



ELVETE - Case Study no 2: Suðurnes Comprehensive Collage;
Carpentry division

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Summary

MSS in Iceland collected four cases at three organisations. The second 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: Carpentry, 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 carpentry trade and want to work in any field of the construction 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: TSA. The business works as a carpentry contractor, providing a wide range of service for companies and/or homes that need to build, fix or change something. The largest client is the KEF Airport, the main Icelandic international airport; the service area and duty free shops are constantly changing to accommodate the ever-growing number of passengers that pass through the area.

Number of employees: During the winter there are about 14 people employed but in the summer the business increases the number of employees up to 18-20.

Area of involved Business: South West area of Iceland. The Sudurnes area (local) and they also take some jobs in Reykjavik (capital) and in the Southern part of Iceland, e.g. to service owners of summer cottages in the area.

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.

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.

However in the case of TSA, they contacted the division manager of carpentry at Sudurnes Comprehensive Collage to ask if he could recommend a current student that had the training period coming up. And the division manager pointed out a student that had shown excellent character and engagement. Stefán the interviewee on the behalf of TSA contractors was proud to tell that the student (their intern) won a prize for excellent performance when he attended the certification exams.

Interview with a participant

Student name: Ellert Björn Ómarsson, who had recently graduated with a certification as a carpenter and won a prize for a great performance in the certification exams.

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, also as I see myself seeking further education such as engineering or some other technical studies at university level general and overall IT knowledge is important to me.

Give an overall rating of the program: Ellert Björn rated the program very favourably, when asked out of 10 what would the score be, he gave the rate of 9.

How effective is the cooperation of the program provider and the employer? There is hardly any cooperation between the program provider and the employer. However in my case the employer called the division manager for information on students that he could recommend and I was granted an interview.

I feel that I was very lucky to take the training period with an employer that takes on such a wide range of projects. I got excellent preparation for the certification exams while some students are trained at companies that are more specialised in one line of the carpentry industry and therefore acquire very limited experience in other fields.

Can it be applied to other areas of ICT? Hopefully it will.

Can you apply the achieved knowledge? I think I can, as I got a great score in the certification exams so I must be able to apply the knowledge.

Does it do the job for you as a learner? Yes I think this has been a brilliant start of my study plan, I want to acquire a higher degree but it is good to know that I will always be able to support my studies financially by working as a carpenter e.g. during holidays.

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.