

This article is written by Oslo VO Servicesenter for the website <https://felles.oslovo.no>.

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## Free or paid courses in Norwegian language and Society, - and other rules in the Introduction Act.

In this article you will find a description of some important rules for courses in Norwegian Language and Society for adult immigrants:

**Who is covered by the rules, right and / or duty, deadlines for free Norwegian language training and the connection between the duty and requirements for Norwegian Language and Society lessons/skills in order to obtain a permanent residence permit.**

The rules are found in the Introduction Act with regulations (“forskrifter”). See also the other articles about **Norwegian Language and Society** on this website.

Kindly note that there are simplifications and interpretations of the rules in this article. It is the law and the regulations and interpretations from the ministry that apply.

### THE INTRODUCTION ACT OR THE INTEGRATION ACT?

It is planned that a new law, the **Integration Act**, “integreringsloven”, will apply from 1.1.2021. The main rule is that it shall apply to persons who receive the first residence permit that gives a right and duty, or duty, to training in Norwegian and social studies from and including 01.01.2021.

It will also apply to those who have received their first residence permit before this date, but who do not arrive in Norway before 2021.

The **Introduction Act**, introduksjonsloven, will continue to apply to those who have been granted a first residence permit that gives a right and duty, or duty, between 1.9.2005 and 31.12.2020 and who came to Norway before 01.01.2021.

### THE INTRODUCTION ACT

The Introduction Act with regulations describes the rules for Norwegian language and Society training for adult immigrants. It applies to most of the immigrants (16-67) who have received their first residence permit as of 01.09.2005 until 31.12.2020 and were/are granted a residence permit that forms the basis for permanent residency

Both previous and current residence permits can determine the rights and / or obligations one has under the Introduction Act. This means that a new type of residence permit can extend, limit or remove your rights and / or obligations.

The Introduction Act is closely linked to the various requirements of Norwegian language and Society lessons/skills when applying for a permanent residence permit (Utlendingsloven / *the Immigration Act*) and citizenship (Statsborgerloven / *the Citizenship Act*).

The introduction Act and its regulations are often revised. From January 01.01.2017, some changes were made the rules, including age groups and new requirements for Norwegian language and Social knowledge skills. A small expansion of the group that gets right and duty apply from summer 2018, see below.

Both the Introduction Act, the Citizenship Act (Statsborgerloven) with regulations and the Immigration Act (Utlendingsloven) with regulations can be found at [lovdata.no](http://lovdata.no).

The Introduction Act with regulations and more comprehensive information on the rules in Norwegian and social studies for adult immigrants and the introduction program are compiled in "circulars" from the government. The latest circular , [G-01/2016](#), is still helpful, but please note that it is not updated as to the changes in 2017 and 2018.

The Introduction Act and its regulations determines which immigrants

- are entitled to free training in Norwegian language and Society
- have to pay for the training
- have mandatory tests (See Permanent residence permit)

The Act also regulates

- the age groups various rules apply for
- rules on time-limits, and other limitations for free training
- alternative documentation of skills and other requirements for an Exemption("Fritak") from the duty.

### **Does the Introduction Act apply to you?**

You can check the information in the residence permit you have received from the UDI/Police, or you can enquire at The Adult Education in your municipality.

## **RIGHT AND DUTY, RIGHT, AND DUTY in the Introduction Act**

### **RIGHT AND DUTY**

Persons with a right and a duty are entitled to free tuitions based on rules and limitations in the Introduction Act and its regulations. The main groups are:

- Persons with a refugee status
- Resettlement refugees (*overføringsflyktninger*)
- Persons with residency based on
  - Humanitarian grounds (*humanitært*)
  - Compassionate grounds (*sterke menneskelige hensyn*)  
(See separate rules for calculating the deadline for free courses in Norwegian language and society)
  - Independent grounds (*selvstendig grunnlag*)
- Individuals under collective protection

- Persons who have family reunification with:
  - a person in one of the groups above
  - a person who has a permanent residence permit
    - Note: special rules apply for calculating the time limit for free training for persons who have family reunification with a work immigrant who later is granted permanent residency
  - a Norwegian citizen or a Nordic citizen
    - Note: special rules apply for persons reunited with Nordic citizens, see [www.udi.no](http://www.udi.no), or contact UDI for more details
  - Family reunification with a person with collective protection if the permit of the person who received collective protection provides a basis for a permanent residence permit

*New groups with right and duty from the summer of 2018 (see the Introduction Act at [lovdata.no](http://lovdata.no)):*

- Persons with a limited residence permit as a member of a family with children, due to doubt about the person's identity. (Such persons are given the right and duty to training in Norwegian language and Society from the first renewal of the residence permit.)
- Persons with a limited residence permit as a single minor, due to doubt about the person's identity

**For persons with right and duty to (free) tuition who were granted first residence permit from and including 1.9.2013, test in Norwegian and the Social studies test are mandatory.** This is linked to required passed tests when applying for permanent residence permit.

## **RIGHT**

### **Who has only a right (without duty) to training?**

Persons with a right (without duty) are mainly the persons in the right and duty groups who are between 55 and 67 years. The rules of right without duty to training apply only to persons who were granted their first residence permit before 1.1.2017. Persons with a right are granted free training, but do not have a duty to complete training/pass tests to apply for a permanent residence permit.

However, from 2017, new rules for requirements of Norwegian language and Society knowledge for citizenship for applicants up to 67 years apply also to such persons. The deadlines of 3 and 5 years for free training (see further) also apply to persons with the right (without duty).

**Changes from 2017:** Persons, who have right and duty to this training and were granted their first residence permit from and including 01.01.2017, must meet the requirements of Norwegian and Social knowledge skills when applying for a permanent residence permit until they are 67 years old. See also "Time limits". The category with "right" will lapse. No one has a right to free training after the age of 67 years.

## DUTY

Persons with a duty (without a right to free training) have to pay for the training Norwegian language and Social studies themselves. The main groups are

- Work immigrants from countries outside the EFTA/ EEA/ EU area
- Persons with residence permits based on family reunification with resident immigrant workers who do not have a permanent residence permit and are from the countries outside the EFTA / EEA / EU area

## MANDATORY HOURS OF TRAINING. TIME LIMITS

Persons granted first residence permit as of **01.01.2012** and later, with right and duty, or right, to free training,

- have a right and duty or right to 600 hours of free training (550 hours of Norwegian and 50 hours of Social studies).

The main rule is that the 600 hours are free for 3 years from the first residence permit which entitles them to the training. (See also "Family Reunification" below.)

Persons granted first residence permit before 1 January 2012, with the right and duty or right to free training, have right and duty or right to 300 hours of free training (250 hours of Norwegian and 50 hours of Social studies). Time limits for free training have expired for this group.

**Persons with a duty (without the right) to education, regardless of when they received their first residence permit**

- Have a duty to complete 300 hours, 250 hours of Norwegian and 50 hours of social studies.
- Persons with a duty (without right) must pay for the training.
- No time limits.

**FAMILY REUNIFICATION with immigrant workers who later are granted permanent residency**

Kindly note that the rules for rights, duties and time limits for free training for persons with family reunification with an immigrant worker who later is granted a permanent residence permit are complicated and are practiced in a way many would think is unfair.

For such persons with family reunification permit, the status changes from duty to right and duty from the date she/he is granted a renewed residence permit after the work migrant (their "reference person") has been granted a permanent residence permit.

The time limits for free Norwegian training, however, are calculated from her/his first residence permit, although she/he at that time had a duty only and had no right to free training. Thus, many persons with permit based on family reunification will be entitled to a "right" to free training that has expired when they actually get it.

If the status of a person with family reunification permit is changed from duty to right and duty, the requirement for mandatory training changes from 250 to 550 hours of Norwegian training (and 50 hours of Social studies). A previously fulfilled duty to complete 300 hours is no longer valid. The person must complete 250 more Norwegian lessons, and often have to pay for them.

See also the article "Exemption from the duty" at the page [RULES and regulations for Norwegian language and Society](#).

You can contact the municipal Adult Education for more information.

## **OTHER RULES**

### **Age**

The Introduction Act applies to persons from 16 to 67 years of age. People over the age of 67 are not entitled to free Norwegian language and Society courses, even if they had a right before they turned 67.

No one has the right or and no one has a duty to training and to pass tests after 67 years.

### **Time limits and other frames for free training**

The right to free training for 600 hours lasts for 3 years from the first relevant residence permit.

Participants with the right to free training, after completing 550 hours of Norwegian lessons, can apply for additional Norwegian training ("*behovsprøvet opplæring*"). It is up to the municipality/school to determine whether a participant is in need of such additional training. The additional training will normally be provided if it is necessary for the participant in order to achieve the goals in her/his individual plan (IP).

Additional training has these limitations:

- more than 5 years since the participant received first residence permit granting right to this tuition. (Exemption: see family reunification)
- passing a Norwegian language test at level B1 (or Norskprøve 3)
  - Exception: The training can go up to level B2 if it is within the first 550 hours of Norwegian training
- completing 2950 training hours in Norwegian

Please note that the time limits of 3 years and 5 years for free training are NOT postponed, even if the participant for example is granted maternity leave.

### **Expired 3-year deadline for 600 hours of free training**

Those who have not taken the mandatory 600 hours within the three-year deadline must pay to have the rest of the hours taken. When they have taken 550 hours of Norwegian, they can apply for more free Norwegian language training based on the rules for "additional

training" within the deadline of five years from when they received the first residence permit which provided the basis for a permanent residence permit, see above.

### **Municipal duties**

The Municipality shall provide free training to inhabitants in their municipality who have a right and duty (within the frames for this training).

The municipality shall offer payment courses to applicants with a duty to the training (minimum 250 hours of Norwegian + 50 hours of social studies).

The Municipality shall provide the training within three months after the immigrant has applied / is registered for the training. The training shall be adapted to the background and prerequisites of the participant. The respective schools shall prepare and revise the participant's individual plan (IP) in cooperation with the participant.

### **Asylum seekers in centres for asylum seekers**

Asylum seekers in asylum centres can receive 175 hours of free Norwegian language training in the municipality where the centre is located, while they wait for a response to the asylum application. These hours do not count when applying for permanent residence.

From 1.9.2018 it has been mandatory for asylum seekers over 16 years staying at asylum reception centres to participate in the Norwegian language and Norwegian culture and values courses. The obligation to participate begins when the person is registered at the asylum reception centre.

(Some exceptions, see <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2018-06-15-41>)

## **PERSONS WITHOUT RIGHT AND WITHOUT DUTY TO TUITION IN NORWEGIAN LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY**

To some groups of immigrants, the Introduction Act does not apply. Such persons are required to pay training fees if they wish to study Norwegian language and/or Society. This applies to:

- Foreign students
- Embassy personnel
- Au pairs and others with a temporary residence permit that does not constitute grounds for permanent residency
- Norwegian and Nordic citizens
- Individuals with residence permit under the EFTA/ EEA regulations.

The largest group in this category are EU citizens and their family members who are in Norway according to the EFTA / EEA rules. (These EU citizens have not applied for a residence permit due to family reunification with a Norwegian citizen.)

Such EU citizens do not need a permanent residence permit. After five years in Norway they can apply for permanent right of residence (*varig oppholdsrett*). There are no requirements for lessons in Norwegian or tests when applying for a permanent right of residence.

## **NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR NORWEGIAN AND SOCIETY KNOWLEDGE FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE AND CITIZENSHIP FROM 2017.**

Kindly note that some of the rules for permanent residence and citizenship have been changed from 2017.

You can read simplified explanations about “Permanent residency” and “Citizenship” at the page [RULES and regulations for Norwegian language and Society](#). See also the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act with regulations on [lovdata.no](http://lovdata.no)

### **FOR THOSE LIVING IN OSLO**

Please note that only citizens of Oslo can apply for free training in Oslo VO. You can read more about the training provided by The Oslo Adult Education here at <https://felles.oslovo.no>.

Application and information about possible rights and/or duties is available at Oslo VO Servicesenter, Karoline Kristiansens vei 8, Fyrstikktorget at Helsfyr.

The opening hours of the Servicesenter can be found at <https://felles.oslovo.no>. Please note that opening hours and routines may change due to Covid-19.