

## **Right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language and social studies tuition**



**Tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies became statutory for immigrants on 1 September 2005. The aim of the tuition is to improve opportunities for immigrants to actively participate in the employment market and in society in general.**

**Norwegian language skills are important in order to be able to understand and be understood, in order to get a job and an education and to be able to participate in society.**

Adult immigrants with residence permits that form the basis for settlement permits have a right and obligation to complete 300 hours of tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies. The municipal authorities are responsible for the provision of this tuition. In order to obtain a settlement permit or Norwegian citizenship, immigrants must either complete 300 hours of tuition or be able to document adequate knowledge of Norwegian or Sami. This applies to persons granted residence permits after 1 September 2005. A transitional scheme is in force for persons granted residence permits before 1 September 2005.

### **The main principles governing the right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language and social studies tuition**

- Immigrants have a right and obligation to complete 250 hours of tuition in the Norwegian language and 50 hours of tuition in social studies, in a language they understand.
- The municipal authorities are responsible for organising the tuition.
- Each person must apply him/herself to the municipality for tuition. The tuition shall start as soon as possible and within three months, at the latest, of the person's application.
- It is the municipal authorities who make decisions relating to the tuition.
- Immigrants must take 300 hours of tuition within three years.
- The completion of 300 hours of tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies is a precondition for the granting of a settlement permit and subsequently Norwegian citizenship.
- Immigrants who are able to document adequate knowledge of Norwegian or Sami may be exempted from the requirement for 300 hours of tuition.
- Immigrants may be given up to 2700 hours of further tuition if this is necessary. There is, however, no obligation to complete more than 300 hours of tuition. The municipal authorities can require an immigrant to take tests to determine whether or not further tuition in addition to the 300 hours is necessary.
- All the tuition of up to 3000 hours must be completed within 5 years.

- The provision of tuition must be adapted to suit the individual's background and qualifications. Everyone participating in the tuition must therefore have an individual plan for his/her own tuition.
- The right to free tuition in Norwegian will normally cease to apply if the tuition is not completed within the deadline. Persons who have been prevented from participating in the tuition can apply to renew their right and obligation to tuition if the deadline has expired.

### **Who has a right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language and social studies tuition?**

The following groups have a right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language and social studies tuition:

- Persons with asylum status
- Resettlement refugees
- Persons granted residence on humanitarian grounds
- Persons with collective protection
- Family members reunited with persons with the above status
- Family members reunited with Norwegian or Nordic citizens
- Family members reunited with persons who have been granted settlement permits

The right and obligation means that these groups are obliged to complete 300 hours of tuition, and that they are entitled to free tuition. Only persons in the age group 16 – 55 have a right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language tuition. Persons between the ages of 55 and 67 are entitled but are not obliged to participate in tuition.

The following groups are not entitled to free tuition but are obliged to complete 300 hours of tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies:

- Labour immigrants from outside the EEA/EFTA area
- Persons who come to Norway on the basis of family reunification with labour immigrants from outside the EEA/EFTA area.

Only persons between the ages of 16 and 55 are obliged to participate in tuition.

### **Who neither has a right nor an obligation to participate in Norwegian language and social studies tuition?**

The following groups neither have a right nor an obligation to participate in Norwegian language tuition:

- Students
- Au-pairs and other persons with temporary residence
- Nordic citizens
- Persons with residence pursuant to the EFTA/EEA rules

This means that the municipal authorities are not responsible for organising Norwegian language tuition for these groups.

## **Transitional scheme for persons granted residence permits before 1 September 2005**

Persons granted residence permits before 1 September 2005 who have not previously been given tuition in the Norwegian language can still receive Norwegian language tuition. However, they are not covered by the right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language tuition and are not therefore obliged to take 300 hours of tuition in order to be granted a settlement permit. A transitional scheme applies to this group. The transitional scheme will apply for a five-year period from 1 September 2005.

## **Applications for citizenship after 1 September 2008**

Everyone who applies for Norwegian citizenship after 1 September 2008 must be able to document that they have completed 300 hours of Norwegian language tuition or be able to document adequate knowledge of Norwegian or Sami. This will apply to everyone regardless of when they were granted residence permits.

## **Further information**

Further information can be obtained by contacting the municipality. Municipal offices that can be contacted:

- Adult education office
- Municipal service office
- Refugee office
- Introduction centre
- Social security office