

The Adult Education Act

No. 27, 31 March 2010

CHAPTER I Scope, Aim and Definitions

Article 1

Scope

This Act covers the organisation of adult education by education and training providers that receive accreditation based on the Act, and public allocation for its implementation.

Article 2

Objectives

The objectives of adult education according to this Act are:

- a. to provide increased opportunities for active participation in society to individuals with short formal education,
- b. to provide suitable education and training opportunities to individuals on the labour market, who have short formal education, and enable them to recommence their studies,
- c. to provide individuals with a way to increase their vocational skills and enhance their responsibilities in that respect
- d. to create the necessary scope and solutions to meet the demands of industry for increased knowledge and competences of employees,
- e. to provide adult education to individuals with reduced educational and professional opportunities, taking into account their competences and unequal situation,
- f. to support the recognition of the value of education and training that is acquired outside of the formal education system and
- g. to increase the general educational level and strengthen the Icelandic education system.

Article 3

Definitions

The definitions of the terms presented in this Act are as follows:

- a. *Adult education*: Any kind of study, solution or counselling that is meant to meet the needs of individuals with short formal education and is not based on legislation for upper-secondary education or higher education.
- b. *Recognition of non-formal and informal learning*: Organised process applied to evaluate formally the general knowledge and competences of an individual. The evaluation may be based on the individual's education, work experience, vocational training, leisure courses, adult education, social activities and life experience.
- c. *Education and training provider*: Independent legal entity that provides adult education and has received accreditation from the Minister of Education, Science and Culture on the basis of this Act.

CHAPTER II Structure of adult education

Article 4

Administration

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture, governs the affairs of adult education according to this Act. This entails responsibility for:

- a. general policy making for adult education in consultation with stakeholders,
- b. general administration for the implementation of the Act,
- c. affairs of the Education and Training Fund,
- d. support for development and innovation in the field of adult education and
- e. supervision and evaluation.

Article 5

Organisation

Adult education shall be focused on the needs of individuals in order to encourage their active participation in society and industry. The organisation of courses offered shall enable individuals to study in parallel with their employment. The confederations of employers and employees shall be consulted in the implementation of this Act and the Minister of Education, Science and Culture may assign tasks related to its implementation to individual institutions or associations cf. Article 15.

Education and training providers that operate on the basis of this Act shall be consulted regularly regarding implementation of adult education. When organising adult education, an effort should be made to ensure its compatibility with other studies and ensure that studies, defined as adult education, can be evaluated for credits within the formal education system. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may issue a Regulation regarding categorisation and levels of adult education based on learning outcomes.

Article 6

Certification of curricula

Curricula or course descriptions shall be written, describing the objectives of adult education, its organisation and content.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture, or a body assigned the task by the Minister cf. Article 15, shall certify individual curricula and course descriptions. The certification entails a confirmation that the study fulfils general requirements for the organisation and quality of teaching, as well as the specific requirements made in each case regarding study content.

Article 7

Accreditation of education and training providers

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture, or a body assigned the task by the Minister, provides accreditation to adult education and training providers. The accreditation shall be based on evaluation of the following:

- a. teaching and learning facilities,
- b. organisation and supervision of studies,
- c. curricula or course descriptions,
- d. the competences of adult education providers, with regard to their knowledge and experience,
- e. financial issues and insurance, and
- f. the existence of a quality control system focused on adult education.

The Minister's accreditation cf. paragraph 2 entails a confirmation that the operation of the relevant education and training provider fulfils the requirements of this Act and Regulations thereof, at the time when the accreditation is granted.

The accreditation does not entail commitment for public funding to the education provider in question nor responsibility for the education and training provider's liabilities.

Should an education and training provider that has received accreditation no longer fulfil the conditions of this Act and rules and conditions based on it, the Minister may revoke the accreditation.

A Regulation shall further stipulate the requirements for accreditation, its provision and revocation.

The financial accounts of education and training providers shall be signed by a chartered accountant and be accessible to the National Audit no later than three months after closing of the financial year.

Article 8

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning, guidance and counselling

Individuals with short formal education who choose to embark on studies organised on the basis of this Act or the Upper Secondary School Act are entitled to having their individual non-formal and informal learning evaluated. The evaluation is carried out according to rules set by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture regarding recognition of non-formal and informal learning and its organisation.

Those that intend to embark on studies that fulfil the requirements of this Act are offered individual guidance and counselling. The Minister may issue rules regarding guidance and counselling cf. this Article.

CHAPTER III

Public funding for adult education, Education and Training Fund

Article 9

Financial contribution

Parliament (Althingi) provides financial contribution out of the State Budget for adult education and related activities. There are two kinds of contribution:

- a. contribution to meet the costs of activities and administration connected to adult education in general in accordance with this Act, including regular capital contribution to adult education and training providers and special activities involving education for adults,
- b. contribution to the Education and Training Fund.

Article 10

Role of the Education and Training Fund

The role of the Education and Training Fund is to encourage the existence of suitable educational opportunities for individuals who have short formal education. The Fund should also participate in creating conditions that enable individuals to use these educational opportunities. That way, the Fund contributes to fulfilling the aims stipulated in Article 2.

The Education and Training Fund shall administer the financial contribution determined by Parliament (Althingi) in the State Budget at each time. Allocations from the Education and Training Fund can be divided into three main categories according to the allocation rules confirmed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture:

- a. contribution to education and training providers for teaching and organisation of courses,
- b. contribution to cover the cost of recognition of non-formal and informal learning,
- c. grants for innovation and development projects in adult education.

The board of the Education and Training Fund is responsible for the Fund's budget and financial allocations. Calls for applications from education and training providers, for contribution and support for teaching and organisation of courses, shall be advertised. The board of the Education and Training Fund may give education and training providers that already receive contributions from the Fund, a pact for up to three-year contribution, in proviso of financial contribution from Althingi.

The board of the Education and Training Fund shall lay down special terms regarding financial contributions to education and training providers and others that receive contributions from the Fund, which shall be confirmed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. The Fund shall issue an overview of funded studies.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may make an agreement to entrust the administration and finances of the Fund to a relevant body. The Minister may also assign the administration of specific tasks connected to adult education and the implementation of this Act to the board of the Education and Training Fund.

Article 11

Board of the Education and Training Fund

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture appoints a nine person board for the Education and Training Fund for a four-year term. The chairman is appointed without nomination; the Confederation of Icelandic Employers and the Icelandic Confederation of Labour shall nominate two representatives each; the Federation of State and Municipal Employees and the Association of Icelandic Upper Secondary Schools shall nominate one representative each; the Ministry of Finance and the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland shall commonly nominate one representative and the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Security one. Alternates shall be appointed in the same manner.

The board of the Education and Training Fund shall set the operation and allocation rules for the Fund which shall be confirmed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.

CHAPTER IV

Evaluation and quality control

Article 12

Objectives

The objectives of evaluation and quality control for adult education are:

- a. to ensure that education and training providers operate according to provisions of the Act, related rules that may be issued and curricula, cf. Article 6,
- b. to increase the quality of education and training according to this Act, and
- c. to ensure that the rights of individuals, that use the services provided on the basis of this Act, are respected.

Article 13

Information dissemination and preservation

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture administers the collection and dissemination of information about adult education with regard to its policy making and supervisory role. Education and training providers that have received accreditation and support are obliged to provide the Ministry and the board of the Education and Training Fund with information regarding their education and training activities, their results and development and any other information deemed necessary, such as information about financial provisions and statistics. The Ministry may also make an agreement to assign the tasks stipulated in this Article to another body. In the case of such an arrangement, education and training providers are obliged to provide the requested information to the relevant body.

Education and training providers shall preserve, and provide access to information about studies which their pupils have undertaken and finished.

The Minister may issue a Regulation with further provisions regarding information obligations of education and training providers cf. this Article and regarding treatment of personal data, including information about pupils' studies.

Article 14

Quality control implementation

Education and training providers shall carry out a systematic evaluation of the quality and results of their activities and publish information about their internal quality control and subsequent plans for improvement.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall administer surveys, analyses and research that aim at ensuring the general quality of adult education and a general

understanding and knowledge of related issues. Implementation of these tasks shall normally be entrusted to a neutral body.

CHAPTER V

Miscellaneous provisions, regulation, entry into force

Article 15

Administration

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture may make an agreement with a legal entity or an institution to administer tasks specified in Article 6 regarding certification of curricula; in Article 7 regarding accreditation of education and training providers; in Article 10 regarding administration of the Education and Training Fund; and in Article 13 regarding collection and dissemination of information

Article 16

Right of appeal

Decisions taken by education and training providers and by the Education and Training Fund cf. this Act may not be appealed to the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.

Article 17

Regulation

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may issue a Regulation with further instruction on the implementation of this Act.

Article 18

Entry into force

This Act shall enter into force on 1 October 2010. Upon its entry into force, the Vocational Training Act no. 19/1992 shall be repealed.