

# The Education Strategy of the Government of Greenland

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Church

February 2015

## **EDUCATION THE KEY TO OUR FUTURE**

## Preface

We are on our way to an important and exciting future. In recent years much discussion has been devoted to the subject of which resources will pave the way for a self-sufficient country. My clear position on this issue is that our most important resource is the people of our country – that is: it is you and me who must pave the way for a sustainable society. We must build this resource with knowledge and education.

*”Education is the most powerful weapon  
which you can choose to change the  
world”  
– Nelson Mandela*

In order to create a better future with better welfare and prosperity, we as individual people and as a country must do our bit to raise the level of education so that we have the necessary competitiveness on the global market.

Getting an education has many positive effects and it is the surest way towards a good life. An education gives you the freedom to create your own future and create a secure framework for your family. At the same time, your education will give you greater opportunity for active participation in the development of our country.

Children and youth have many different dreams for their future. This is true both here in our country and in the rest of the world. Unlike many other countries we have built a unique education system that gives all our children and young people the possibility to educate themselves and realise their dreams. The good framework conditions for getting an education are here, so it is up to us to make good use of them. We – both parents and teachers – must ensure that our children utilise and get the greatest possible benefit from these conditions. Together we must inspire our children to get an education, to get the desire to perfect their skills and the desire and courage to shape our future.

Our children’s desire to educate themselves must be fostered in elementary school as the elementary school is the basis for the future and educational possibilities of the individual. A strong elementary school is therefore necessary in order to achieve our ambitions.

We must all roll up our sleeves and ensure that we all contribute to building the foundation that shall carry this country into a bright and secure future. It is our responsibility, through education, to ensure that the foundation is strong and stable.

The vision of the Education Strategy is that more people shall act out their desire to get an education and acquire the tools necessary to complete an education. We want to achieve a situation where we can ourselves fill the future positions on the labour market – also in new industries and sectors.

Built on the lessons learned from the first phase of the Greenland Education Programme, we have prepared an action plan in order to carry on all the good initiatives. Our human resources are now in a stronger position as more people have enrolled education and more have completed in recent years. We must consolidate and continue this positive development in the second phase of the programme. The overall visions from the Education Strategy of the Government of Greenland 2014 are passed on in this strategy. I am glad that there is a continued political consensus on the overall objectives of the Education Strategy that forms the basis for Education Plan II.

The Education Strategy is also the basis for our cooperation with the EU through the Partnership Agreement. In the Partnership Agreement with the EU we have the freedom to shape our education programmes so that they reflect the values of our country. At the same time the Partnership Agreement gives us a responsibility to ensure that we raise our level of education, that this is done in an effective manner and that the effort is continuously evaluated.

It is thus our mutual objective to ensure a high standard at all levels of the education system, from preschool to higher education. This applies to us as politicians, as parents, as teachers and not least as pupils, apprentices and students.

I wish you happy reading.

Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Church

Nivi Olsen

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## 1 Introduction

People are the greatest resource of our country, which is why it is important for both our society and the individual that everyone in our country is offered educational opportunities. With good financial and strategic planning these opportunities can be made even better.

### 1.1 Why get an education?

The Government will work to ensure that even more students complete their education and thus are able to better support themselves and their family. One of the roads towards our common goal of becoming an independent nation is more people getting a qualifying education. This has to be done through collaboration across the ministries and by involving stakeholders.

Learning and personal development begins when the child is born. Therefore children must be offered a developing preschool education, either through a day care centre or through initiatives ensuring their learning and development in their local area. A good preschool education lays the foundations for a good education and for further learning.

Children must acquire the abilities that are required for completing an education in elementary school. The elementary school must be strengthened while still being able to accommodate children with different backgrounds and the elementary school teachers must be able to provide the best possible education for all children.

The high school which is the foundation for advancing into higher education, academic or professional, has grown since The Education Plan I from 2005. At the same time more students are attending vocational education and training. It is important to meet the demands of skilled labour in the years to come; however, it creates a pressure on our apprenticeships. Therefore work has to be done to find solutions involving school apprenticeships. We encourage young people to consider going abroad when looking for vocational education and training. Already today there is a good collaboration with the business community in Denmark, and the Greenlandic Houses in Denmark create a better contact between companies and Greenlandic students.

The number of students has also increased in higher educations. We wish to see this trend continue while even more students must complete their education. This development is important as the need for people with a higher education will increase in the future and we want to ensure that more positions in our country, including those within the new industries, are being occupied by native labour.

The Education Plan I from 2005 has resulted in that:

- compared to 2005 the number of students in vocational education and training has increased by 47% in 2012 with 3872 active students at the end of 2012.
- compared to 2005 the number of students completing vocational educations and training has increased by 77% in 2012 with 978 students completing their education in 2012.

The education sector is developing in a positive direction but to continue this it is important to continue to develop the sector. Since everything cannot be done at once we need to prioritise our actions and efforts. We need to ensure that we make the best of the circumstances and that more people who start an education also completes it.

The Education Strategy describes the Government's visions and goals for the different areas of the education sector. The Education Strategy is a revision of the former Education Strategies from 2012 and 2014 and it is a continuation of the Greenland Education Programme. The visions and goals in the Education Strategy 2014 are the background for the initiatives that the Government wish to initiate with the Educational Plan II.

The Educational Strategy 2014 is based on knowledge build in the recent years among other things from the following:

- ❖ In 2005 the *Education Plan I* was implemented.
- ❖ The partnership agreement with the EU signed in 2006 has ensured Greenland approximately DKK 200 million annually in sector budget support for education in the period 2007-2013. The agreement has meant that the Government to an even larger extent has had focus on results and progress in the education sector because of the reporting obligations on a set of indicators. The partnership agreement has been renegotiated for the period 2014-2020. This means that the cooperation with the EU within the area of education continues.
- ❖ In the period from 2010 to 2011 the Regional Development Strategy and the Strategy for Children and Youth was formulated in inter-ministerial working groups. The work of the Tax and Welfare Commission was also completed during this period.
- ❖ Since the end of 2012 there has been an effort to involve stakeholders through working groups within the different areas of the education sector. During the second half of 2013 two-day workshops have been conducted on different areas within the education sector.

The stakeholders were invited to dialogues resulting in a set of recommendations to the Education Plan II for the Minister of Education.

## **1.2 Goals of the educational strategy**

We need educated and qualified labour all over the country and in all sectors and there is still a need to bring in labour from abroad for many jobs in the country. The Education Strategy 2014 shall ensure that we to a larger extent educate our own population so that we can fill these positions and give the individual a better opportunity to provide for themselves and their family. In 2012 51 % of the 35 year-olds in our country had a qualifying education.

The overall goal for the education sector is:

**Of the year groups that leave elementary school from 2015, 70 % must obtain a qualifying education before they reach the age of 35.**

The proportion with a qualifying education is measured of the 35 year-olds living in Greenland using data from Statistics Greenland.

## **1.3 Areas of focus within education**

An investment in education is an investment in our human resources. For this reason the Government has selected ten focus areas within the education sector. The Government especially focus on the development of these areas based on our values. The values, which we wish to be applied for the entire educational sector, are; inclusion, diversity, motivation, sustainability and last but not least mutual and personal responsibility. It is important that we focus on the strengthening of these values in our country given that we have so much both professional and social diversity. The Government believes that the education system must be able to include and accommodate all citizens in our country and should cultivate our diversity and support those who need a helping hand to complete an education. The Government further believes that we must strengthen the enterprise of our creative, innovative and resourceful youth and through this contribute further to the development of our society.

### *More children in preschool*

See section 2 Preschool

### *Strengthening of elementary school*

See section 3 Elementary School

### *Earlier start*

The average age among Greenlandic students in youth- and higher education is too high. It is never too late to get an education; however, the youth must be encouraged to start an education earlier than they do today among other things to ensure a good foundation for the maintenance of our welfare state. By completing an education the individual is ensured a good foundation for being able to provide for one self and one's family. The job security is lower for unskilled people.

### *More skilled workers*

See section 6 Vocational education and training

### *Higher completion rates*

After we initiated the Education Plan I in 2005 many more have started an education and many more have completed but the drop-out rate is still too high. We need to work on actions and initiatives to help more students complete their education. Dropping out of an education, regardless of the cause, is a step backward for anyone. Completing an education gives one more self-confidence and independence while improving one's future prospects.

### *Better guidance and counselling/psychological therapy*

In recent years it has become evident that counselling is very important for those who wish to start an education. The counselling must continuously improve and develop in line with the general development of the country. Counselling is more than just student guidance. It must also include counselling of the following areas: transitions, life, change of education, moving, and guidance on seeking help. In addition there is a need to work on better and more accessible offers of psychological counselling for the students in need and counselling for children and youth with special needs, including the disabled, must be ensured.

### *Education outside of Greenland*

The Government recognises the importance of educating as many people as possible while also acknowledging that at this time it is not possible to provide all educations in our country. Therefore there must be a focus on the possibilities for the youth to get an education in another country. Young people seeking counselling on education must be informed about the possibility and freedom to choose education and apprenticeship abroad.

### *Increased ICT skills*

It is important for both the individual and the society that everyone has the competences to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT). To achieve this we need to start early in the child's development. All students when leaving school must be competent users of ICT.



Subsequently, the knowledge of ICT which young people acquire through education should be improved so that they all have a solid knowledge of the ICT tools that are available either in the labour market or in higher education.

### *Management training*

The Government believes that there is a need for upgrading qualifications of managers at all levels of education. This way, managers everywhere within all professions get useful tools ensuring that employees meet a dynamic and successful management. Management training is a significant part in becoming an independent state as good leaders are the key to a healthy development of companies and institutions and the welfare of the employees.

### *Optimal use of resources and impact assessment*

The resources allocated to the education sector must be optimally used to consistently pursue the overall strategies. This requires a strong culture of evaluation which can continuously inform the administrative and political level about the effects of the effort. At the same time an optimal use of resources is only possible if there is coherence between the educational opportunities and potential barriers to start an education are systematically detected and broken down. Action must continuously be taken regarding initiatives and institutions that are deemed to not provide the expected quality in relation to the money allocated. An accurate and cost-effective prioritisation of funding is a prerequisite to support the other goals. Economies of scale should be established to the greatest possible extent as this provides a more efficient use of both human and financial resources.

## 2 Preschool

Lifelong learning begins in preschool. The earlier effort we make, and thereby give the children a good basis for learning, the better it is for their lifelong learning.

### 2.1 Status

There are 1500 children between 0-5 years, corresponding to 31% of the children in this age who are not in public or private pre-school. At the same time projections show that the age group will grow until 2018. This illustrates the growing need for pre-school services for these children. In addition 46 % of the staff in the public pre-school was in 2012 without a professional education.

### 2.2 Vision

**The vision is that all children shall have equal access to day-care that can accommodate them and secure their learning and development regardless of their social and cultural background.**

It is the ambition of the Government to provide public preschool services for all children in order to teach children social skills in relation to children of the same age and the best possible conditions for learning in elementary school and in further education.

The focus of the effort is on the child and its family as the family is the foundation for a happy childhood. Providing a safe childhood environment is parental responsibility and the local community and the preschool must be supportive of the parents' role.

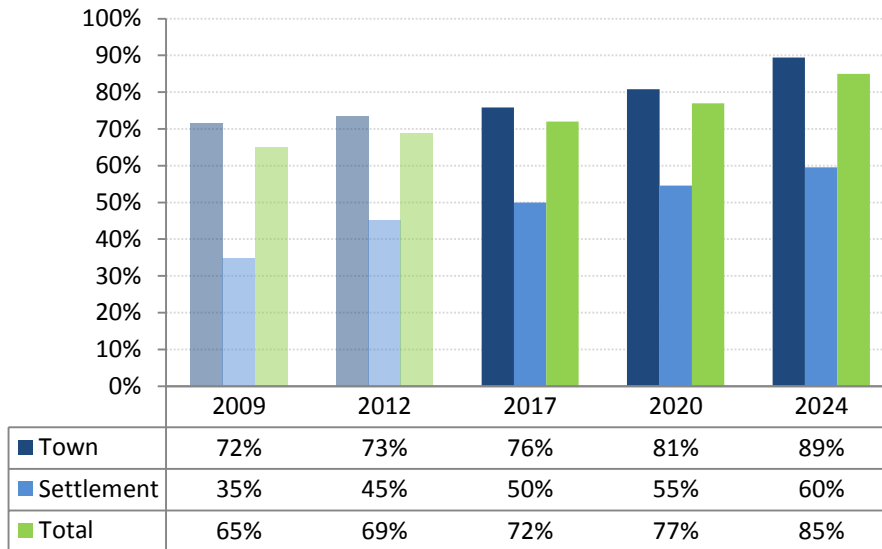
Upgrading of staff qualifications and efforts to improve professional competences in preschool is of great importance especially in the settlements where the need for action is greatest. That is why a plan is required on how to ensure more educated personnel in the preschool, both in our towns and settlements. It must be planned when and where expansion or constructions of new facilities is needed based on population projections and regional needs. In addition we must ensure that the system takes children with special needs into account.

Preschool is the responsibility of the municipalities and it is therefore in the interest of the Government to fulfil our visions and goals for the preschool in close collaboration with the municipalities.

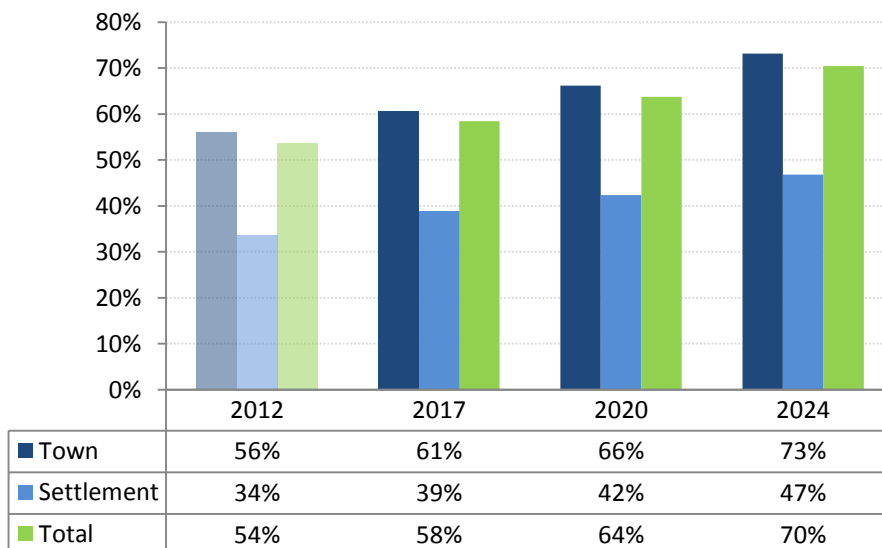
### 2.3 Goals

The vision for the preschool is put into targets for the years until 2024. These are visualised in graphs below where 2012 is included as the base year. The development until 2012 is also visualised where data is available.

#### Share of children age 0-5 in pre-school



#### Share of professionals in pre-school



### 3 Elementary School

The elementary school is the most important focus area. The elementary school is the foundation for all further education. When children leave elementary school they must have achieved the competencies necessary for their further education.

As parents it is our responsibility to ensure that our children have the best possible conditions for learning: a good, stable and secure environment where they have the necessary support to pursue opportunities that will carry them forward in their life.

#### 3.1 Status

The graduates of the elementary school in 2013 were the first to attend all school years of elementary school, since the elementary school reform 'The Good School' ('Atuarfitsialak') was implemented. In autumn of 2010 the implementation of the reform was evaluated and the Government finds that there are still many students who do not experience the educational quality that the reform aims to create.

Furthermore there are still too few young people who continue into further education directly after finishing elementary school.

#### 3.2 Vision

**The primary school must prepare the pupils –academically and personally- for starting a youth education. The pupils' strengths must be developed and be the basis of their learning and development. The primary school shall be able to accommodate the pupils in all their multiplicity and include them regardless of their background.**

The Government wishes to continue in the overall direction of the elementary school reform but recognises the need to evaluate and further develop the education of the elementary school and the ability to meet and accommodate all students, including students with challenges and special educational needs.

All children, regardless of social background, should have the competences which are required to continue in the educational system. The Government wishes to promote an elementary school that offers activities in accordance with the qualifications and needs of all children and where the staff is qualified to take care of children in relation to their mental, physical, social and cultural development, and thereby develop their wellbeing and their connection to the community. This also applies to children and people with disabilities whose needs should be met with special educational

offers. At the same time there must be a focus on inclusiveness and developmental opportunities for the strong students of the elementary school.

The Government believes that it is important for the future of our children that the parents take the responsibility to support their children's learning. It is the responsibility of the parents that their children are ready to learn when they attend school and that they have the necessary support for school activities at home. To support this the Government finds that parents who are experiencing difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities as parents receive support, guidance and/or counselling, at an early stage.

The Government finds that in many schools the elementary school reform has only recently been sought implemented. In cooperation with the municipalities we wish to ensure that the implementation is completed and we wish to focus particularly on schools in settlements and school homes. It is important that the necessary action plans are prepared and that there will also be space for the teachers' professionalism and teaching autonomy in the future.

The Government wishes to introduce the use international comparative tests to ensure high quality of the elementary schools. This is an important tool for the future development of the elementary school.

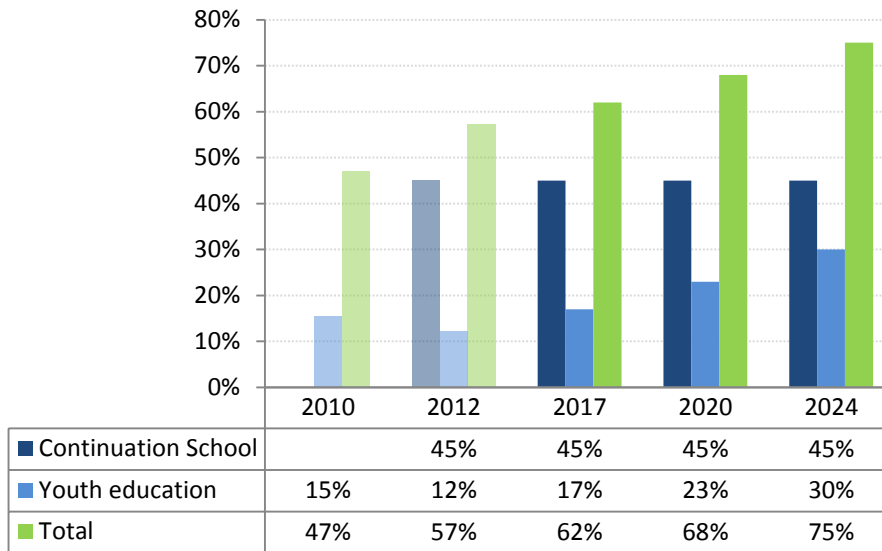
One of our major challenges is recruiting educated teachers in all schools in our country. Therefore it is required to find alternative solutions and develop other options to be able to meet the need for the best possible education for all children.

Elementary school is the responsibility of municipalities and it is therefore in the interest of the Government to fulfil our visions and goals for the elementary school in close collaboration with the municipalities. Additionally the Government will support successful local initiatives such as the school fairy scheme and mentoring schemes.

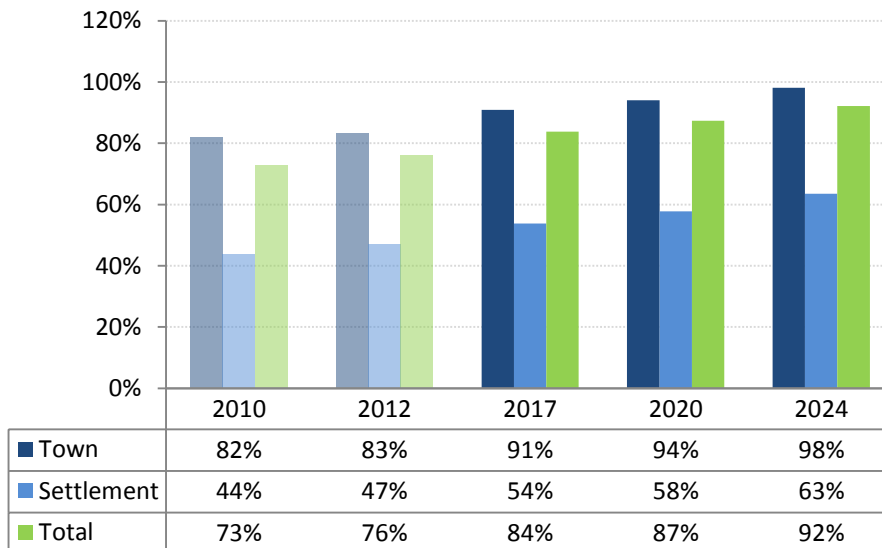
### **3.3 Goals**

The vision for the preschool is put into targets for the years until 2024. These are visualised in graphs below where 2012 is included as the base year. The development until 2012 is also visualised where data is available.

### Transition rate from elementary school



### Share of professionals in elementary school



## 4 Young people outside the education system

Young people outside the education system relate to people in the ages of 16-18 years. These young people has not enrolled a youth education or continued at a continuation school after finishing elementary school. The group was previously known as the 'residual group'.

### 4.1 Status

43.5 % do not continue at a further education directly after elementary school and the young people outside the education system are 61,9 % of the total population of 16-18 year-olds. Internationally compared this is a high share. A late start on a youth education means that the economic contribution to one self and to the society will be delayed. At the same time not being a part of the education system can also have negative consequences for the self-esteem of the individual. Further, it leads to a situation where way too many never start an education and thereby find themselves having difficulties getting a foothold in the labour market.

### 4.2 Vision

**We must create an education system where everybody can progress regardless of their background. The vision is that young people outside the education system are included in the system and complete a qualifying education.**

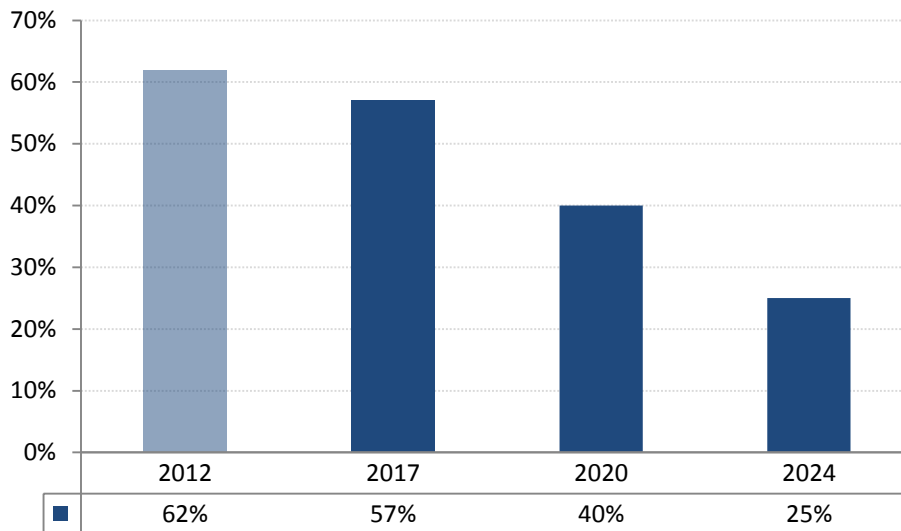
It is important that young people start the process of getting a qualifying education early. The longer they wait the greater is the risk that they will never get started. For the youth to continue in the education system after finishing elementary school we need an expanded counselling effort for the youth. It is important to make sure that young people between the ages 16-18 years do not end up outside the education system. In addition focus must be put on the transition between elementary school and youth education which is experienced as a hard transition for many. There should be focus on counselling and initiatives that make the youth continue faster in the education system. If it is not possible to start a youth education after finishing elementary school they should continue on continuation school or in another course that leads to a youth education.

The Government will have extra focus on those young people with academic and social issues or disabilities so that these young people also are given the opportunity to get an education and thus improve their own life and be able to contribute to the society.

### 4.3 Goals

The vision for the young people outside the education system is put into targets for the years until 2024. These are visualised in graphs below where 2012 is included as the base year. The development until 2012 is also visualised where data is available.<sup>1</sup>

#### Share of young people outside the education system



Note: Young people outside the education system are defined as young people between the age of 16-18 not being active at a continuation school or in formal education.

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<sup>1</sup> The visions for the young people outside the education system should be seen in combination with the visions for the primary schools.



## 5 High School

The high school education is a generally educating and study preparatory education. The education is aimed at people with interests in knowledge, immersion, discussion and abstraction, and the primary goal is to qualify for higher education.

### 5.1 Status

Since Education Plan I was formulated in 2005 the number of students in high school has increased by 70 % from 791 students to 1344 students in 2012. At the same time the number of students who complete high school has increased by 135 % from 150 to 353 students in 2012. However, the completion rate is low and in 2012 it was 55.6 %. The average age of students in high school is, as in many other parts of the education sector, high.

The high school reform went into force in 2012. There are now eight study programmes for the youth to choose between. The reform makes the Greenlandic high school more flexible so that students have a first year core curriculum and afterwards choose their study programme. The different programmes meet the individual student's abilities and interests. With the new education we have introduced one high school education (GUX), replacing the former Greenlandic high school educations: high school (GU), higher commercial examination (HHX) and higher technical examination (HTX).

## 5.2 Vision

**The high school shall prepare the students for further studies and provide liberal education. High school education shall also contribute to a society of enlightened and active citizens. The study directions shall create a strong academic and social foundation, for the individual student, for progression in life and learning.**

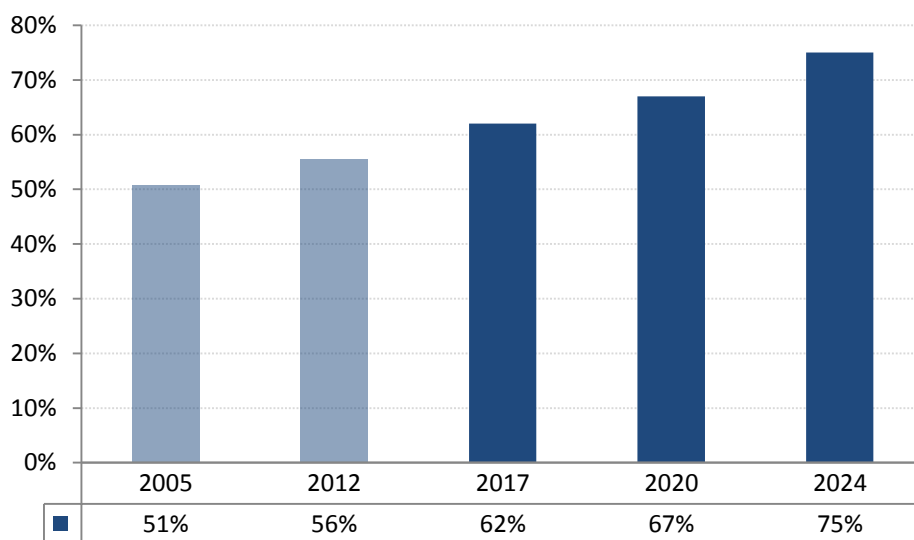
It is the goal of the Government that students begin their education earlier. Additionally a focus on more students completing their education is needed. A higher completion rate must be ensured through better counselling to prevent students choosing a wrong education. The initiatives preventing dropout will continue in collaboration with the educational institutions and the students. Alongside a high academic level and preparing students for further education it is important for the high school to include diversity. This implies, among other things, that there should be focus on supporting the students with academic challenges in one or more subjects and there has to be support and counselling for students with social or mental challenges.

The Government also wants to ensure strong collaborations with the parents of the students especially for students under the age of 18.

## 5.3 Goals

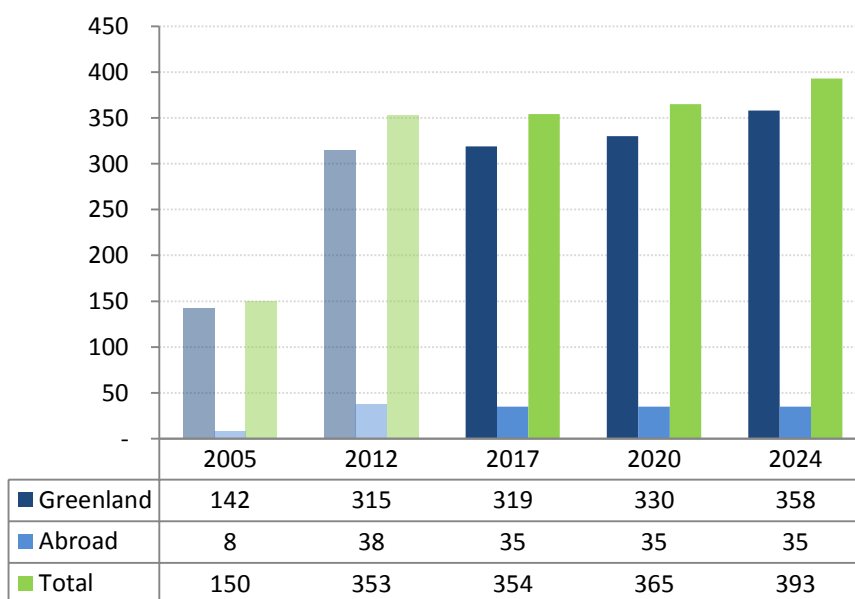
The vision for the high school is put into targets for the years until 2024. These are visualised in graphs below where 2012 is included as the base year. The development until 2012 is also visualised where data is available.

## Completion rate



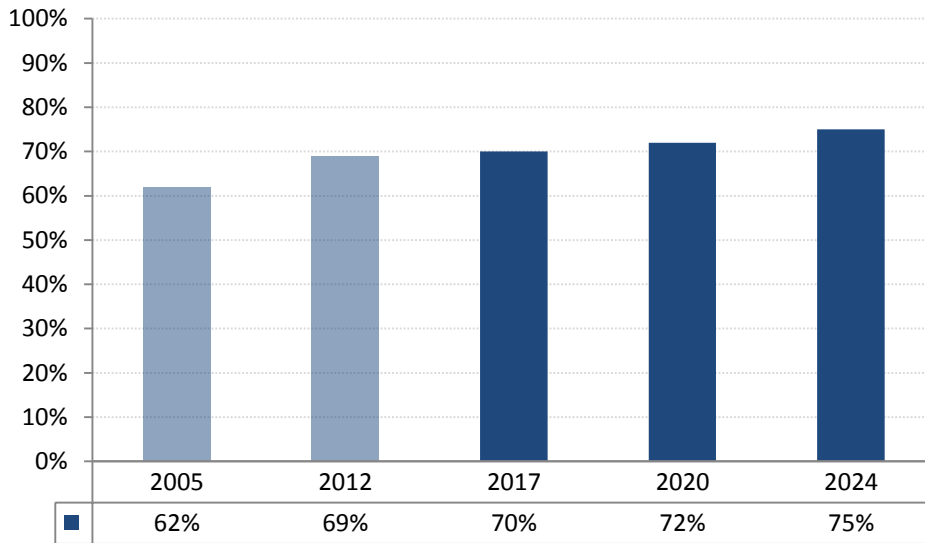
Note: The completion rate is the share of a high school year group that have either completed or is expected to complete the education they have started in the year of counting.

## Number of completions

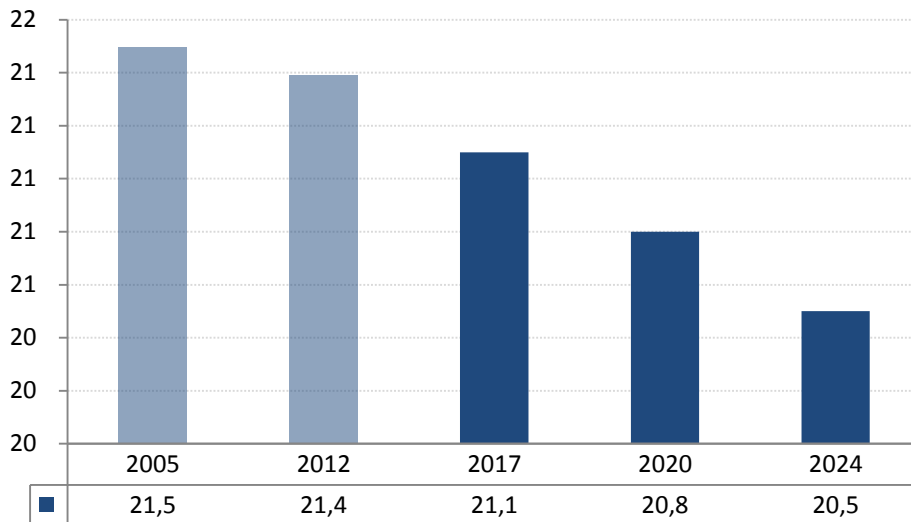


Note: including study preparatory courses for adults

### Transition rate (2 years after completion)



### Average age at completion



Note: excluding study preparatory courses for adults

## 6 Vocational education and training

A vocational education is a qualifying education that gives the individual direct access to skilled employment in the labour market.

The vocational educations are structured as work-linked training where students alternate between an apprenticeship at a company or school apprenticeship and teaching at the vocational college. Students acquire practical skills during their apprenticeship and theoretical and practical skills in vocational college.

### 6.1 Status

Since the Education Plan I was formulated in 2005 the number of students in vocational education and training has increased by 22 % from 1118 to 1367 students in 2012 and the number of students completing has increased with 53 % from 271 to 415 in 2012. However the completion rate is still low and in 2012 it was 42.5 %. The average age of students in vocational educations and training is high just like in many other parts of the education sector.

One of the greatest obstacles is providing a sufficient amount of apprenticeships. Many of the applicants to vocational education and training cannot find an apprenticeship and therefore cannot start the education.

By introducing boards of directors for the vocational colleges in 2011 it was attempted to ensure a stronger connection between the vocational colleges and the labour market. These boards of directors consist of members from the industry, trade organisations etc. At the same time the schools are more independent with their own board of directors which contributes to ensuring ownership in the industry to the vocational educations.

### 6.2 Vision

**Vocational education and training shall provide opportunity for the students to gain specialised knowledge based on their strengths and interests. The educations shall prepare the students to take up positions as skilled labour, but also secure that the students have a basis for professional growth. In close interaction with society, business community and schools, vocational education shall be the link between the strengths of the students and the needs of the society.**

It is essential for the Government that the vocational educations are developed in line with the needs of the labour market creating a link between the skills of the youth and the demand of the

labour market. The boards of directors must take part in ensuring relevance and make sure that the labour market's educational demands are met in the planning of educations. This includes that the students acquire the linguistic competences that the labour market requires. This is particularly important in the years to come in relation to new businesses, which are expected within the areas of raw materials and mining. This also applies to the health and social services where a greater demand for labour will occur in the future in the light of the demographic conditions.

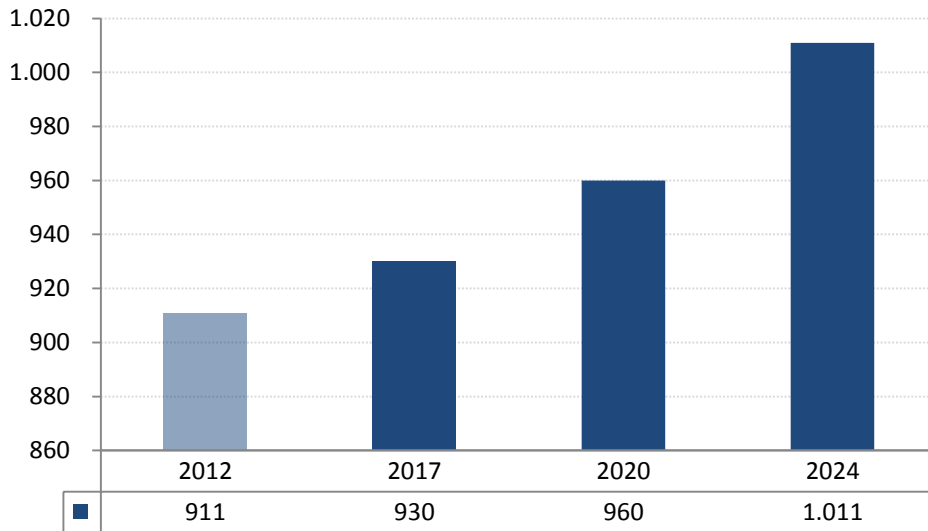
It is the goal of the Government that students begin their vocational education and training earlier. Additionally focus should be on more students completing the education they start. A higher completion rate must be ensured through better counselling to prevent students making a wrong choice of education. Initiatives preventing drop out will continue in collaboration with the educational institutions and the students. Finally, action needs to be taken to improve the opportunities of finding an apprenticeship. The large increase in the number of active students in vocational education and training puts a pressure on the capacity - both in terms of classrooms, dormitories and educators. This makes it important that students are offered and supported in attending vocational colleges and/or apprenticeships in Denmark and afterwards return to use their education in Greenland where qualified labour is needed in practically every area.

It is also important that people with less academic skills and people with special needs are also given the opportunity to get a vocational education making them able to develop and actively support themselves. The Government wishes that this is achieved through inclusion where specially organised courses are established so that these people can attend lessons together with the other students.

### **6.3 Goals**

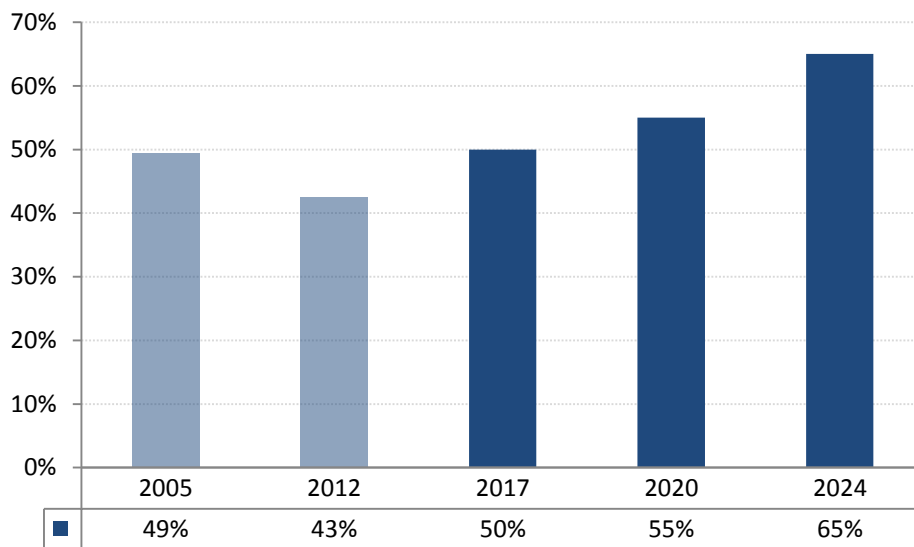
The vision for vocational education and training is put into targets for the years until 2024. These are visualised in graphs below where 2012 is included as the base year. The development until 2012 is also visualised where data is available.

### Number of apprenticeships



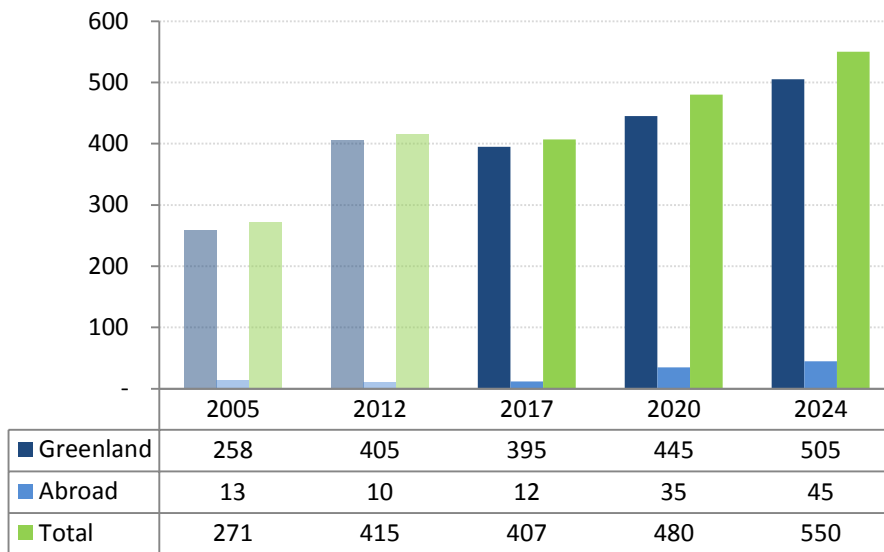
Note 1: only apprenticeships within Greenland are included

### Completion rate

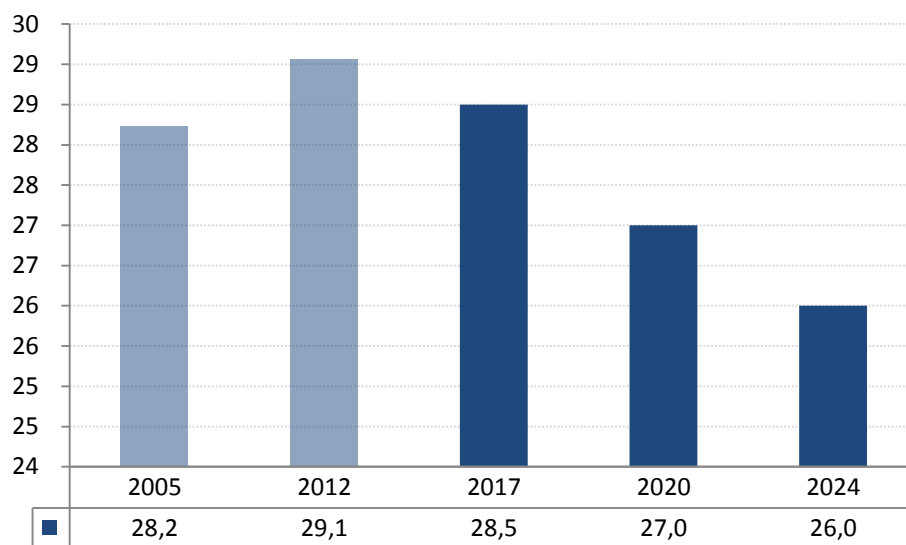


Note: The completion rate is the share of a VET year group that have either completed or is expected to complete the education they have started in the year of counting.

### Number of completions



### Average age at completion





## 7 Higher education

Higher education can be short-cycle tertiary educations, bachelors or masters. Higher educations are mostly build upon high school education but can in some cases be based upon vocational educations.

### 7.1 Status

The labour market is in need for people with academic educations. Demographic projections show that this need will be even greater in the future.

Since the Education Plan I was formulated in 2005 the number of students attending higher educations has increased by 62 % from 717 to 1161 students in 2012 and the number of students completing by 59 % from 132 to 210 in 2012. However, the completion rate is still low cf. section 7.3. The average age of students in higher education is high as in the other parts of the education sector. In addition many students extend their study time beyond the standard time limits. This is especially true for master students.

### 7.2 Vision

**The higher educations within the country shall provide academic competence at an international level rooted in the historical and cultural context of the country. The business community will be included as an active partner to ensure the academic level.**

**Students who enrol an education abroad shall be given the best possible conditions for completing their education and for returning home when they do.**

**The number of students who complete higher education both in the country and abroad must be substantially increased within all fields of study.**

The Government believes that it is important to educate the youth to fill the positions in the labour market making us able to ensure that we are actively participating in the development of our country.

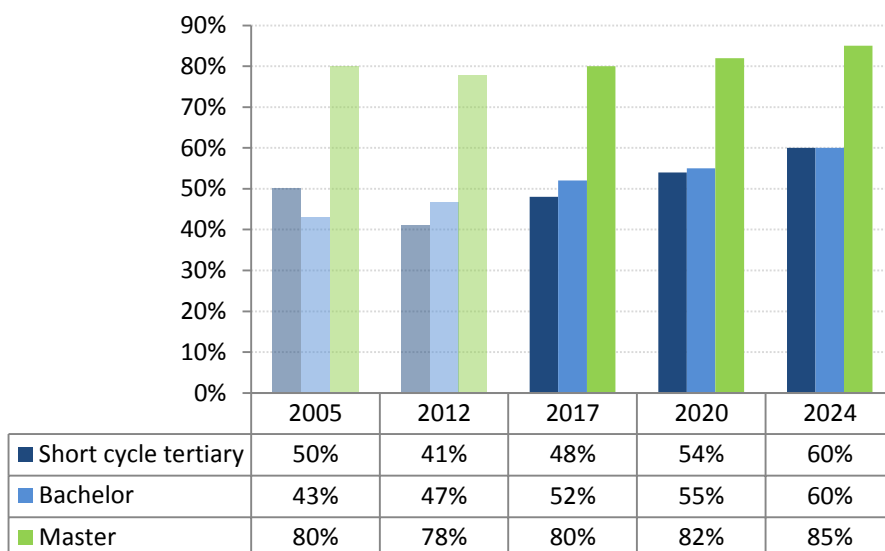
In higher educations it is important to focus on counselling, dropout prevention and the inclusion of students with special needs. Furthermore focus has to be on ensuring that the students finish within the standard time limits and thus enter the labour market faster.

The Government is interested in expanding the range of professional bachelor educations and to support the creation of more educations in line with the structure of the ARTEK model<sup>2</sup>. Among other things, this is meant to strengthen and promote the Greenlandic educational system internationally. It is important that we ensure that as much of the knowledge of our country and its resources as possible are held by people with association to our country. That is why it is important to make sure that as many students as possible choose a job in our country after graduating.

### 7.3 Goals

The vision for higher education is put into targets for the years until 2024. These are visualised in graphs below where 2012 is included as the base year. The development until 2012 is also visualised where data is available.

#### Completion rate

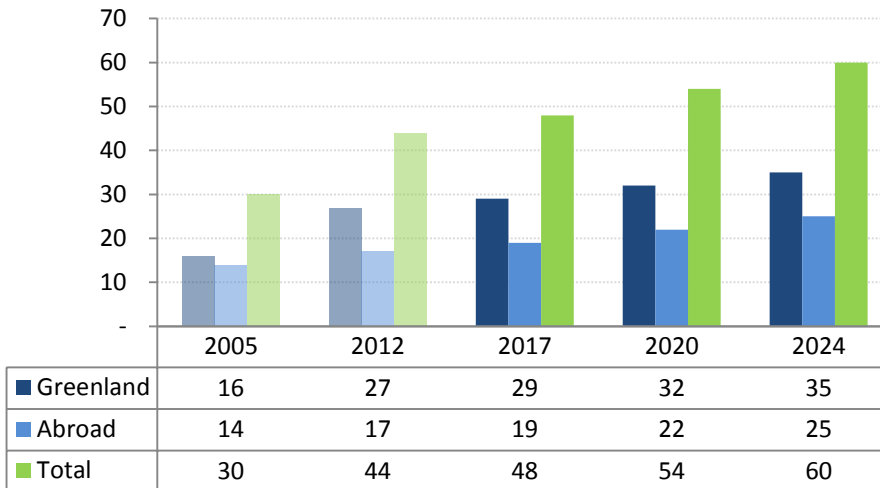


Note: The completion rate is the share of a school year group that have either completed or is expected to complete the education they have started in the year of counting.

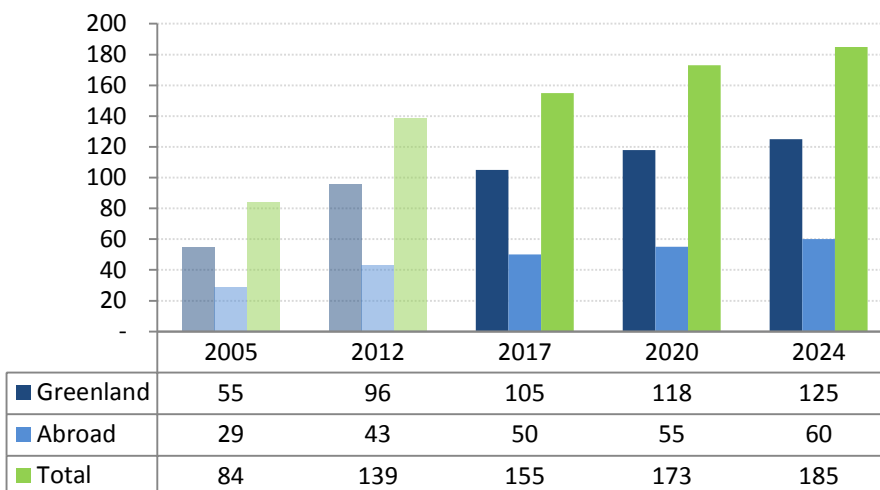
<sup>2</sup> The ARTEK model is a collaboration between a Greenlandic educational institution and a foreign educational institution, about providing an education partly held in Greenland and partly abroad. The operating costs are shared between the institutions.

## Number of graduates

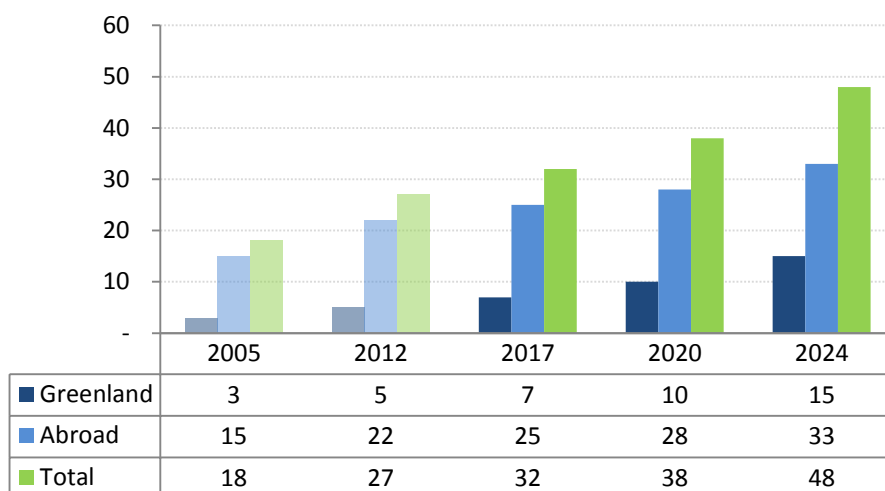
### Short-cycle tertiary



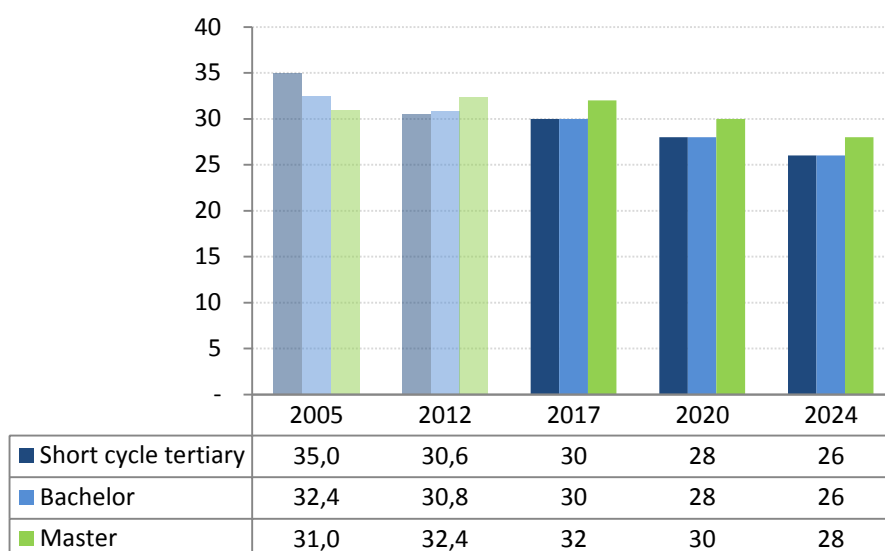
### Bachelor



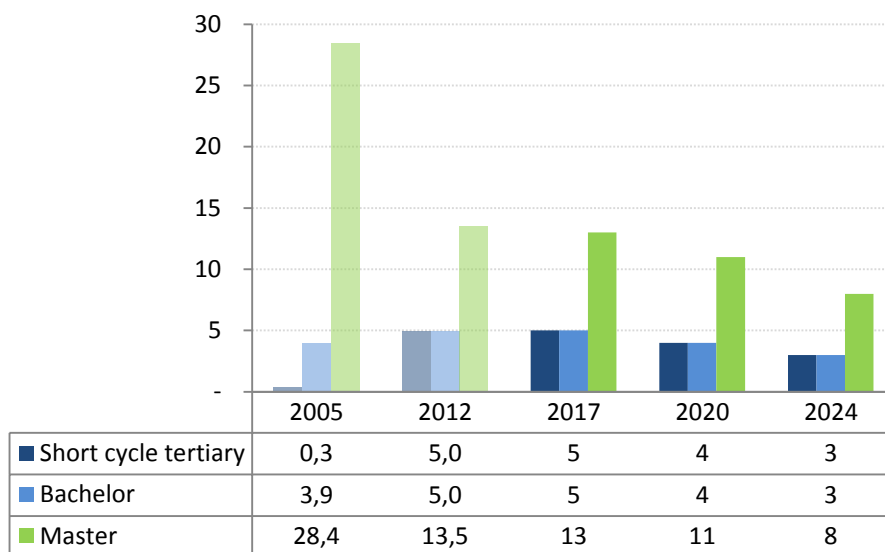
### Master



### Average age at completion



### Average study time beyond the standard time limits



Note: Only educations in Greenland are included