



FOLKETINGET
STATSREVISORERNE



FOLKETINGET
RIGSREVISIONEN

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Extract from Rigsrevisionen's report
submitted to the Public Accounts Committee

Special educational support for pupils and students with disabilities

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and conclusion

1. This report concerns whether pupils and students with disabilities, such as dyslexia or ADHD, receive special educational support when they need it upon beginning a new education programme.

The purpose of special educational support is to compensate for the challenges caused by disabilities, enabling the pupils and students to complete their education on an equal footing with others. People with disabilities are more likely to drop out of their education than those without disabilities, according to a study from the Danish Center for Social Science Research. If the support is provided too late, pupils and students may fall behind in the crucial start-up phase and risk dropping out of their education.

2. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils and students receiving special educational support. In 2024, approximately 14% of pupils in upper secondary education and about 9% of students in higher education received special educational support.

3. The allocation of special educational support is based on an application process. The educational institution applies for support following a dialogue with the pupil or student regarding their needs of support in the programme. In the application – which can be submitted as soon as the pupil or student has been admitted to an education programme – the institution specifies when the support should begin to best assist the pupil or student. In this report, this is referred to as *the date of need*. The date of need will often coincide with the beginning of the education programme. The National Agency for Education and Quality under the Ministry of Children and Education processes the applications. This also applies to applications from higher education institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. Although the Ministry of Children and Education is responsible for processing the applications and allocating the support, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science is responsible for ensuring that students at its educational institutions receive their support when they need it. Once the application has been approved, the support must be provided to the pupil or student.

Upper secondary education under the Ministry of Children and Education

- Upper secondary schools and schools offering higher preparatory examination programmes
- Vocational schools.

Higher education under the Ministry of Higher Education and Science

- Universities
- University colleges
- Business academies.

Transfer of the administration of special educational support

The administration of special educational support in higher education has been transferred to The National Agency for Education and Quality, cf. Executive Order on the delegation of the powers of the Minister for Higher Education and Science under the Act on Special Educational Support for Higher Education (Executive Order No. 659 of 19 June 2014).

4. The purpose of the study is to assess whether the Ministry of Children and Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Science have ensured that pupils in upper secondary education and students in higher education can receive special educational support when they need it.

In the report, we refer to pupils and students collectively as *students*.

Rigsrevisionen initiated the study in June 2024.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Higher Education and Science and the Ministry of Children and Education have not sufficiently ensured that pupils and students can receive special educational support when they need it. Rigsrevisionen does not find this satisfactory. The consequence is that half of the new students, who need special educational support in higher education do not receive their support in time when they begin their studies. The same applies to one out of three new pupils who needs support in upper secondary education. When the support is not ready from the beginning of the educational programme, pupils and students may find it more difficult to participate in classes and are therefore at greater risk of dropping out.

The deadlines set by the ministries for the various stages of the allocation process for special educational support are in total longer than the time available between the time the students receive their admission notice and when they begin their studies. The allocation process therefore does not ensure that new pupils and students with disabilities can receive the support at the beginning of their studies when the application is processed manually. For some of the new pupils and students, the ministries have ensured that support is provided on time since the applications are processed automatically. However, most of the pupils and students have their applications processed manually, and the majority do not receive the support in time.

The ministries have not collected data on or continuously monitored whether pupils and students receive their support on time. Such knowledge is necessary for the ministries to improve the allocation process and thereby ensure that more pupils and students receive their educational support in due time.

The actual processing time for manually approved applications takes most of the available time before studies begin. This leaves very little time for the rest of the allocation process, including delivery of the educational support. This particularly affects students in higher education.

A large number of pupils and students contact the educational institution and apply for support when they show up at the beginning of their studies. This means that their applications cannot be processed in time for the support to be initiated when it is needed. It is therefore a problem that new pupils and students are not systematically and consistently informed about the importance of applying for support well in advance of beginning their studies.