



# Adult Vocational Training (AMU): **A Danish model for adult and continuing training**

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# Introduction

Denmark's vocational education and training system is robust and well-regarded. It provides companies with skilled labour and improves workers' job prospects. It also helps the workforce adapt to ongoing technological and structural changes, promotes economic growth and prosperity, and empowers individuals to learn and grow throughout their careers.

The VEU Council is pleased to present the strengths of our short adult vocational training courses for specific industries and jobs in this brochure.

Although it is designed for unskilled and skilled workers, the AMU system can also be useful for those who already have further and higher education qualifications. Denmark has one of the highest participation rates in continuing education in the EU, with approximately 180,000 people taking one or more AMU courses in 2024.

*Jens Mejer Pedersen*  
Chair of the VEU Council



Photographer: Frederik Johs

## What is the VEU Council?

The VEU Council provides advice to the minister on matters concerning commercial law and adult and continuing education.

The Council is made up of representatives from the Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH), the Confederation of Danish Employers (DA), public-sector employers (including Local Government Denmark (KL), the Danish Regions, and the State), as well as representatives from vocational schools, adult education centres (VUC), the Education Union, the Adult Education Association, the Ministry of Children and Education, the Ministry of Employment and the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs.

# Why is adult vocational training important for Denmark?

The AMU system is unique because the courses are the result of ongoing collaboration between employers and unions in the industries concerned and in both the public and private sectors. This approach ensures that the training reflects the labour market's needs and equips workers with relevant, up-to-date skills. The system addresses important national challenges, makes Denmark more competitive and provides a well-trained workforce.

## **1. Skills and training for the whole country**

AMU courses are run all over the country and are popular outside the major cities, where many of the companies and industries that hire skilled and unskilled workers are based. The AMU system helps workers all over Denmark obtain the certificates and licences they need.

## **2. Courses tailored to the needs of the labour market**

AMU course providers work closely with companies and workers to address business needs. This collaboration creates a flexible system that responds quickly and adapts to changing demands.

## **3. Lifelong learning**

The AMU system helps adults who did not take further and higher education earlier in life to learn new skills and competencies. The short, focused AMU courses also facilitate flexible transitions between jobs or industries and equip workers to cope with new technology. Several AMU courses also provide credits, which can be transferred to other vocational or further and higher education programmes at business academies.



The 50 largest AMU providers in 2023.

# What is an AMU course?

Courses cover a wide range of industries and cater for unemployed people and those with jobs. Adult vocational training plays a crucial role in integrating international workers into the Danish labour market.

Workers can take single AMU courses or combine them to suit their needs.

## Examples of AMU courses

Safety and Electric/Hybrid Vehicles	Sales Techniques for Sales and Service Employees	Security Guard	The Road as a Workplace – Certificate
Fire Safety for Tools	Use of the 5-S Model by Operators (LEAN)	Agricultural Spraying – Certificate	Doorman/Security
Forklift – Certificate	Positive Communications in Care Work	Welding	Health and Safety in Production

Figure 1: Selected popular AMU courses in various sectors.

AMU teaching is practical and job-specific. Courses last anywhere from half a day to several weeks. Certificates are awarded on successful completion, and credits can be transferred to other forms of education and training.

Various funding options are available for AMU courses. Participants and companies can apply for allowances to help offset wage costs during the courses, and unions and employers have set up funds to finance activities like AMU courses in a range of sectors.

# What are the benefits of the AMU system?

## Correct and up-to-date certification

Many AMU courses offer certification for specific jobs.

Several of them meet the health and safety regulations set by the Danish Working Environment Authority. The new authorisation scheme for asbestos removal requires employees to complete an AMU course on the safe management of asbestos.

Drivers of trucks, buses, and other vehicles can also sit their tests as part of AMU courses. Legislation also stipulates regular updates, including compulsory EU driver training every five years to ensure drivers

keep their qualifications up to date and continue to prioritise safety.

- Approximately 3,100 people took the AMU course “Freight Transport by Truck” in 2024 and obtained an HGV licence (Category C/CE).
- In 2024, approximately 14,200 people took the EU continuing education courses for freight and bus drivers through AMU.



**Supporting the green transition with new skills**

Sustainable development, ESG and the green transition in the private and public sectors mean many employees need to learn new green skills, from climate accounting to knowledge of electric vehicles and plant-based foods.

AMU has 11 continuing education committees covering various sectors. They monitor industry trends and devise new courses to keep Denmark at the forefront of the green transition.

**Some examples of AMU Green Transition courses:**

- Climate Accounting: Around 1,100 people have already enrolled in the new AMU courses designed to help Danish companies meet the updated EU ESG regulations.<sup>1</sup>
- Since 2020, approximately 11,800 people have learnt about electric vehicles.
- Green Foods: Since 2020, around 3,600 people have learned about sustainable cooking and food production.

1 From 2023, up to and including Q4 2024.

**People enrolled in AMU courses about electric cars**

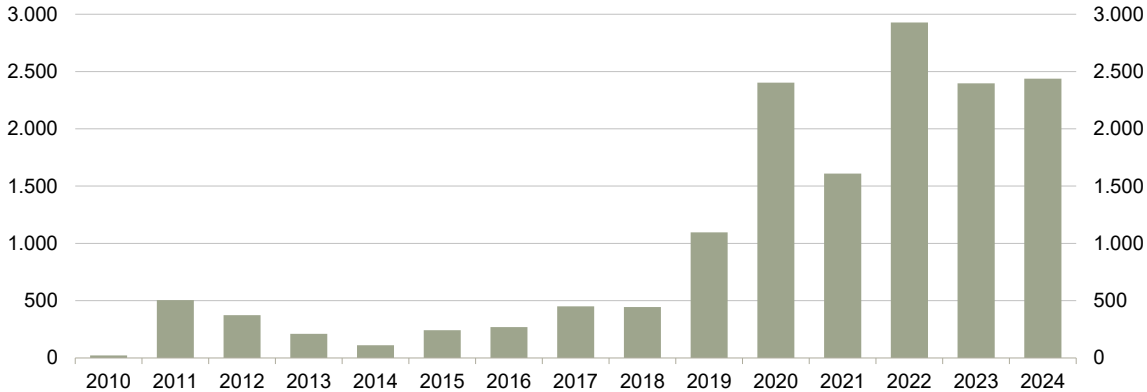


Figure 2 includes the following courses: Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Construction and Service, High-Voltage Battery Technology for Electric/Hybrid Vehicles, Safety Management for Electric/Hybrid Vehicles, and Heat Pump Technology in Electric/Hybrid Vehicles. Source: The Ministry of Children and Education.

### **Flexible pathways into elder care**

To address the significant recruitment challenges in the elder and healthcare sectors, the Social and Health Care Colleges (SOSU) have partnered with AMU courses and other relevant stakeholders to attract qualified workers.

This has resulted in a training package for unskilled workers in employment who aspire to become social and health care assistants. AMU also offers bilingual workers the opportunity to combine language studies with industry-specific courses, enabling them to learn Danish in practical, real-world settings.

→ In 2024, 1,400 students enrolled in the courses “Introduction to a Sector” and “Danish as a Second Language” in the fields of pedagogy, social work, and health.

### **Fast and flexible courses for companies and upskilling for new workers – e.g. in the pharmaceutical industry**

The pharmaceutical industry has strict production requirements and quality standards. AMU courses provide vital qualifications for careers in this field.

AMU courses upskill workers previously employed in other sectors, which has been crucial because the industry has expanded production so much in recent years.

→ Since 2020, around 13,000 people have enrolled in AMU courses in the “Production of Pharmaceutical Products” area, with about 10% completing the courses as part of a six-week programme of job orientation.

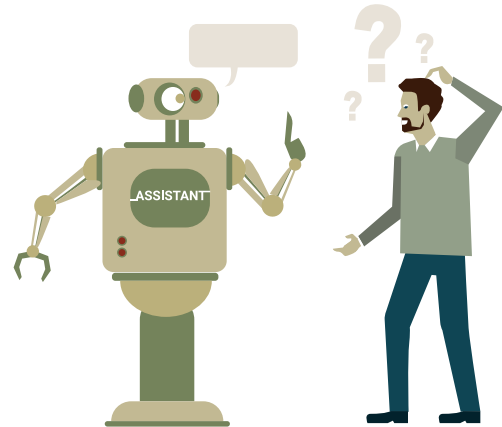
### **Management competencies**

The role of management has become increasingly complex in recent decades, underlining the need for effective training. Although management is rarely part of standard curricula, it is often covered by continuing education programmes. AMU’s management courses provide current and aspiring managers with the skills needed to turn strategic and tactical decisions into practical outcomes.

→ In 2024, approximately 24,000 people took AMU management courses. The six modules in basic management training are in particularly high demand.

### **AMU, digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Digitalisation has been a significant area for AMU for many years, allowing employees to update their digital skills in response to the ongoing digitalisation of the world of work. Increased digitalisation and the use of AI will have a significant impact on many jobs, particularly administrative ones.



→ The high demand for digital and AI skills has prompted AMU to develop an “AI Driving Licence” course that teaches essential intersectoral knowledge and terminology.

### **New competencies for unemployed people**

Short courses allow unemployed people to pick up relevant qualifications for new jobs, re-train, or transition into industries with labour shortages.

AMU courses play a crucial role in upskilling unemployed people to meet the needs of Denmark’s flexible labour market. Ongoing dialogue between companies, unions and regional employment councils (RBRs) also means that initiatives like the Job-VEU model can tailor courses to meet company-specific skills needs.

→ In 2024, around 7,500 unemployed people took an AMU course targeting sectors with labour shortages as part of a six-week job-oriented training programme. The driving, transport and warehouse sectors were in especially high demand.

# A robust AMU system – now and in the future

The VEU Council has identified three key factors that will help AMU support private companies and public-sector organisations by providing the workforce with the skills needed for the future.

- 1. Ease of use for companies and participants**

The VEU Council believes that the AMU system is essential for Danish society. The courses should be user-friendly, accessible nationwide, cover all industries, and be delivered by professionals.

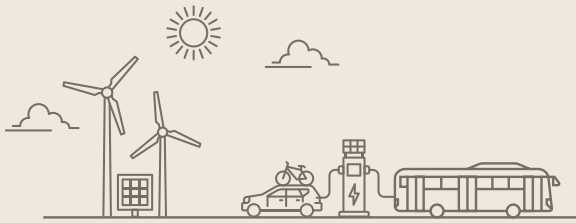
The AMU system must be updated continuously to meet the needs of employers, workers, participants and course providers.
- 2. Experienced teachers – also from relevant companies**

Skilled teachers are crucial to ensuring a strong professional environment. They make sure the teaching is based on the latest methods and approaches.

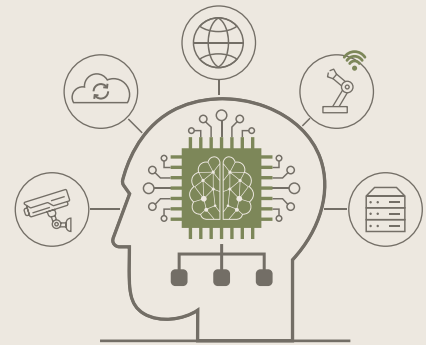
To enhance their relevance, courses should invite guest speakers from companies or similar workplace training programmes. Good teaching lays the groundwork for a robust AMU system.
- 3. Equipment and facilities**

Modern equipment and facilities are essential for effective AMU teaching and for useful practical learning. Using the latest technology and relevant materials allows instructors to help transform theoretical knowledge into the practical skills employers need.

# What can AMU do?



→ Quickly qualify large groups to work in areas like renewable energy, sustainability and welfare



→ Support the use of new technology and AI



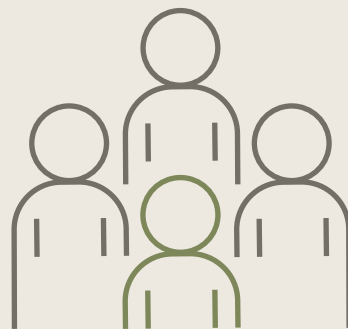
→ Help workers change jobs/industries



→ Provide job-specific courses for unemployed people



→ Help workers obtain mandatory statutory certificates and licences



→ Provide international employees with qualifications