



**ELVETE - Case Study no 1:
Sudurnes Comprehensive College;
Electrician division**

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Table of Contents

Summary	3
General Information on VET Organisation.....	4
General Information on Business involved.....	5
Interview with a participant	6
General Information about VET Organisation	6
The duration of the programs	7

Summary

MSS in Iceland collected four cases at three organisations. The first case was collected at Sudurnes Comprehensive Collage, -a collage that offers formal education both traditional studies and certified trades. The trades include vocational training during a period of time.

The conclusions indicate that there is very limited collaboration between the educational organisations and the companies of the sector, and influences on curriculum are limited. It seems the more formal the trade, the harder it is for employers/companies to influence the curriculum; all changes have to go through formal committees and educational authorities in order to be accepted so changes and new methods take quite long time to get accepted.

General Information on VET Organisation

Institution: Sudurnes Comprehensive Collage

Type of Institution: Sudurnes Comprehensive Collage, -a Collage that offers formal education both traditional studies and certified trades. The trades include vocational training during a period of time.

Locality and Country: Reykjanesbær, Sudurnes area, Iceland

Course name and level: Electrician trade, the course covers all levels from start until a formal certification in the trade has been acquired.

Target Group of Course/Curriculum: Students that seek formal certification of the electrician trade and want to work in any field of the electrician industry. They can equally plan to start their own business and work as contractors or they can seek work at larger companies.

Pedagogy used? Traditional trade/VET pedagogy

Is the course accredited? Yes, courses are organised on a unit-credit basis.

Statistical Information (if relevant)

General Information on Business involved

Name of Business: TG Electrician contractors. The business works as an electrician contractor, providing a wide range of service for companies and/or homes that need to fix or change something. The largest clients are companies in the fishing industry they both service their factories and their ships but they also service a lot of other companies and homes in the area.

Number of employees: There are about 14-15 people employed by the company.

Area of involved Business: South West area of Iceland. The Sudurnes area (local) and they also take some jobs in Reykjavik (capital).

How is the Business involved in the curriculum?

It seems the more formal the trade, the harder it is for employers/companies to influence the curriculum; all changes have to go through formal committees and educational authorities in order to be accepted so changes and new methods take quite long time to get accepted. If there is an important change in method or mechanic the committees can be addressed to try to promote a change in the curriculum. Tómas Guðmundsson the owner of TG said: "the main changes in the curriculum during the last 15 years have been "natural changes" conducted to respond to technical changes, mostly computer related."

Engagement profile of business: In what way(s) does the business cooperate?

There is no formal cooperation between the educational organisation and the VET business other than that the business signs the contract provided by the educational organisation of that the student has worked for the business for the required time that the educational authority has published in the curriculum for this exact trade.

Interview with a participant

Student name: Emil Þór, who had recently graduated with a certification as an electrician and is currently working for a company that services a factory that smelts fish to produce fishmeal and fish oil.

Relevance of IT: IT is important in some courses but not at all in other. IT is very relevant in the academic part of the studies.

Give an overall rating of the program: Emil Þór had taken a part of his studies in Sudurnes Comprehensive Collage and another part in the Technical Collage of Reykjavik. He rated the programs quite differently, when asked out of 10 what would the score be, he gave the Sudurnes Comprehensive Collage the rate of 7 but the Technical Collage of Reykjavik the rate of 5 stating that the programs were somewhat differently arranged and the Sudurnes one suited him a lot better.

How effective is the cooperation of the program provider and the employer? There is hardly any cooperation between the program provider and the employer. In my case I saw an ad in newspaper advertising for an electrician and applied.

Can it be applied to other areas of ICT? Emil Þór does not exactly see how that might be beneficial, IT is more used in the academic part of the studies and a lot of the academic part of our studies is math, which requires hands on learning.

Can you apply the achieved knowledge? The traditional trade teaches the basic for all kinds of electric work but the job I have is absolutely in the field of factory electricity that we don't have such a good knowledge of. Everything at the workplace has therefore to be taught from scratch.

Does it do the job for you as a learner? Yes I think this has been a brilliant start of my carrier as an electrician. I especially like being able to finish all the semesters at school before starting the training period at the workplace. (** This is the opposite to Tómas' opinion as a master for interns at TG, see below in the last part of the chapter about the duration of the studies. Emil Þór is however not working for Tómas.)

General Information about VET Organisation

Sudurnes Comprehensive Collage offers formal education both traditional studies and certified trades. The trades include vocational training during a period of time. The students have to seek businesses that are willing and able to employ them during the training periods (-authorised, the person responsible for the student has to hold the highest level of certification, this type of certification is called "master" of the trade but the degree should not be confused with a university level master's degree.) Normally the educational organisation does not interfere in this process and students are responsible for finding a job in training, however employers sometimes contact the trade schools to seek trainees that the trade schools are willing to recommend for employment.

The duration of the programs

The duration of the program is 4-6 years depending on the speed of studies and the level of certification. The highest grade (6th year) of certification in all trades in Iceland is entirely academic and gives the right to take on interns for training in the trade.

Normally the course of the trade studies is 2 years in school, 18 months work with an authorised company, then the students come back to school for one semester to prepare for the certification exams and by the end of year four they should have finished all the hands on studies of the trade. If they choose to take the “master” certification they have to work for a year alongside a master of the trade and then they take 1-2 years of school again but this part of the studies is designed to prepare them to run a company and to take interns in their trade.

After the financial crisis in Iceland in 2008 there was extremely hard for students to find companies that were willing to take on trainees. The educational committee agreed to change to form of the studies to meet the consequences of the crisis so the students would not be stuck in the middle of their studies, they authorised students to finish the third semester of trade school even if the training period had not been taken in between. This change has been kept in the curriculum but **Tómas said that in his opinion it is not good for the studies. He has also had interns from Denmark that have studied by the Danish model which is outlined in that way that students take on semester in school and one training with a company and then the program goes on like that until graduation. Tómas at TG said that the interns that have been taken more training earlier in their studies give a lot better performance and are more confident when they start working.