

Table 1 Integration goals and measures in the Nordic countries: a comparative table. Due to space constraints, Åland is included under Finland, and both Greenland and the Faroe Islands are included under Denmark. Source: Authors' compilation.

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Governing authority (authorities) & examples of responsibilities	Ministry of Immigration and Integration National agencies: Danish Immigration Service, Danish Return Agency, Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI). Municipalities (local execution: housing, health evaluation, school education, carry out integration programmes). Faroe Islands: Ministry of Justice (Integration), Ministry of children and education (language courses). National agencies: Integration Authority, Immigration Office, Directorate of Education. Municipalities provide local services and social integration elements. Greenland: The Government; Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour and the Interior; Ministry of Education, Culture, and Church; and local municipalities (no dedicated integration authority). Municipalities ensure integration-related public services.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (TEM) National agencies: KEHA Centre, KELA. Regional: ELY Centres; well-being services counties Municipalities (integration programme, integration training, school education and service access; since 2025: manage public employment services). Åland Islands: Åland Government (oversees integration policy and adopts 4-year integration programme); AMS-Åland Labour Market and Student Service Authority (labour market services for immigrants who are registered as jobseekers). Municipalities conduct assessments for immigrants receiving social assistance; develop 4-year integration programmes either independently or in cooperation with other municipalities.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing; Ministry of Justice; Directorate of Labour; Directorate of Immigration. Municipalities (preschools, primary schools, and social services, including child protection and financial aid).	Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion; Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI); Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir); Ministry of Justice and Public Security; Directorate of Immigration (UDI). Regional: County Municipalities, County Governors. Municipalities (integration programme and public services such as healthcare, adult, primary and lower-secondary education, and child welfare services). Local Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV offices).	Ministry of Employment. National agencies: Public Employment Service; Swedish Social Insurance Agency; Swedish Migration Agency. Municipalities (civic orientation, Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), general services: housing, education, adult learning, elderly care, and social services).
Key integration policies & goals	Increased focus on return migration; labour market integration, self-support, language proficiency, participation in Danish social life; limiting migrant 'parallel societies.' Faroe Islands: New Integration Act: Mandatory integration consultation meeting to provide information, ensuring civic orientation course, language course and health check-ups. Strong focus on immigrants with children under the age of 18. Greenland: No national integration policy, but strong co-operation with Denmark. Integration primarily takes place through participation in the labour market. Formal integration takes place through language training.	Since 2025: increased focus on employment, language skills, increased participation in society, health and well-being, equality. More obligation-focused; reduce financial burden. Responsibility for integration promotion is transferred from the state to municipalities. Åland Islands: Åland Integration Act applies only to immigrants with valid residence and permit in Åland; asylum seekers fall under Finnish national law. The Integration Act excludes asylum seekers, visa/visa-free stayers, and first-time residence permit applicants until a permit is granted.	New policy on matters of immigrants 2025–2038 (not adopted): create an inclusive society, enhance access to services, promote language acquisition, fair employment opportunities. New Action Plan for immigration 2026–2029 is scheduled for Althingi in March 2026.	Work-oriented programmes, incl. work obligation requirements 15 h/week, language acquisition, social participation, increased return focus. Stricter rules for refugees from Ukraine.	New 2024 objective: integrate and become self-sufficient quickly, setting requirements and providing opportunities for integration. Focus on enhancing labour market entry (incl. immigrant women) and language acquisition, incl. children with foreign backgrounds. State-run reception reforms; Increased return focus.
Protection seekers from Ukraine	Not bound by Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), but Special Act valid until March 2027. Temporary residence permit under the Special Act, similar rights as other refugees in Denmark, exempted from work obligation. Personal identity number (CPR): yes Access to the Self-support and Return Programme, which includes mandatory Danish language training and 15 hours/week of employment-related activities. Excluded from work obligation. Eligible for basic integration education (IGU).	Bound by TPD (extended to March 2027). Personal identity number: yes Mandatory Finnish or Swedish language courses during year one in reception centres. May participate in integration training but are ineligible for the introduction benefit. Full-service access after one year after receiving a municipality of residence.	Not bound by TPD, but similar collective protection activated (valid to March 2027). Residence permit for humanitarian reasons. Same rights and support as other refugees. Personal identity number: yes Full access to services on a par with other residents in Iceland after settlement in a municipality.	Not bound by TPD but implemented temporary collective protection (valid to July 2026). May participate in the introduction programme and receive financial support, but only after formal settlement; participation is voluntary. Eligible for public resettlement assistance. Municipal settlement within 3 months. Personal identity number: yes Stricter rules apply from 2024: restrictions on travel back to Ukraine and exclusion of dual citizens from the collective protection scheme.	Bound by TPD (extended to March 2027). Same rights as asylum seekers until registered in population registry and issued a personal identity number, usually after one year (per November 2024 amendments). Registration gives extended access to services (full healthcare, Swedish for Immigrants, eligibility for establishment programme and certain employment support). Personal identity number: yes (issued after one year in Sweden (per 2024 amendments).
Integration or establishment programmes	Three types: (1) Introduction Programme for refugees and reunified family (>18), 37 hrs/week work obligation. Mandatory, unless they do not receive benefits. Contract required; sanctions for non-compliance. (2) Self-support and Return Programme for refugees from Ukraine. No work obligation, but ca 15 h/week Danish language education is mandatory. Mandatory participation, unless they do not receive benefits. Contract required; sanctions for non-compliance. (3) Introduction Course for immigrants and accompanying family members (foreign nationals, job immigrants, etc.). No work obligation, no associated financial benefits, voluntary participation. Basic Integration Education (IGU) for upskilling (includes vocational/language studies and paid internships) for refugees and reunified family, incl. refugees from Ukraine.	Integration training: individual integration plans. May include language learning, employment support, entrepreneurship, health, well-being, and civic skills. 1–2 years (extendable); sanctions for non-compliance. Integration training target group: residence permit holders, unemployed jobseekers, beneficiaries of international protection and their families, long-term social assistance recipients, and child home care allowance recipients. Åland Islands: An individual integration plan is developed jointly by AMS, the municipality and the immigrant. It may include Swedish language training, employment support, and civic orientation. It can last up to 3 years, with a possible extension of 2 additional years.	No standardised programmes as in other Nordic countries. 'Landneminn' community education material (online). Directorate of Labour provides support for learning Icelandic and job market integration.	Full-time, tailored introduction programme; 3 months to 4 years; language, work training, social studies, parental courses. Since April 2025, increased focus on employment and formal education. Mandatory for refugees and their family members (aged 18–55) settled in a municipality. Mandatory language & civic training (part of introduction programme) for immigrants (aged 18–67) with residence permits leading to permanent residency. Asylum seekers: required to complete 175 hours of Norwegian and 25 hours of social studies while in reception centres (aged 18+).	Establishment programme for newly arrived refugees, persons in need of protection, and their family members aged 20–65. Full-time up to 24 months; voluntary participation. Includes SFI, civic orientation, internships.
Language education	Municipalities provide Danish language courses (up to 5 years) for all migrants. Self-sufficient migrants pay deposit for the course and get reimbursed after completion. Mandatory for refugees, reunified family and displaced persons from Ukraine receiving benefits. Non-compliance reduces benefits.	Free Finnish/Swedish language courses (<=1 yr) organised by municipalities as part of the integration plan. Eligible: see Integration training target group.	No universal right to free Icelandic courses. Refugees, jobseekers, and those on municipal aid reimbursed for 2 courses; others pay. Labour unions often cover fees for employed migrants. Policy draft 2025–2038 and 2024 coalition platform emphasise expanded access.	Norwegian language training is mandatory and separate from Introduction Programme. Target group: adults (18–67) with residence permits leading to permanent residency, incl. family migrants. Requirement for permanent residence/citizenship. Labour migrants must complete 300 hrs at own cost; EEA/EFTA not covered. Digital learning introduced in 2024	Free Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) to residents aged 16+ with residence permits and personal ID numbers. Since 2023, access expanded to TPD beneficiaries. Reform proposals (2025) include integrating civic orientation into SFI, making it mandatory for those on financial support, and adding a final exam.
Settlement processes	Compulsory for municipalities to settle refugees based on national quota allocation. Asylum seekers: at reception centres, accommodation centres, private housing in some cases, return centres. Refugees: must accept the placement offer; binding decision. When relocated to a municipality, refugees receive temporary housing (municipal rent cap applies) and later, they have responsibility to find permanent housing. They pay rent themselves with support in some cases.	No mandatory municipal quota, relocation guided by national targets and ELY-municipality agreements for quota refugees, unaccompanied minors, and vulnerable groups. Asylum seekers: at reception centres or private housing. Quota refugees: assigned placements; municipalities must provide housing. Other refugees and permit holders: may receive formal placement or relocate independently.	Reception centre in Reykjavik; municipal pairing based on employment prospects; not obliged to accept municipal offer. Municipalities (part of the Coordinated reception programme) decide how many refugees to receive and are reimbursed for the first three years per refugee.	Voluntary for municipalities to settle refugees. Asylum seekers: at reception centres, agreed self-settlement without losing financial support is possible by application (AMOT scheme). One settlement offer must be accepted to access public support (incl. collective protection, humanitarian grounds, or special ties). Self-settled refugees have limited access to introduction programmes and social assistance.	Asylum seekers: at Migration Agency housing (ABO) or private housing (EBO). Compulsory for municipalities to receive newly arrived refugees, protection status holders, and their family members based on municipal quota. Both municipal settlement (mainly quota refugees and individuals living in ABO) and self-arranged housing possible. One municipal offer only.
Social assistance & financial support	Migrants with 9 years of residence of the past 10 years in the Kingdom of Denmark qualify for full benefits; if needed, others (e.g. refugees) may receive benefits (minimum rate). Amounts vary by status and need (receiving benefits might hinder receiving a permanent residence permit). Basic daily allowance for asylum seekers. Labour market guidance is offered for all.	Services depend on legal status; full access for those with residence and municipality. Basic allowance for asylum seekers. Social assistance for permit holders.	Asylum seekers: basic services and allowance; those with permits (e.g., refugees), full access to housing, healthcare, and social services like other municipal residents. Financial assistance levels vary by municipality.	Basic allowance for asylum seekers. Social assistance for residence permit holders. Support is conditional on participation in the Introduction Programme. Full access to benefits requires municipal registration.	Daily allowance for asylum seekers. Establishment benefit for establishment programme participants. Eligibility for full social services after registration at the Swedish Population Register.
Healthcare & school attendance	Healthcare for refugees and other migrants is fully accessible. School attendance is mandatory for all children.	Asylum seekers: urgent/necessary care. Refugees: full healthcare as residents. Right to attend school but no obligation; becomes compulsory upon municipal registration. Åland Islands: Refugees: full healthcare, including dental care. Right to attend school regardless municipal registration in Åland.	Full healthcare access after 6 months' legal residence; immediate coverage for protection/humanitarian permit holders. School attendance is mandatory for all children.	Equal healthcare for all. School attendance is mandatory for children, if stay exceeds 3 months regardless of legal status.	Asylum seekers: urgent/necessary care; full care for children under 18. After population registration: full healthcare rights as residents. Right to attend school for asylum-seeking children, but no obligation. Same for TPD permits until registered in the Swedish Population Register