



FOLKETINGET  
STATSREVISORERNE



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RIGSREVISIONEN

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# Educational institutions' statutory assessment of the learning environment

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose and conclusion

1. Pupils and students in Denmark have the legally protected right to a good learning environment. This is intended to ensure that education takes place in conditions that are safe and sound in terms of health, and to support their opportunities for development and learning. This is stated in the act on the learning environment from 2001. A good learning environment helps promote learning, quality in education, and prevents poor well-being and dropout. This is supported by analyses from EVA and VIVE.

2. Under the act, educational institutions are obliged to assess their learning environment through learning environment assessments. A learning environment assessment is an evaluation of the institution's physical, psychological, and aesthetic learning environment, intended to provide an overview of areas needing improvement.

3. The purpose of this study is to examine whether institutions comply with the legal requirements for learning environment assessments.

4. The law stipulates several requirements for these assessments. The assessment must be in writing, updated at least every three years, and must include:

- a mapping of the physical, psychological, and aesthetic learning environment
- a description and evaluation of any problems with the learning environment
- an action plan outlining how and when the problems will be addressed
- proposals for follow-up guidelines to the action plan.

The assessment must also be made available to pupils, students, and other interested parties.

### **Right to a good learning environment**

According to section 1 of the act on the learning environment, pupils, students, and other participants have the right to a good learning environment. Other participants may include, for example, course attendees. In this report, we use "pupils and students" as a collective term for all those entitled to a good learning environment.

### **Educational institutions**

The act on the learning environment defines educational institutions as schools and educational establishments.

5. The study covers 335 public and private educational institutions. These include institutions offering higher education, upper secondary education, general adult education, and sector-specific training. Around 526,000 pupils and students attend these institutions. Most attend higher education and upper secondary institutions – approximately 247,000 and 256,000 respectively. The remaining 23,000 are enrolled in adult education centres and sector-specific training programmes, which are often shorter courses such as certificate training (e.g., forklift certification). These institutions fall under the remit of the Ministry of Children and Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Resilience and Preparedness.

6. The Danish Centre for Learning Environment, under the Ministry of Children and Education, has been responsible for supervising compliance with the act on the learning environment since 2017. In December 2024, the Danish Parliament decided to close the centre. It will be closed by the end of June 2025.

Rigsrevisionen initiated the study in October 2024.



## Conclusion

**The study shows that 21% of the institutions do not have a learning environment assessment, and a further 55% have an assessment that is inadequate and only meets some of the statutory requirements. In total, 76% of the institutions do not comply with the legal requirements. Rigsrevisionen finds this unsatisfactory. As a result, approximately 259,000 pupils and students attend institutions where the learning environment has not been assessed as intended under the law, risking their legally protected right to a good learning environment.**

The 70 institutions without any assessment are spread across all types of institutions - those offering higher education, upper secondary education, adult education, and sector-specific training. The highest share of institutions without an assessment is found among the sector-specific institutions, although most of the institutions without assessments are upper secondary schools.

The 184 institutions with inadequate assessments are also spread across all types of institutions. The highest proportions with inadequate assessments are found among upper secondary institutions and adult education centres - more than 60%. These institutions often map the learning environment but fail to address the other legal requirements. As a result, they do not have a sufficient overview of potential problems and do not follow up with action and evaluation.

Only 24% of institutions - 81 in total - have a learning environment assessment that meets all legal requirements. The highest proportion of compliant institutions is found among those offering higher education.

Institutions under all the relevant ministries include examples of non-compliance. Rigsrevisionen recommends that the ministries assess whether the closure of the supervisory body necessitates special initiatives.

The law requires that the assessment be made available to pupils, students, and other interested parties. The study shows that 77% have published the assessment on their website. The Ministry of Children and Education has stated that the requirement may also be met by sending the assessment on request if it is not available online. Rigsrevisionen finds that this unnecessarily hinders accessibility - especially for other interested parties.