

# Evaluating post-secondary vocational education and qualifications – challenges in Sweden and Norway

Education, exchange, enrichment – helping you take the next step



## The Swedish Council for Higher Education

Government Agency with 320 staff responsible for:

- recognising foreign qualifications.
- information on higher education studies, managing the Swedish HE Entry Test and coordinating admissions to HE.
- developing and managing *e-services* for the education sector.
- facilitating international exchange and training across the entire education spectrum.
- promoting widening participation and working for equal rights and opportunities in higher education.

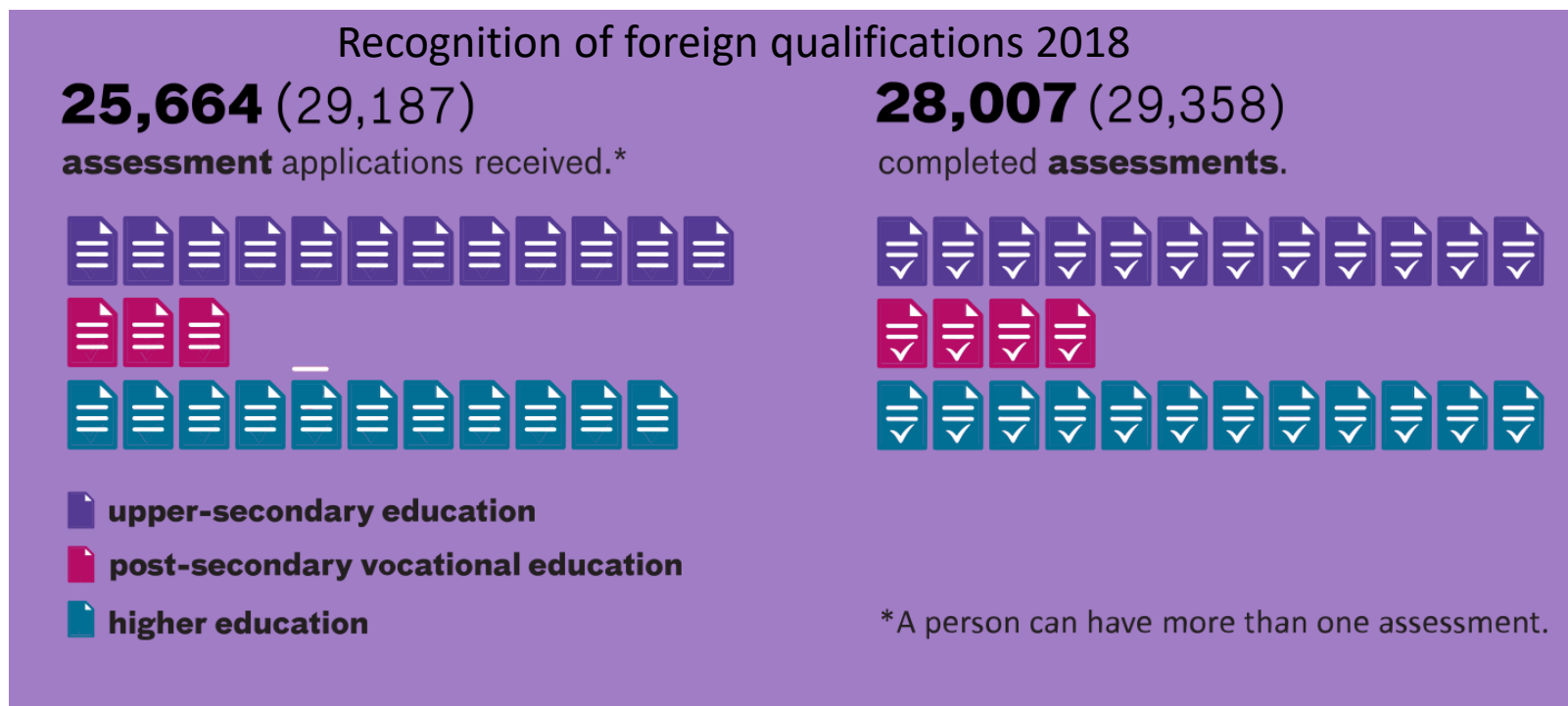


## Department for Qualifications Recognition



- Sweden's ENIC-NARIC with 85 staff proficient in over 30 languages.
- National Coordinator for Professional Qualifications Directive and related assessment, and for Diploma Supplement.
- Cooperation with other government actors and social partners on issues regarding integration, validation & qualifications.
- Provide information about recognition and foreign qualifications to higher education institutions and other stakeholders about qualifications recognition, and about working in a regulated profession.
- Assess foreign qualifications to support those who wish to continue their studies or seek employment in Sweden. We also provide information for employers.

# Recognition of foreign qualifications 2018



## The *wild west* of PS vocational education . . . and qualifications

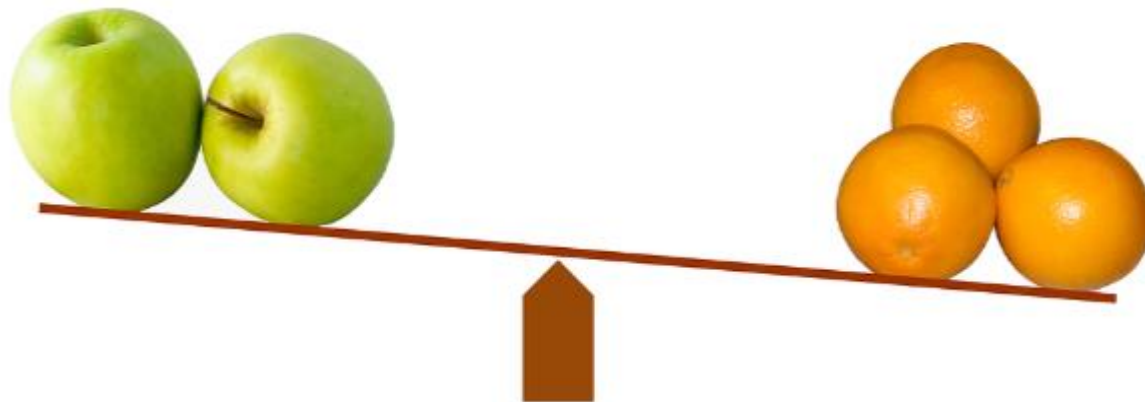
- Between the more established models of upper secondary and higher education we have the post-secondary VET, *aka* PS-non tertiary, technical, polytechnical, PS tertiary, but not "short-cycle" as *currently* defined by the EHEA.
- Most post-secondary vocational qualifications are at what many of us call **Level 5** (i.e. between upper secondary and Bachelor Degree) but some higher vocational qualifications rooted in dual system countries (e.g. Germany) are at Level 6 or even 7 or 8.

## Challenges

*Both sides of the comparison are changing and dynamic, in other words  
“wild and crazy”*

Swedish post-secondary vocational education

The overseas post-secondary education



## Swedish Post-secondary Vocational Education Sector

### Advanced Vocational Education (Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning, AVE)

- AVE courses were between one year (40 points) and three years (120 points) in duration and led to a Kvalificerad yrkesexamen (KY) certificate.
- AVE was previously organized and administered by the Swedish Agency for Advanced Vocational Education (Myndigheten för kvalificerad yrkesutbildning), and subsequently by the Swedish Agency for Higher Vocational Training (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan).
- Replaced by HVE in 2009 and phased out in 2013.

# Swedish post-secondary Vocational Education Sector

## Higher Vocational Education Programs and Diplomas (Yrkeshögskola)

- Programs are at a post-secondary level and they cover a number of different fields.
- Completion of a 1-year minimum program results in a *Higher Vocational Education Diploma*. Completion of a 2-year min. program *can* result in an Advanced Higher Vocational Education Diploma.
- Business and organizations take an active part in the planning and delivery of programs, e.g. as members of program steering committees. They may also take part in the teaching and offering work placements (LIA).



## Swedish post-secondary Vocational Education Sector

### Higher Vocational Education (Yrkeshögskoleutbildning, YH)

- Higher Vocational Education (HVE) programs are developed in response to a real labor market need, and the range of programs and specializations therefore change over time.
- New programs start and old ones are discontinued as the labour market changes
- Education providers are institutions or establishments such as universities, local authorities or private training companies.

## Swedish post-secondary Vocational Education Sector

### Other types of post-secondary education

In addition to HVE, there are two other types of post-secondary education:

- *Arts and Culture courses (Konst- och kulturutbildningar)*
- *Interpretation courses and programs (Tolkutbildningar).*

They do not lead to a national diploma.

## Post-secondary education abroad

### *A Motley Jumble of Post-secondary Credentials*

- Post-secondary vocational education as a part of the education system in the country of the origin.

**Example:** *Technical Diploma in Business Administration, Construction, Electrical engineering, etc. from Syria*

- Post-secondary vocational education as a part of the education system in the country of the origin with a major that exists in the Swedish higher Education.

**Example:** *Teaching, Nursing, Midwifery*

- Post-secondary vocational education as part of the education system in the country of the origin, but not given within the Swedish PS VET.

**Example:** *Acupuncture or Herbal Medicine from Japan*

## ...Post-secondary education abroad

### *A Motley Jumble of Post-secondary Credentials*

- Post-secondary non-vocational education as a part of the education system in the country of the origin.  
**Example:** *Zhuanke* in Chinese Language from China
- PS vocational education not as a part of the education system in the country of the origin, but recognized by international education organizations.  
**Example:** *Montessori, YMCA, and The Red Cross.*
- PS vocational education as/not as a part of the education system in the country of the origin, but not resulted in a national qualification.  
**Example:** *Pre-Al-Shamel Certificate* from Jordan, *BEK Certificate* from Greece.

## ...Post-secondary education abroad

### *A Motley Jumble of Post-secondary Credentials*

- PS vocational education as/not as a part of the education system in the country of the origin but compared to the qualification framework levels (NQF, EQF, etc.)  
**Example:** *AAT Level 4 Diploma in Accounting* och *ACCA* from the UK
- PS vocational qualification not as a part of the education system in the country of the origin but being compared to the qualification framework levels (NQF, EQF, etc.)  
**Example:** *Meisterbrief* from Germany
- PS vocational qualification not a part of the education system in the country of the origin but recognized by an authorized board in the country.  
**Example:** *Professional Qualifying Examinations (Chartered Shipbrokers)* in the UK

## The Grey Education Area

*The distinction between the academic and vocational sectors is fuzzy!*

- Vocational programs are often recognized for academic purposes and academic programs are designed with vocational aspects.
- Many vocational/technical qualifications are offered in traditionally academic subject areas: engineering, arts, business.
- In some countries academic and vocational qualifications are related to each other.



## Constantly developing our method

- One-track Recognition: Full Recognition.
- Two-track Recognition: Full Recognition and Alternative Recognition with No Comparison).
- Poly-track Recognition: Full Recognition and Alternative Recognition with Comparison.

# One-track Recognition

## Full Recognition

- *Before 2017, we evaluated all of these qualifications against Sweden's two PS vocational diplomas.*
- Duration of the qualification a decisive factor:
  - 1 year post-secondary benchmarked to HVED
  - 2 year post-secondary benchmarked to AHVED



## Two-track Recognition

### Full Recognition and Alternative Recognition with No Comparison

- In 2017 we realised that we could not evaluate the broad range of vocational qualifications against Sweden's two PS vocational diplomas.
- In the spirit of LRC and the EAR-manual (i.e. a flexible approach), we decided to evaluate all of these qualifications as long as they are at the post-secondary level and are, in some way, recognized in the country of origin.
- Evaluated qualifications within the usual 1-2 year PS VET against Sweden's two PS vocational diplomas (duration of the qualification was still a decisive factor).
- Evaluated qualifications outside the usual 1-2 year PS VET without comparing them to any Swedish PS diplomas.

# Poly-track Recognition

## Full Recognition and Alternative Recognition with Comparison

- Since 2018, we compare most programs that were previously compared to AHVED to HVED because of changes in the Higher VET legislation.
  - Few Swedish PS vocational qualifications now result in AHVED
  - Swedish AHVED benchmarked to SeQF 6, same level as the Swedish Bachelor. Duration of the qualification is not as decisive as before.
- We recognize foreign qualifications in different ways, comparing to

### ➤ Swedish Higher Vocational Diplomas

- PS VET as a part of the education system in the country of the origin.
- PS VET not as a part of the education system in the country of the origin but recognized by international education organization.

## ... Poly-track Recognition

### Full Recognition and Alternative Recognition with Comparison

... We recognize foreign qualifications in different ways, comparing to

#### ➤ **SeQF Levels**

- Post- secondary vocational qualification not as a part of the education system in the country of the origin but being compared to the European qualification framework levels (NQF)

#### ➤ **Swedish PS Program of .... Duration**

- PS VET as/not as a part of the education system in the country of the origin, but not resulted in a national qualification.
- PS non-vocational education as a part of the education system in the country of the origin.

## Linking recognition to broader strategic goals such as labour market needs and integration of immigrants

- Both Norway and Sweden view credential evaluation and recognition as part of broad public services linked to national needs and challenges.
- Credential evaluation publically funded (i.e. fee free) in both countries and housed at larger national agencies linked education quality and internationalisation.
- Growing interest in evaluation without complete documentation as well as linking individuals to the validation/recognition of prior learning.

## Norway and Sweden – shared factors

- Evaluation of post-secondary vocational education primarily linked to the labour market rather than further studies.
- Two countries with a commitment to support the integration of immigrants by recognising their education/skills.
- A shared flexible (willingness to think outside the box) approach to recognise vocational education (and qualifications)
- Both Norway and Sweden piloting UNESCO World Reference Levels
- Thank you! Tack! . . . and over to Norway.

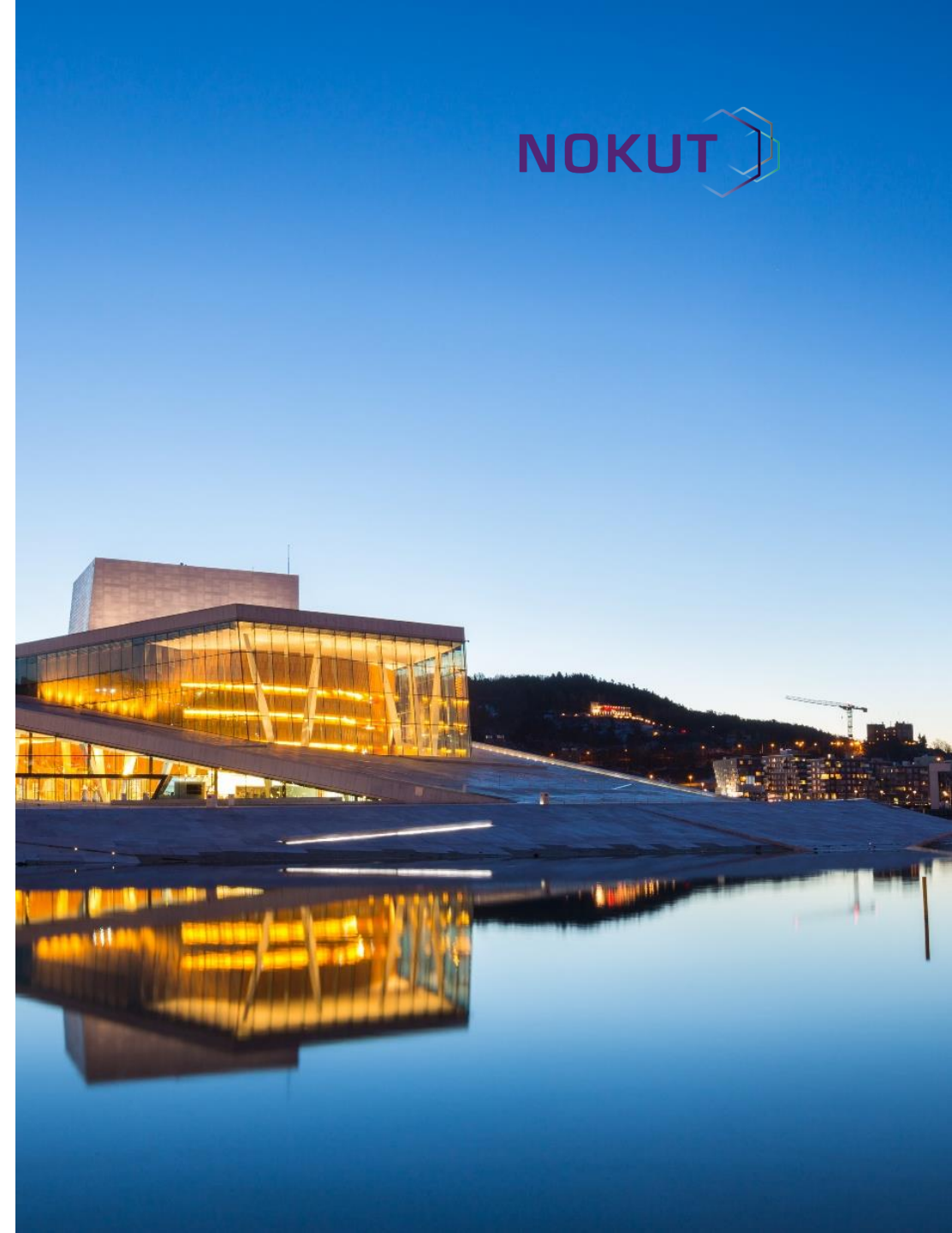


**Recognition of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications  
and Tertiary vocational education and training (TVET)**



## About NOKUT

- Independent agency with its own governing board under the Ministry for Education and Research, established 2003
- NOKUT's department of foreign education has experience since 2003 assessing foreign higher education ( bachelor and masterlevel)
- Our section is consist of 14 credential evaluators, assess VET and TVET



# Background for recognition of VET and TVET

- Recognition scheme for VET established November 2016 and TVET in 2019
- National recognition system for professional VET qualifications
- High demand of graduates with professionally oriented short cycle qualifications on the labour market
- A need for better understanding and recognition of these qualifications





# Guidelines for recognition for VET

Guidelines for recognition have been developed with social partners and was adopted by NOKUTs board in 2016

- Terms for recognition:
- Qualification must be **formal** and issued by the responsible authority
- Qualification must comprise completed VET of **minimum three years duration** with at least one year documented **practical training**
- Qualification has to comprise knowledge, skills and general competences **equivalent NKR level 4A** (Norwegian craft and journeyman's certificate). The qualifications occupational profile is the decisive element for recognition

# Guidelines for recognition TVET

- The education must be sufficiently documented by the school or education authorities in the country where it was achieved. The education must be completed at the time of application.
- The education must be at the same level as accredited Norwegian tertiary vocational education (fagskoleutdanning). To assess whether a foreign education is at the same level as Norwegian tertiary vocational education, the education system in the country where the education was achieved, is compared to the Norwegian education system. The education must be on a level above upper secondary education, or equivalent prior learning. The education must provide competence that can be used in the labour market in the country where it was achieved, without further training.
- The education must have a content and scope equivalent to at least half a year.
- The education is normally recognized on the basis that one year of nominal study time in the country where the education was achieved, is equivalent to one year of nominal study time in Norway.



# Method of recognition VET

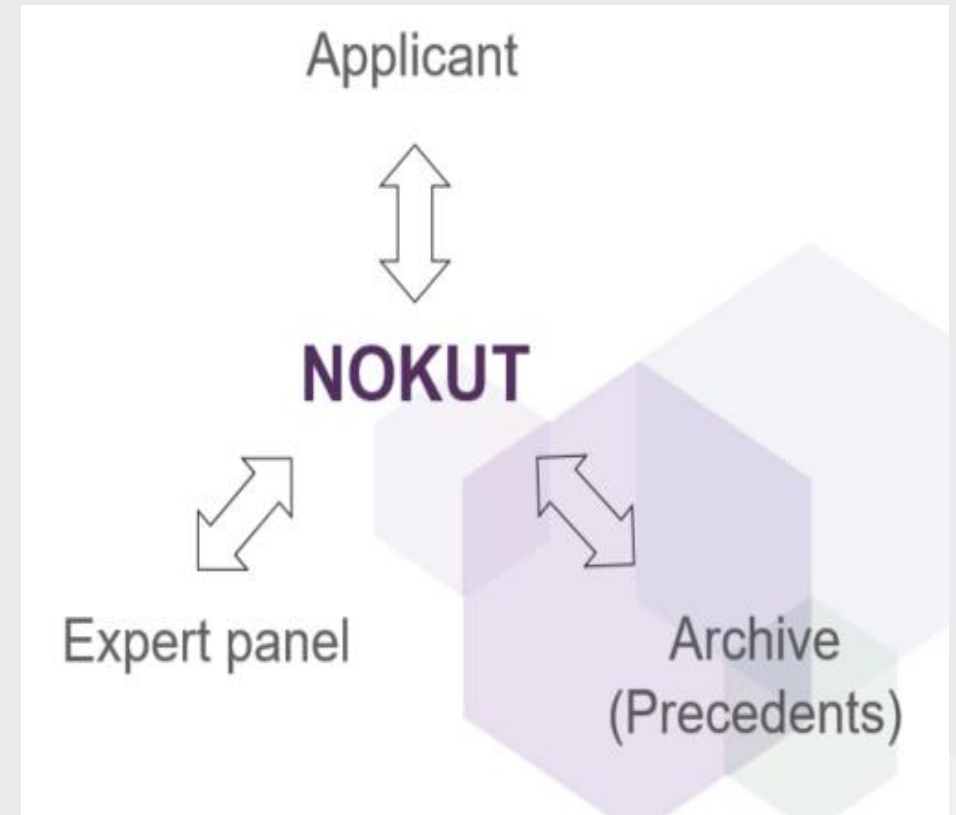
## Two phase model

1. Systemic assessment

Conducted by credential evaluators in NOKUT

2. Vocational content assessment

Conducted by field experts



# 1. Phase – Systemic assessment

Systems assessment of the VET

- Level
- Scope
- Formal qualification
- Authenticity



# 1. Phase – Systemic assessment

Systems assessment of the VET

- Level
- Scope
- Formal qualification
- Authenticity



## 2. Phase – Vocational content assessement

- Assessment of the vocational content
- Each committee consists of three members – representing triparte cooperation in VET
- Consensus
- Committee give advice to NOKUT on vocational content of foreign VET

# Our biggest challenges

- Curricula, finding, translating etc
- Practical training
- Verification
- Understanding of “many of the essential elements”
- Equal vs. equivalent





# **Method of recognition TVET**

# 1. Phase – Systemic assessment

Systems assessment of the TVET

- Is the education completed
  - What level is the education?
  - Is the institution accredited
  - What is the entrance requirement
- 
- Authenticity

## 2. Phase – Professional profile

- What is the intention of the education in its origin country
- What is the person qualified to do after finish education/training
- Authenticity



# Underlying challenges of VET and TVET recognition

- No international convention or guidelines on recognition of VET
- The difficult level 5 How do we fit other educational system into the Norwegian system?
  - What if the qualification is part of higher educational system in its origin country
  - When is the qualification vocational enough?
  - What about short cycle?
  - Verification
  - Quality assurance
- Link to labour market, different need than for bachelor and master level.



**Relevance of recognition**

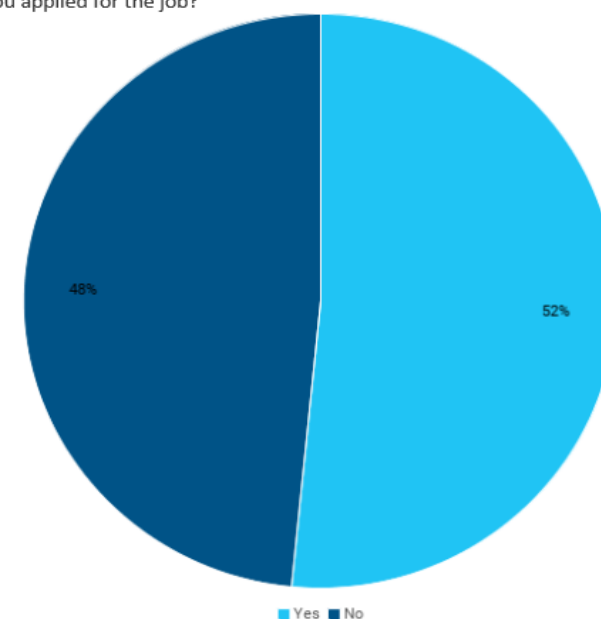
## NOKUT – Survey on VET

- Conducted in April 2018
- By April 2018 NOKUT had issued 300 recognitions
- 276 people were contacted by NOKUT, and 165 people responded. 60% response rate
- 300 people with recognition – reached 276 in the survey.

## Work situation

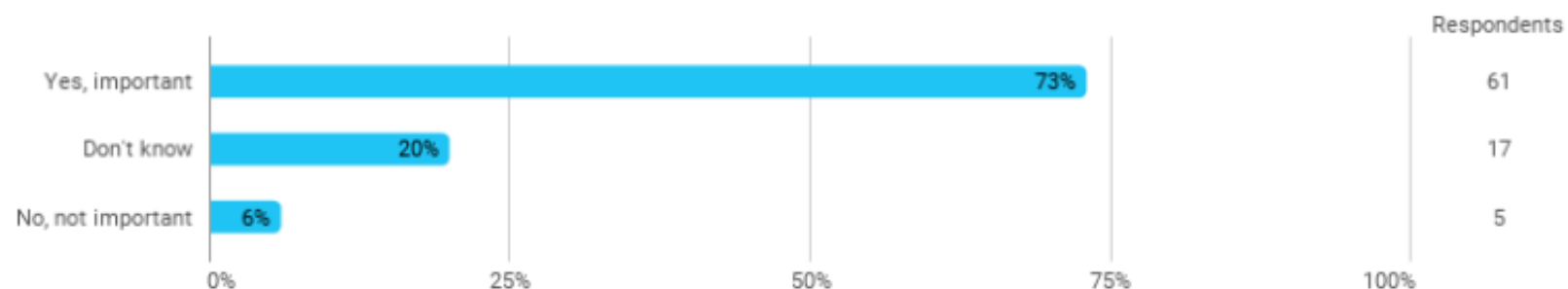
- 95% (158 people) employed in Norway today
- 52% used NOKUT's recognition in job application

Did you use NOKUT's recognition when you applied for the job?



## Indication – relevance to labour market

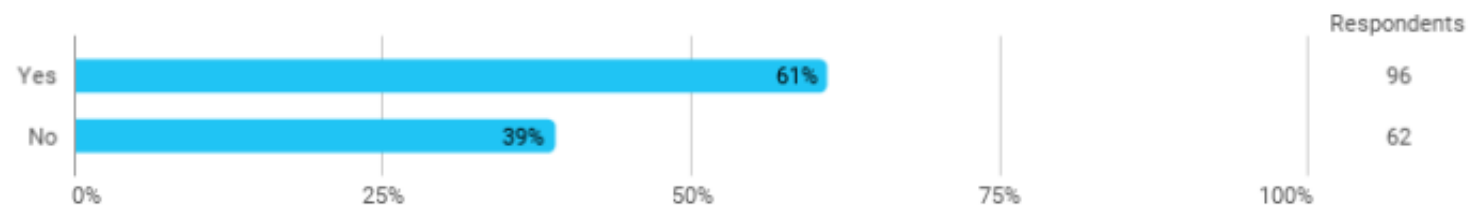
Would you say NOKUT's recognition was important for getting the job?



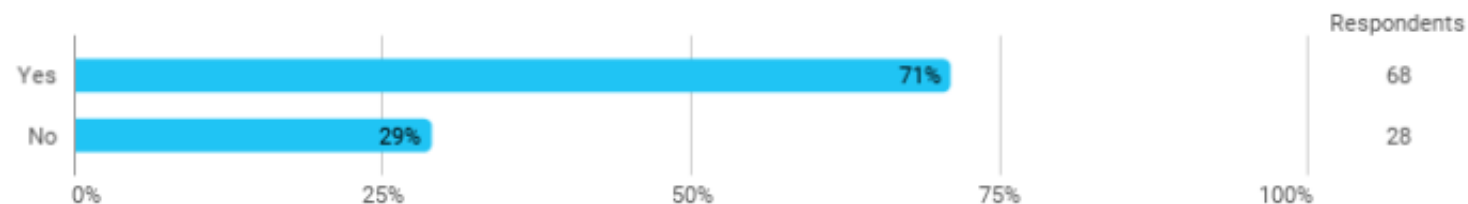


# Indication - relevance to labour market

Did you use recognition to negotiate your pay?

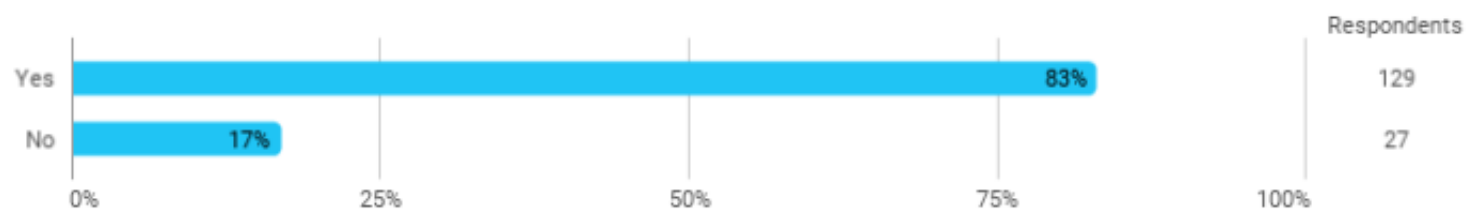


Did you get more pay or higher salary?

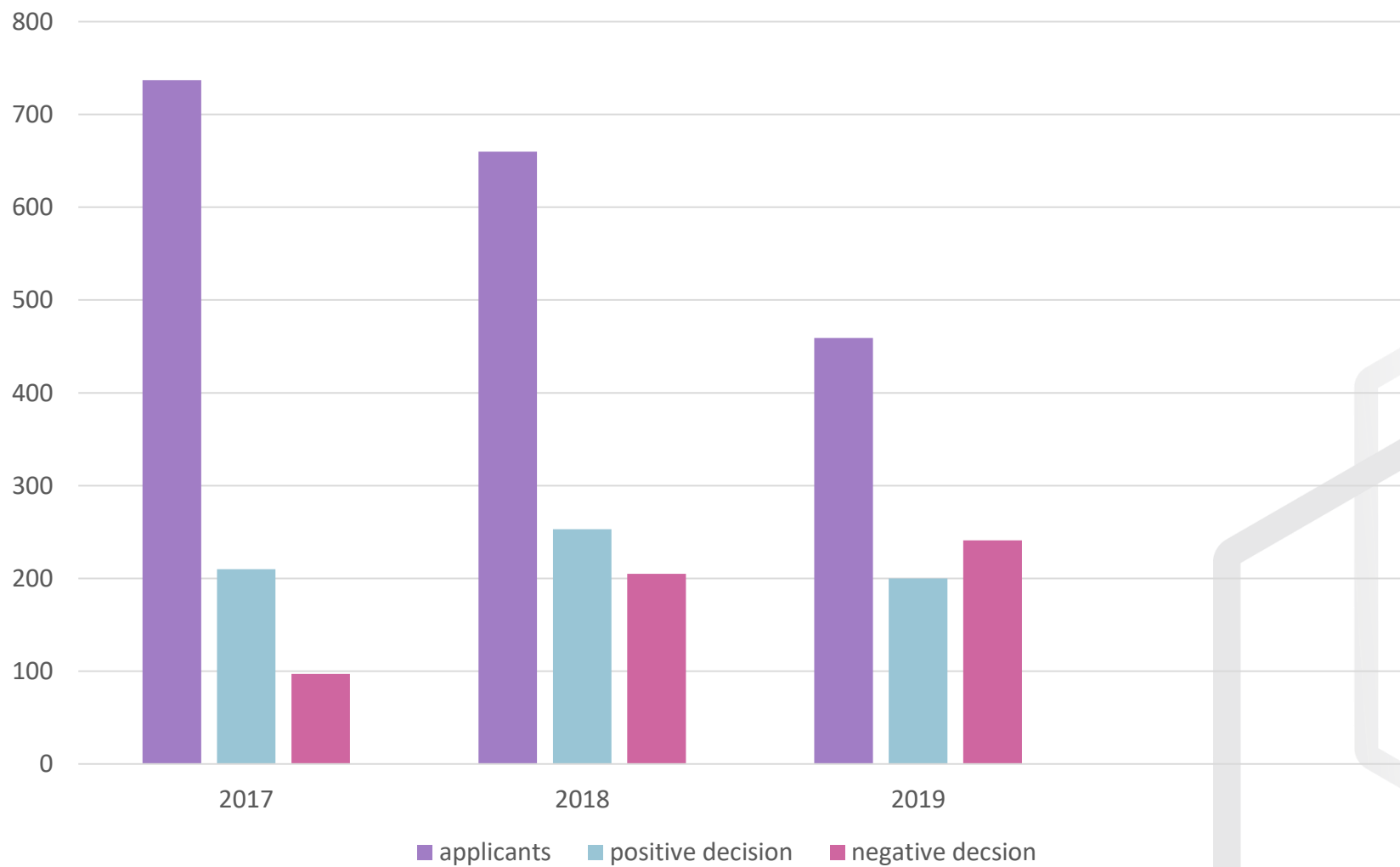


# Indication - relevance for the labour market

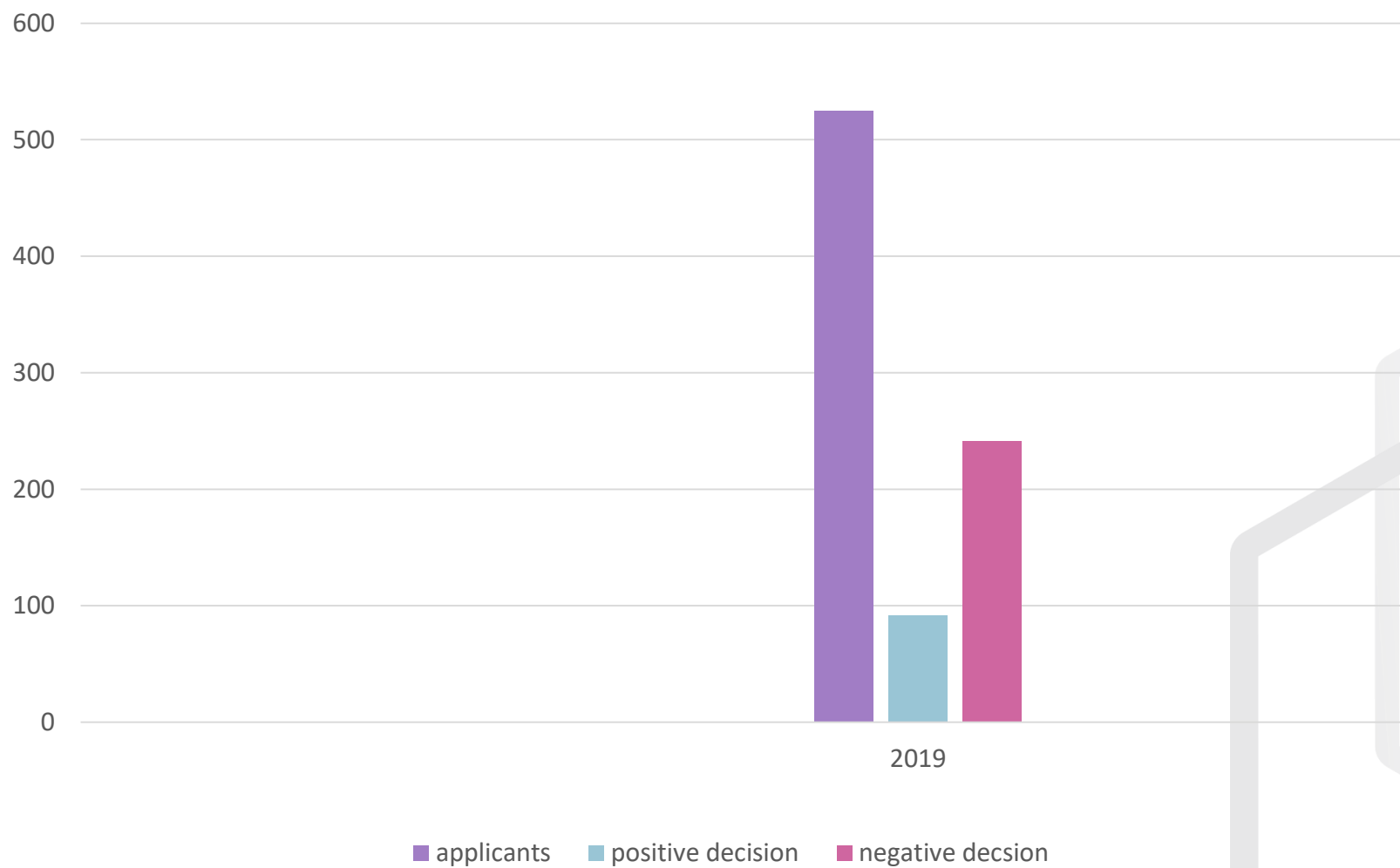
- Do you think that recognition of your vocational education and training has positive influence on your situation at work?



## Statistics VET



## Statistics TVET



**Questions?**