theory and practice and for the student to acquire theoretically based practical skills with the purpose of preparing, implementing, evaluating and developing their teaching. The teaching practice also aims to develop the student's proficiency in interacting with parents, teachers and other professional partners.

During teaching practice, the student teaches children and participates in other teacher tasks at a primary and/or lower secondary school, a private school at the same levels, or at a continuation school, under the guidance of one or more teaching practice tutors.

With the approval of the university college, the teaching period may take place in schools abroad, typically in connection with a study visit that has been organized and approved by the educational institution.

The teaching practice is organized according to three progressively advanced competence objectives that each is divided into the following areas of competence:

- Didactics

- Class management
- Relations and cooperation

## The Bachelor of Education project

The Bachelor of Education project tests the student's ability to independently research, investigate, develop and communicate as the basis for professional analysis, evaluation, and action-oriented reflection on tasks and challenges within the teaching profession.

The project is based on a concrete empirical problem from the Danish primary and/or lower secondary school system or from other equivalent school programmes. The project has to include research- and development-based literature and studies.

## 3. Exams

Testing in the teacher education programme consists of (a) evaluations of modules and (b) examinations on the basis of competence objectives.

Each module within the teaching programme must be evaluated in order to be credited. . The evaluation of modules can take place in one of two ways: either based on objective participation requirements, or based on exams that must be passed. Participation requirements can involve mandatory attendance, written assignments, student presentations, portfolios or other forms of student products.

The teacher education programme states the minimum number of required modules necessary for the student to become eligible for examination in a specific subject.

To complete the training programme, the student must complete modules equal to 240 ECTS points and pass a number of subject exams (see table below) based on the competence objectives of the subject in question.

| Subject                                | number of exams    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Teacher's foundational comp:</b>    |                    |
| - Pedagogy and the teaching profession | 2                  |
| - General education                    | 1                  |
| <b>Main subjects:</b>                  | 1 per main subject |
| <b>Practice training:</b>              | 3                  |
| <b>Bachelor of Education project:</b>  | 1                  |

The examinations can take on a number of different forms. The study programme lists the specific examination mode(s) for each subject. Most examinations are conducted with an external examiner.

All examinations in competence objectives are graded on the Danish 7-point grading scale.

A body of external examiners appointed by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education undertakes quality supervision of the examinations.

## 4. Extracurricular courses

The teacher training programme offers the student a number of voluntary extracurricular courses that prepare the student for a number of auxiliary functions in relation to the teaching profession and the Danish school systems.

Courses include:

- Traffic safety and first aid
- Health and sexual education and family knowledge
- Education and jobs
- Kinaesthetic and other non-verbal teaching methods
- Advanced writing and rhetoric

## 5. Admission

Admission into the teacher education programme is conditioned by the eligibility of the applicant, involving both educational prerequisites and minimum grade point average requirements. For some applicants a passed entrance exam might be required.

### **Educational admission prerequisites**

Admission to teacher education requires that the student has completed upper secondary education in the form of one of the below:

Main avenues:

- Upper secondary school examination (stx),
- Higher preparatory examination (hf )
- Higher commercial examination (hhx)
- Higher technical examination (htx)
- Vocational education examination qualifying for access to higher education (eux)

Other avenues:

- Faeroese upper secondary school examination
- Faeroese higher preparatory examination
- Faeroese higher commercial examination
- Faeroese higher technical examination
- Vocational upper secondary education for the higher commercial examination in Greenland

- Greenland upper secondary education (GU examination)
- Vocational upper secondary education for the higher technical examination in Greenland
- The examination from Duborgskolen, Germany
- Special upper secondary programme for non-Danish speaking pupils (GIF)
- Danish/French Baccalaureate (DFB)
- European Baccalaureate (EB)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB)
- A foreign examination that ranks alongside a Danish upper secondary examination or which the institution applied to has assessed as comparable to a Danish upper secondary examination.

The institution can allow the applicant to seek admission on a basis other than the established admission requirements if, after an assessment of prior qualifications, the applicant is judged to have academic qualifications that are comparable to the established requirements, and if the institutions assesses that the applicant will be able to complete the training programme.

## Grade point average requirements and entrance exams

Applicants that fulfil the educational prerequisites will be eligible for admission into the teacher education programme through one of two selection processes:

First, available study places will be reserved for applicants who have achieved a grade point average (GPA) of at least 7.0 ('C' on the ECTS scale) from their qualifying upper secondary education. The available study places will be offered to applicants based on their GPA from high to low.

Second, any remaining study places will be granted to applicants on the basis of an entrance examination. The entrance exam is based on the principle of multiple mini- interviews (MMI), and the exam tests the applicants' performance on the following dimensions:

- Motivation
- Cognitive ability
- Cooperation and personal integrity
- Communicative ability
- Ethical understanding
- Understanding of professional texts

The applicant is given between 1 and 7 points on each of the six dimensions, with 1 being a poor performance and 7 being an outstanding performance. The applicant is also given a number of points equal to 1.5 times the applicant's grade point average (e.g. a GPA of 4.0 equals 6.0 points). An applicant must score at least a total of 30 points to become eligible for an available study place. An applicant who scores below 30 points is rejected and can apply again no earlier than the following year.

Available study places are offered to applicants based on their total score from high to low.

## 6. Information for students

Tuition is covered by the state and is without charge for the students according to the rules governing the public higher education system. However, the students themselves must acquire the relevant teaching materials. The education programme gives the right to receive Danish Education Support (SU) in accordance with the current rules.

Students must participate actively in the training programme according to the requirements of the teacher education programme curriculum. Attendance is compulsory during all teaching practice periods.

The programme is structured differently from institution to institution.

In addition to daytime classes, a number of educational institutions offer flexible teaching in the form of e.g. e-learning and evening classes.

University Colleges may offer parts of the teacher training programme in English.

## 7. College tutors' (teacher educator) qualifications

The B. Ed. training programme is a professional bachelor programme. The teaching staff of the programme as a whole must have a level of qualification that is higher than that of the final level of the programme.

By level of qualification is meant educational competence and documented theoretical, academic and/or professional competence.

Teachers at the teacher education programme will typically have a university degree at Master's level that is relevant for the teaching profession or teacher education supplemented by relevant in-service training. An increasing number of teachers also have Ph.D. qualifications.

## 8. The merit-teacher education: an alternative teacher qualification pathway

The merit-teacher programme is an alternative pathway to teacher qualification in the Danish school system.

The merit-teacher programme is a two and a half year programme, corresponding to 150 ECTS points. The programme consists of the following three main elements:

- Pedagogy and the teaching profession
- 2-4 Main subjects
- Teaching practice (level III only)

The directives concerning modules, exams and competence objectives are the same as for the ordinary teacher education programme.

The merit-teacher programme addresses students who already have previous vocational work experience and/or a higher education degree within a different field of study. The student is to receive study credits (merit) from previous relevant work and/or studies.

The following criteria determine eligibility for the programme:

- 1) The applicant must have completed a Master's, Bachelor's or Professional Bachelor's degree

OR

- 2) The applicant fulfils the following criteria:
  - a) is at least 25 years of age
  - b) has completed a vocational training programme (at upper secondary level or above)
  - c) has at least two years of work experience

Applicants can also be accepted to the programme based on an individual evaluation of the applicant's qualifications and competences.

The merit-teacher education is considered as continued professional development (CPD) and students are charged a tuition fee.