

Right to establish student councils in VET schools

Denmark

DESCRIPTION

In Denmark, the formation of **student councils in VET schools is a right** established by a dedicated [Ministerial Order](#). They are not mandatory, but their formation is strongly encouraged, and, in schools where they do not exist, the school managers are obliged to inform learners of their right to establish one and to **provide support in establishing them**. The Ministerial Order also prescribes that, where student councils are established, **students** must be **represented on the institutions' board of directors** with two representatives, one of whom **holding voting rights**. This voting member can vote on all issues related to the VET institution, **including matters of administration, budgets, and teaching**.

Despite the strong encouragement in the Ministerial Order, **many VET schools do not have student councils**. In a survey conducted by the Confederation of Danish Student Councils in VET schools (*EEO, Erhvervsskolernes Elevorganisation*), this is explained by a **lack of commitment among learners** and by **practical barriers preventing them from participating**, notably the fact that they spend most of their learning trajectory as apprentices in enterprises. In addition, many learners felt that the efforts of the **student council had little real impact on their conditions**.

To address these challenges, in 2021, the EEO took the initiative to produce a [handbook](#) with **practical information for establishing and running student councils**, backed up by relevant documentation (such as the Ministerial Order) and examples of good practice. This handbook is based on a study of the conditions of student councils in selected VET schools in Denmark, and it covers topics such as systematic learner involvement in VET school governance, how to engage and motivate learners for participation in student councils, and how to overcome the barrier of participating in student councils while on a placement period in an enterprise.