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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

SWEDEN

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

VET IN EUROPE 2023

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Contributors: Cecilia Hågemark, Anna Jägberh, Sofie Bäckman (Refernet Sweden) and Silke Gadji (Cedefop)

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  - Higher VET programmes at EQF level 5, ISCED 453.
  - Higher VET programmes at EQF level 6, ISCED 554.
- References.

CHAPTER 1.
Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

Summary of main elements

Swedish vocational education and training (VET) starts after compulsory education and includes programmes at upper secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels.

To enrol in upper secondary VET programmes, learners need a sufficient number of passing grades in a lower secondary programme. Four bridging programmes offer an alternative pathway to gain access rights for upper secondary programmes. They do not lead to any VET qualification but learning outcomes might be recognised if they continue an upper secondary VET programme or ease their access to the labour market as semi-skilled workers. Depending on student goal and performance, they usually last from 1 to 3 years.

Upper secondary VET programmes are 3-year programmes leading to an upper secondary vocational diploma at EQF level 4. Each programme can be followed through two pathways: school-based and apprenticeship. Both pathways incorporate mandatory training at the workplace; in school-based programmes the overall share of work-based learning is at least 15%; in apprenticeship the minimum is 50%. Overall, there are 12 such VET programmes focusing on different occupational fields. Graduates having sufficient passing grades in particular modules (such as Swedish, English and mathematics) can access higher vocational education.

Higher 1- or 2-year VET programmes are offered at post-secondary and tertiary levels, leading to a diploma (EQF 5) or advanced diploma (EQF 6) in higher vocational education. Programmes combine school-based learning with training at the workplace; the programme leading to the advanced diploma needs to contain a minimum of 25% of workplace training.

Adult education is provided in many forms and has a long tradition. In 2021, participation in lifelong learning was above 34%, making it the highest in the European Union (Eurostat). Individual modularised pathways for adults, set up according to specific required needs, are the most common way to gain a qualification in a new field or study the courses required to access higher vocational or higher general education. A range of non-formal courses and programmes is offered, financed through fees or by companies and organisations, with public grants also provided.

Since 2016, non-formal qualifications and certificates can be referenced to the Swedish national qualifications framework (SeQF).

Governance

The Swedish government has overall responsibility for the education system and sets the policy framework at all education levels. Goals and learning outcomes are defined centrally but with decentralised implementation. The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for most education fields, including upper secondary schools, adult education, and higher VET. Steering documents regulating upper secondary school and municipal adult education are drawn up by the government and by the Swedish National Agency for Education *(Skolverket).* There is a national programme council for each vocational programme; these advise and support *Skolverket* regarding adaptation, development and modernisation of vocational education.

The Swedish Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH) is in charge of higher VET, approving

and financing training providers who then cooperate with the world of work to develop and deliver programmes. Training providers can be run by municipalities, counties, State or private stakeholders**.**

Distinctive features

Modularised structure of upper secondary education. Modularised programmes allow learners in upper secondary education to transfer one or more courses to another programme, for example when changing study route. Municipal adult education provides the same courses as secondary school, with a few exceptions, allowing learners to build on their earlier studies and, for example, gain higher education access.

National governance, decentralised provision, municipal funding. Upper secondary education is governed by the State, financed by municipalities through a voucher system (funded through taxes) and provided for locally. It is a decentralised system with private and public education providers competing on a school market for students. The voucher is paid by the municipality to the education provider the student chooses to go to.

Validation in adult education. Validation is possible in municipal adult education courses at upper secondary and higher vocational levels. Education, knowledge, skills and competences acquired through training, job experience or otherwise may be validated and recognised for part of a programme. Education providers are responsible for the process.

Strong social partner involvement. To guarantee a close link of education with the world of work, social partners are represented in various councils and involved at many other levels. For example, they are represented in the national programme councils for each of the upper secondary vocational programmes and members of the Labour Market Council, an advisory body linked to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education.

CHAPTER 2.
Main challenges and policy responses

Small school units in need of regional cooperation. Swedish VET schools are small. Decentralised provision, public funding and learner choice have increased competition among them, leading to inflated costs and risks of skill mismatch. The Swedish National Agency for Education provides regions with data for planning and dimensioning of upper secondary education, to secure the skills supply demanded by the regional and national labour markets, streamline the use of resources, and improve access to a comprehensive and wide range of high-quality education. According to an amendment to the Education Act in 2022, municipalities are obliged to cooperate with at least two other municipalities by concluding an agreement when planning upper secondary education.

Transition from education to the labour market. The government has focused on strengthening the link between education and the world of work, within upper secondary and tertiary VET. Municipal adult education has accordingly shifted from prioritising admission to VET for those that have the lowest education levels to other target groups. This includes adults with a diploma from an upper secondary higher education preparatory programme or someone with a tertiary degree from another country. More opportunities for VET are also given to adults with intellectual disabilities.

Fast introduction of newly arrived immigrants. Many newly arrived immigrants have received training and professional experience in occupations facing labour shortage (as e.g. in healthcare). In consequence, many new VET pathways were introduced allowing for partial qualifications. To reduce the time from arrival to first job entry, the government consulted with social partners, the Swedish public employment service and other relevant government agencies on measures for creating ‘fast tracks’ into the labour market. The initiatives may include Swedish language training specific to the vocational field, quicker validation of skills and competences, assessment of foreign qualifications, and supplementary training.

CHAPTER 3.
External factors influencing VET

3.1 Demographics

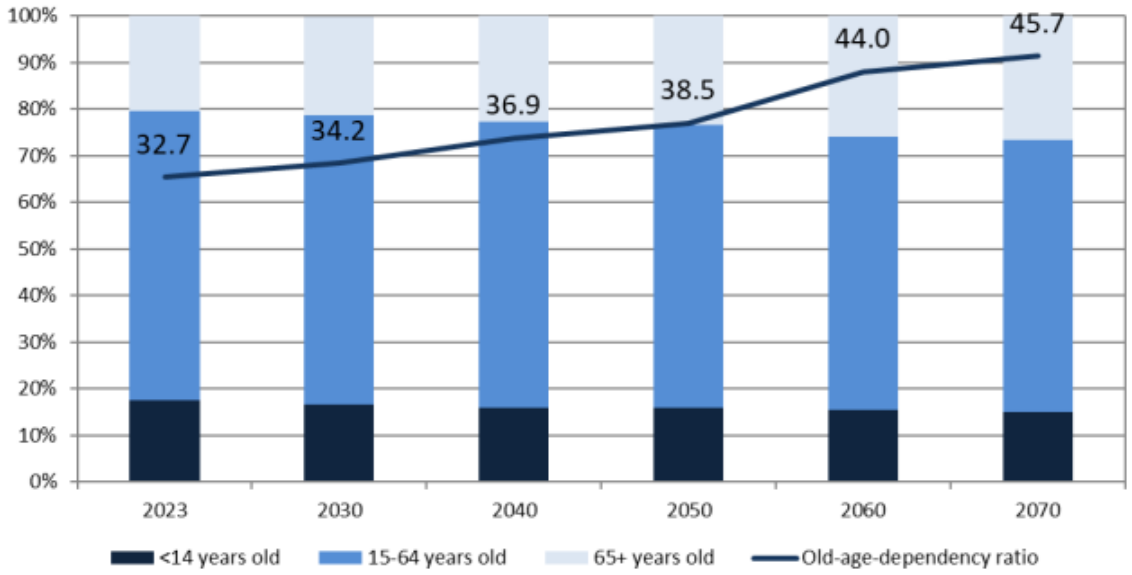
Population in 2022: 10 452 326 (1)

It increased by 4.6% since 2017 due to high natural growth and immigration.

As in other parts of Europe, Sweden has an increasing proportion of elderly people in the population. The 15-64 age group made up 62.2% of the population in 2023. By 2070 this proportion is anticipated by Eurostat to fall to 58.4%. In 2023 the elderly (65+) already outnumbered those under the age of 14 by 2.8 percentage points. This difference is foreseen to increase further until 2070, when the elderly will make up 26.7% and the young 14.9% of the population.

The old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 32.7 in 2023 to 45.7 in 2070 (2).

Population forecast by age group and old-age-dependency ratio



Source: Eurostat, tps00001 and proj_23ndbi [extracted 12.6.2023].

Demographic changes have an impact on VET. In line with the national statistics of SCB, since 2000, the population has increased by more than one million or 16%, due to high nativity rates and immigration (see table below).The high number of immigrants required introduction of measures to integrate them into society. Some of these measures were an increased offer of the

Swedish language introduction programme (*Språkintroduktion*), as well as introduction of study paths leading to partial VET qualification.

Net population change 2000-2021

Year	Population	Births	Deaths	Immigrants	Emigrants
2000	8 882 792	90 441	93 461	58 659	34 091
2005	9 047 752	101 346	91 710	65 229	38 118
2010	9 415 570	115 641	90 487	98 801	48 853
2015	9 851 017	114 870	90 907	134 240	55 830
2017	10 120 242	115 416	91 972	144 489	45 620
2020	10 379 295	113 077	98 124	82 518	48 937
2021	10 452 326	114 263	91 958	90 631	48 284
Change 2000-2021	16 %	21 %	-2 %	35 %	29 %

Source: Data based on SCB [extracted 7.11.2022].

The country is multicultural and has a high number of immigrants asking for an increase in the offer of Swedish language classes and for VET qualification programmes. The importance of recognising prior learning has also increased. In March 2018 the National Agency for Education launched a skills mapping web-based tool (3) for people who have professional work experience from other countries. The tool assists individuals to become aware of their skills, which can shorten their study time and contribute to improved integration through access to the labour market (4).

3.2 Economics

Most companies are small in Sweden. One-person enterprises without any employees dominate, at almost one quarter of all enterprises. Only 0.1% of all Swedish enterprises are large, having 250 employees or more.

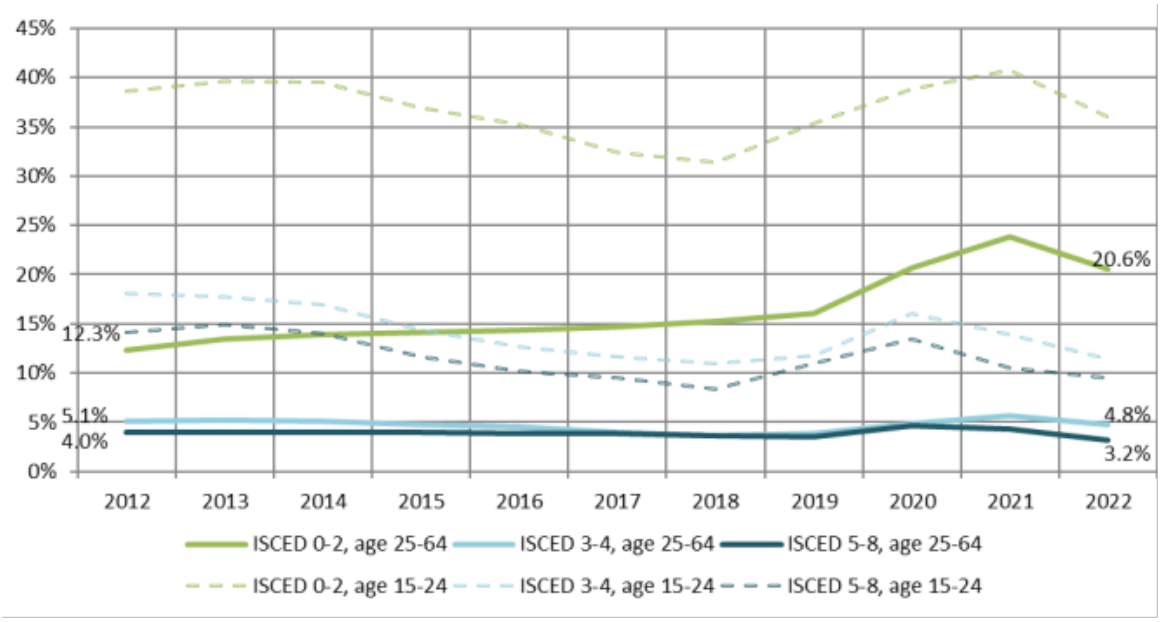
Sweden has a long and successful industrial tradition and is an export-dependent country that competes in a global market. Manufacturing industry is dominant, with products like machinery, telecommunications, electronics, vehicles, medications, as well as iron, steel and paper products. Another important part of the Swedish export market is knowledge-intensive services such as research and development, ICT-services and intellectual property like patents or licences.

3.3 Labour market

The labour market is considered flexible and approximately 40 professions are regulated in 2020, mostly in education and medicine.

Total unemployment (5) of the active population (25-74) in 2022 was 5.6 % (5.4% in EU-27); it has increased by 0.4 percentage points since 2018 (6).

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2012 - 2022



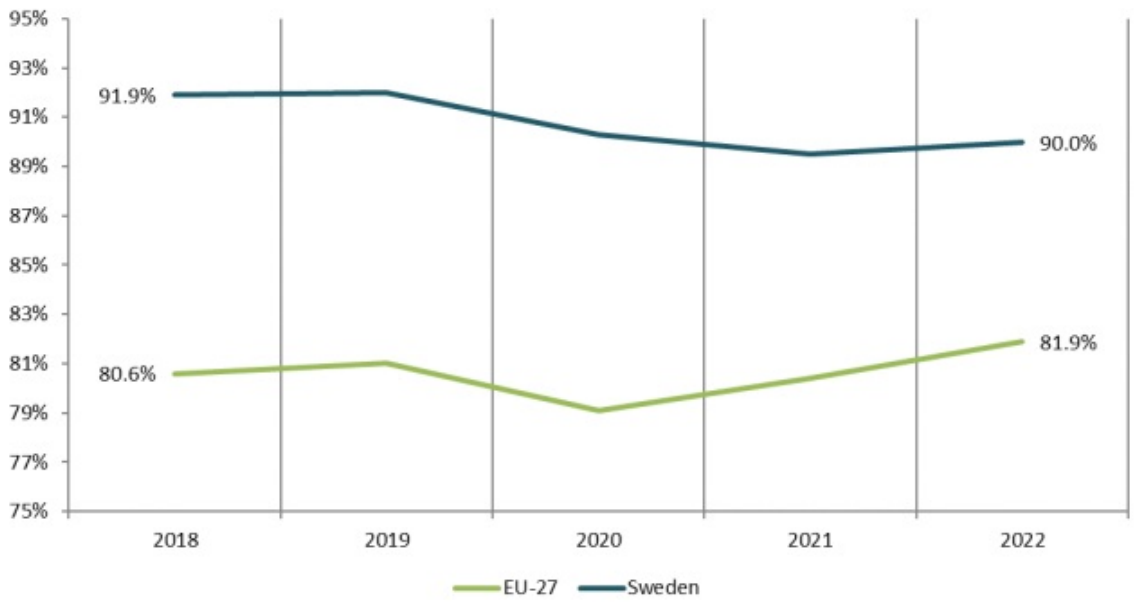
NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.
ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary. Education.
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.
ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.
Source: Eurostat, lfsa_urgaed [extracted 12.10.2023].

The unemployment rate for graduates aged 25-64 with ISCED level 5-8 qualifications, has been below 5% from 2012-22. Graduates with medium-level qualifications (ISCED levels 3 and 4), including most VET graduates, faced a slightly higher risk of unemployment but in 2022 had only a risk of 4.8% of being unemployed. However, the unemployment rates of graduates at ISCED level 0-2 was much higher and reached in 20.6 % in 2022.

A characteristic feature of Swedish working life is that many professions are skills-intensive, requiring constant upskilling and lifelong learning. The unemployment rate is higher among persons born outside of Sweden than among Swedish-born, and the increase among low-skilled adults is partly due to the large migration flows that peaked in late 2015.

The employment rate of VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4) aged 20 to 34 increased from 80.6% in 2018 to 81.9% in 2022 and was always higher than the EU average.

Employment rate of VET graduates (aged 20 to 34, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.
Source: Eurostat, edat_lfse_24 [extracted 12.6.2023].

The employment of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4) from 2018 to 2022 decreased by -1.9 pp whereas the employment rate of all ISCED level graduates aged 20 to 34 increased by +1.3 pp in the same period in Sweden (7).

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[1] NB: Data for population as of 1 January; break in series. Eurostat table tps00001.

[2] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).

[3] Skolverket. *Välkommen till verktyget för kartläggning av yrkeskunskaper* [Welcome to the professional skills assessment tool].

[4] Information is based on: Skolverket; ReferNet Sweden (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Sweden*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018.

[5] Percentage of active population aged 25 to 64.

[6] Eurostat table une_rt_a

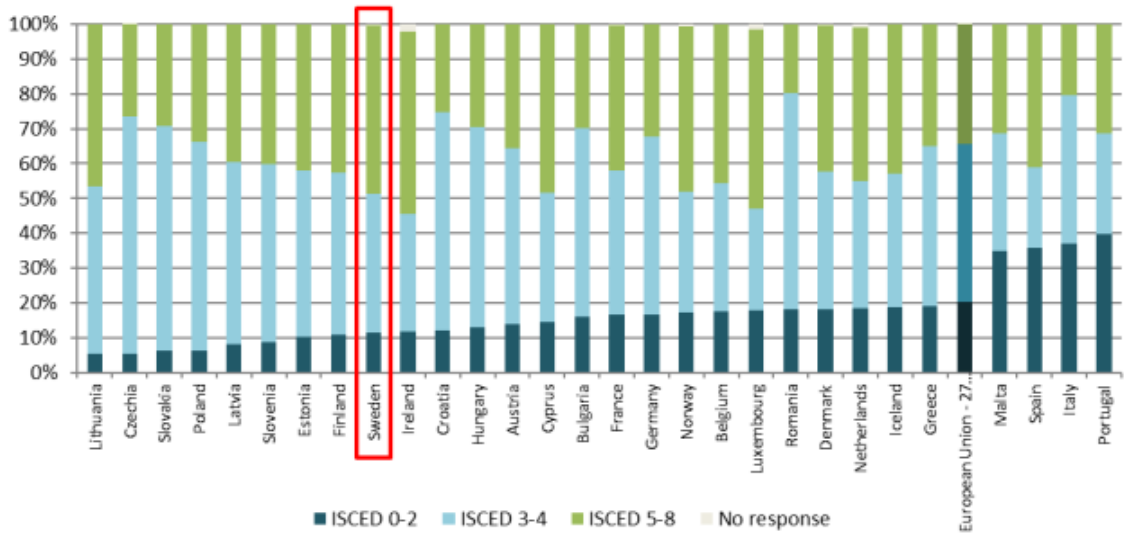
[7] NB: Breaks in time series. Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

CHAPTER 4.
Education attainment

4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

Education traditionally has high value in Sweden. In 2022 the share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (48.4%) was higher than in most EU Member States (34.2%). The share of those with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3-4) was 39.6%, lower than the EU average of 45.2%. The same applies also to the percentage of those holding an ISCED 0-2 level qualification (11.6%), which was lower than the EU average (20.5%).

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2022



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011. Low reliability for 'No response' in Czechia and Latvia.
ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.
ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.
Source: Eurostat, lfsa_pgaed [extracted 12.6.2023].

4.3 VET learners by level

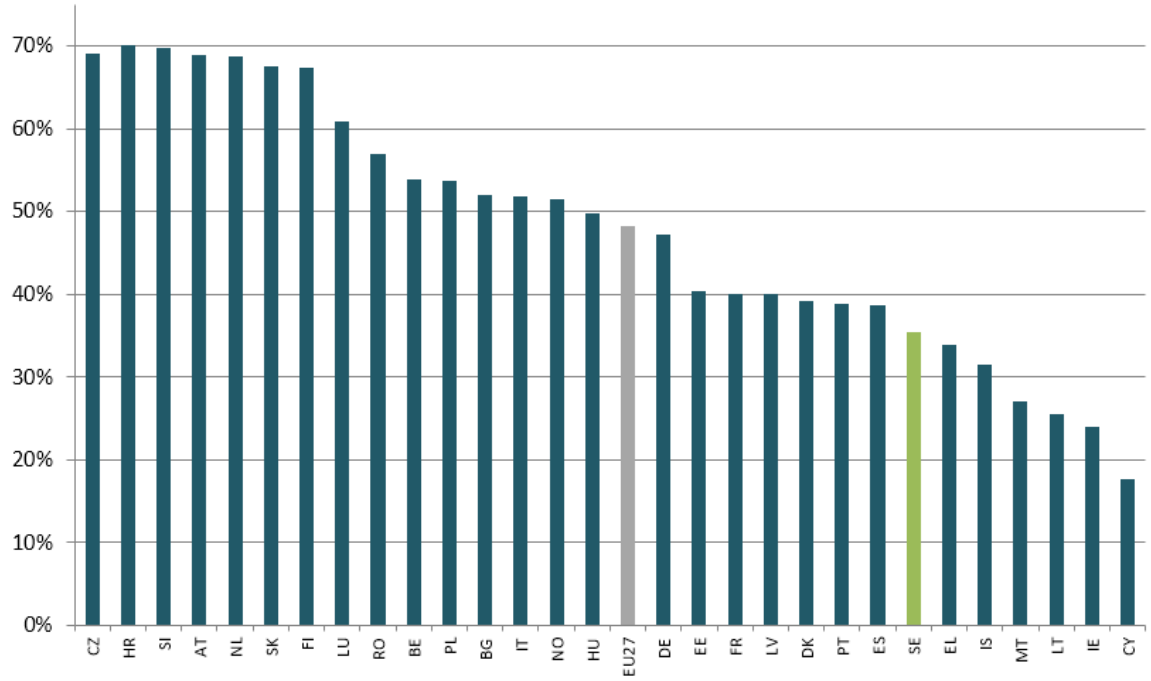
In 2021, of all upper secondary level students the share of VET learners was 35.4%, below the EU-27 average of 48.3% and of all post-secondary level students, the share of VET learners was 71.0%.

Share of learners in VET by level in 2021

	2017	2021	Change 2017-2021
Lower secondary	-	-	N/A
Upper secondary	34.1%	35.4%	1.3 pp
Post secondary	71.4%	71.0%	-0.4 pp

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [extracted 12.6.2023].

Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper-secondary level (ISCED level 3), 2021

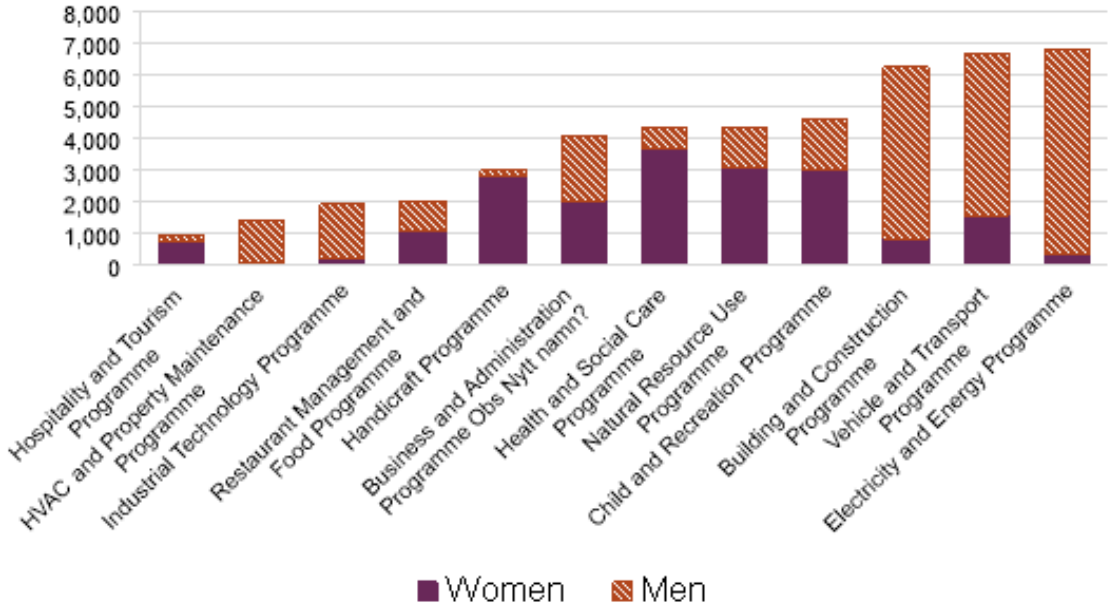


NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.
Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [extracted 1.11.2023].

4.4 Female share

The vocational programmes which most applicants put as their first choice in 2020 were building and electricity and engineering, construction and vehicle and transport. These programmes are highly male-dominated, which means that VET programmes as a whole had a larger proportion of male than female applicants, 60 and 40 % respectively (see figure below).

Number of applicants, and gender distribution of VET programmes in 2023

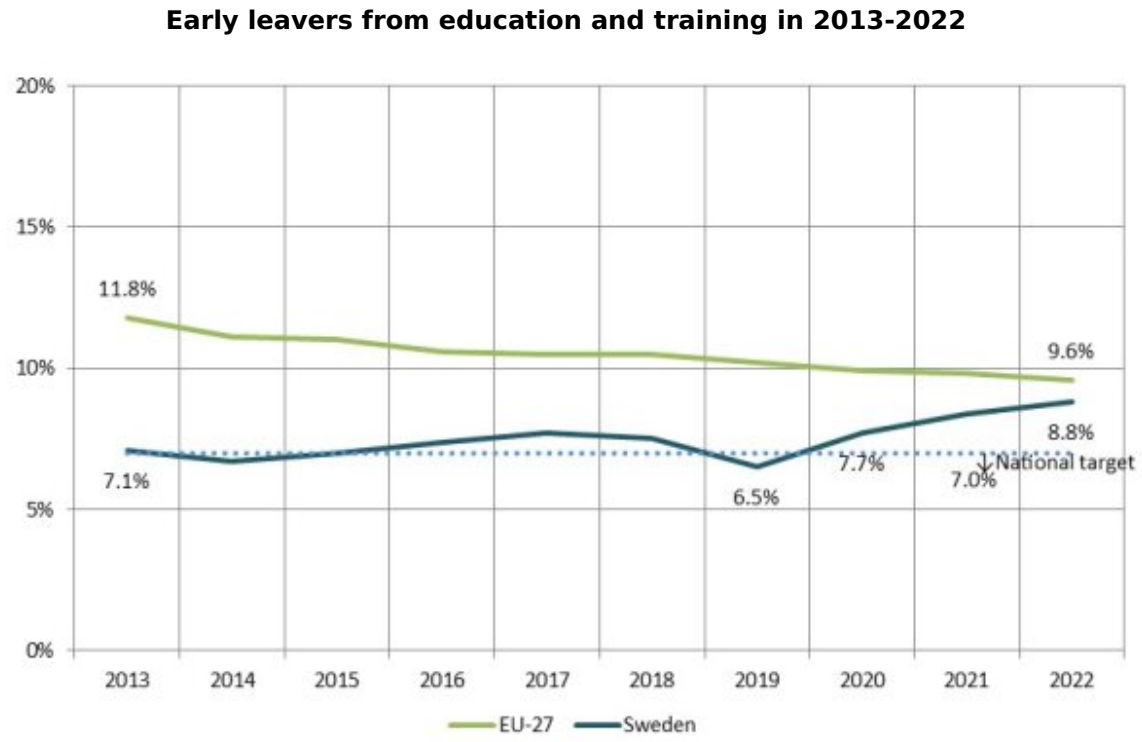


Source: Skolverket (2023). *Sökande och antagna till gymnasieskolan läsåret 2023/24 [Applicants and admitted to upper secondary school for the academic year 2023/24]*

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

The percentage of early leavers increased slightly from 2013 to 2022 from 7.1% to 8.8%; this is above the national target of no more than 7%. However, throughout the years it was always better than the EU average, which decreased from 13.8% in 2013 to 9.6% in 2022.

According to the Education Act the municipalities are responsible for tracking and engaging early school leavers in activities. They mainly target young people under 20 without a completed upper secondary school diploma. Statistical data show 58 400 (8) young adults reported by municipalities 2022/23 were not attending school or any other activity. 36 000 learners were deregistered the same year. One third of the deregistered learners had resumed or completed their studies.

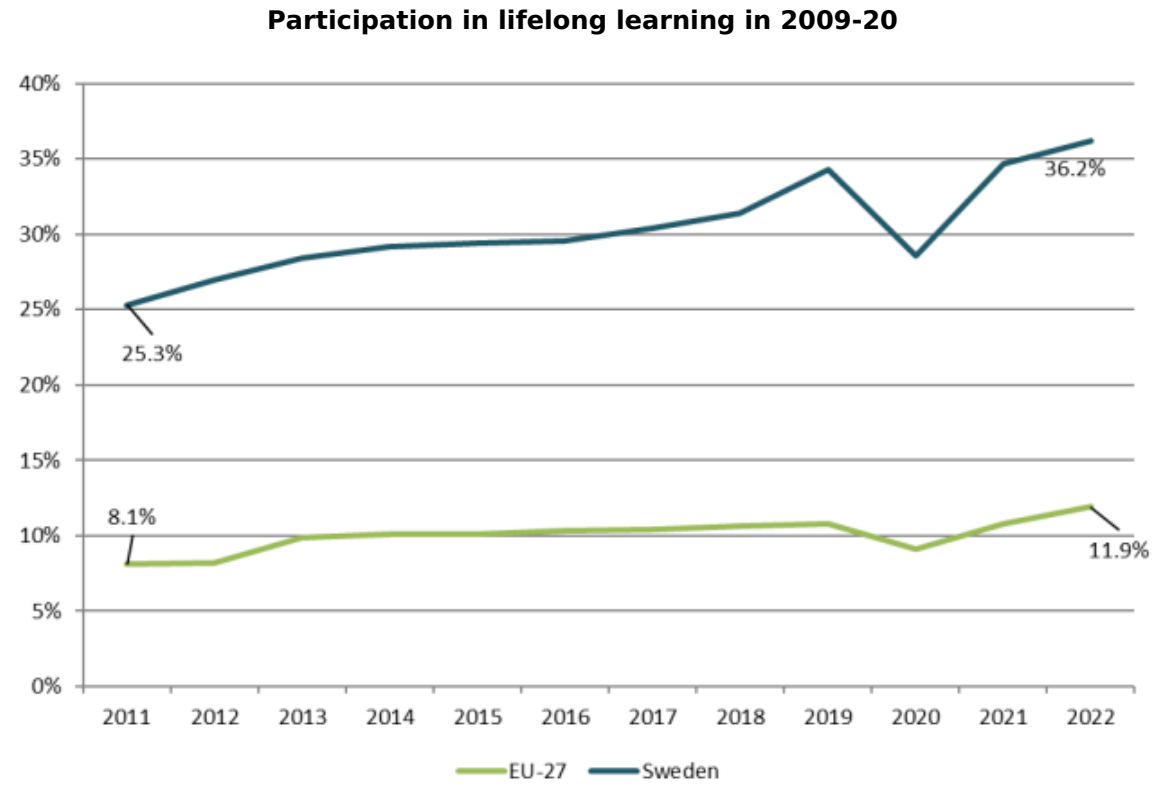


NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training; break in series.
Source: Eurostat, edat_lfse_14 [extracted 12.6.2023] and European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes_en [accessed 6.5.2021].

For more information, visit Cedefop project page on tackling early leaving and our interactive toolkits: Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving and Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs

4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Participation in lifelong learning was already at a high level in 2011, at 25.3%, and steadily increased in the following years until 2022, where it reached 36.2%. Sweden has the highest participation rate in the European Union; the EU-27 average in 2011 to 2022 increased from 8.1% to 11.9%, far below the Swedish rate.



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training.
Source: Eurostat, trng_lfse_01 [extracted 12.6.2023].

Lifelong learning is provided in many forms. Municipalities offer formal adult education where learners can also acquire an upper secondary vocational diploma. Individual modularised pathways for adults, set up according to specific needs, are the most common way to gain a qualification in a new field or study the courses required to access higher vocational or higher general education. At a non-formal level, folk high schools and private training providers offer various courses for adults. Several active labour market policy programmes (ALMP) for the unemployed are also vocationally oriented or feature different forms of work placement. Courses and programmes are financed through fees or by companies and organisations, with public grants also provided.

The Swedish Government has been implementing a major education initiative for lifelong learning and higher employment since 2015. The initiative involves State-funded training places in vocational adult education programmes at upper secondary level, higher vocational education, education at folk high schools and at universities and colleges. The objective of the initiative is mainly reskilling and upskilling the unemployed and reaching out to adults lacking upper secondary education, or with secondary vocational education needing completion (9).

[9] Information is based on: Skolverket, ReferNet Sweden (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Sweden*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018.

CHAPTER 5.
VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- preschool education (ISCED level 0);
- primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 1 and 2, EQF level 2);
- upper secondary education (ISCED level 3, EQF level 4);
- post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4, EQF levels 5-6);
- higher education (ISCED levels 5, 6, 7 and 8, EQF levels 6-8);
- municipal adult education.

From 2018/19, attending pre-school is mandatory for all children from age 6. Compulsory school begins then at age 7 and lasts 9 years. Upper secondary VET starts after compulsory education. Learners can choose among one of the 12 vocational programmes (*yrkesprogram*) focusing on different occupational fields or six general preparatory programmes for higher education (*högskoleförberedande program*) in upper secondary school (*gymnasieskola*). Initial VET at upper secondary level leads to an upper secondary vocational diploma at EQF level 4. Graduates having sufficient passing grades in particular modules (such as Swedish, English and mathematics) can access higher vocational education.

At tertiary level, there are higher vocational education programmes (*yrkeshögskoleutbildningar*) leading to first or second cycle VET qualifications placed at EQF levels 5 and 6. This applies to education for professions requiring specific knowledge or certification to work in the profession. Many of these programmes are in health care and business. These programmes are adaptable and change over time as labour market changes.

Municipal adult education is flexible and based on the individual's needs as part- or full-time studies. Adults aged 20 and older, without upper secondary education who wish to change career paths can enrol in upper secondary VET courses in municipal adult education institutions (*kommunal vuxenutbildning*). If an upper secondary education diploma is achieved, the qualification is placed at EQF level 4. Moreover, they can enter municipal adult education directly after graduating from upper secondary education, e.g. to study for eligibility to access tertiary education. A learner may also resume studies after being employed. For some, municipal adult education may be a CVET path; for others, it may be a continuation of the upper secondary IVET or general education programme.

There are several learning options and initial VET at upper secondary level leading to EQF 4 is available in the formal education system as:

- school-based learning for the young and adults;
- work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice), mandatory in VET for the young, and encouraged through State grants in municipal adult VET;
- distance learning, available in municipal adult VET-education.

Apart from formal education, Sweden has a long tradition of liberal adult education (*folkbildning*), a type of non-formal learning which is typified by being ‘free and voluntary’, offered outside the school system. Liberal adult education covers education in folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*) and adult education associations (*studieförbund*) that are not restricted to State-determined curricula or syllabuses. Each folk high school or adult education association decides on the content and

organisation of their own educational offerings. The folk high schools provide shorter and longer special courses. 1- to 3-year VET programmes are special courses for specific professions, including journalist, recreation leader, treatment assistant, cantor or sign language interpreter. Both shorter and longer courses in crafts and art, music and drama are also common. Some vocational education programmes are at post-secondary level and have special admission requirements, while others are at upper secondary level (10).

Learners with special educational needs (SEN) must complete 9 years of compulsory schooling, including primary and middle school. The goal of SEN schooling is to adapt education to these students' needs, providing knowledge, values, and personal development. This education should prepare them for active life choices and foster their participation in society.

CHAPTER 6.
Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is, next to school-based education, a possible pathway to studying a vocational programme at upper secondary school, aiming to prepare learners for the labour market. Upper secondary apprenticeship education can start in the first, second or the third year. From the moment apprenticeship education starts, half of it should consist of work-based learning (WBL). An education contract or learning agreement is obligatory for every apprentice; this should specify the content and scope of the WBL. The apprentice, the education organiser and the workplace should sign the contract and a contact person and/or a trainer/supervisor should be appointed. The school is responsible for the establishment of an education contract or learning agreement. In both pathways, the same syllabuses are applicable and successful completion leads to a vocational diploma.

Swedish upper secondary education is organised in 3-year national programmes, of which 12 are vocational programmes covering most vocational fields. The programmes are modular and organised in courses where one course is usually 100 credits. All programmes include foundation subjects, such as Swedish, English and mathematics, and programme-specific subjects, such as retailing and vehicle technology. The schools decide if a vocational programme should be provided as apprenticeship education and when the apprenticeship starts. The learner chooses between the pathways offered.

Apprenticeship education as part of formal IVET was only introduced in 2011. The development of apprenticeship education within the frame of the upper secondary school includes a broad spectrum of initiatives such as changes in upper secondary school regulations, financial incentives and support to schools and workplaces. Regulations steering apprenticeship education were introduced in the Education Act and in the Upper Secondary School Ordinance following the reform in 2011. Steering documents in the form of curricula, diploma goals and syllabuses are drawn up by the Swedish government and by the Swedish National Agency for Education.

In 2014, an apprenticeship centre (*Lärlingscentrum*) was created under the auspices of the Swedish National Agency for Education to promote apprenticeship, provide advice to VET institutions and employers, train supervisors at workplaces, and stimulate cooperation at regional level between schools and businesses (11).

Unlike VET as a whole, the number of upper secondary VET learners enrolled in an apprenticeship programme has grown steadily since its introduction in 2011, with an average annual increase of over 1 000 learners, from 5 600 in 2013/14 to 13 991 in 2022/23 (12). For the school year 2022/23 this meant that 13.2% of all VET learners followed an apprenticeship programme. Despite the positive trend, apprenticeship participation remains below expectations; there are also significant challenges in relatively low completion rates and high drop-out rates. The government ambition is to increase both participation and apprenticeship quality.

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop.

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[12] Source: Apprenticeship centre at Skolverket.

CHAPTER 7.
VET governance

Governance for upper secondary VET

A distinct feature of the Swedish education system is that primary and secondary education is a goal-steered system with a high degree of local responsibility. The Swedish Parliament, the Government and the National Agency for Education draw up the overall national goals in legislation, but the main responsibility for funding lies with the municipalities, and provision is the responsibility of the municipalities and the organisers of independent schools (see table below for a summary of governance and responsibilities).

In addition to the public municipal bodies, private entities may also be approved as organisers and run independent upper secondary schools after approval from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. Independent schools are regulated by the same legislation and governing documents as municipal schools and may offer both VET and higher education preparatory programmes. School organisers have a primary responsibility for distributing resources and organising activities so that learners attain the national goals.

Summary of governance and distribution of responsibilities in Swedish upper secondary education (including IVET)

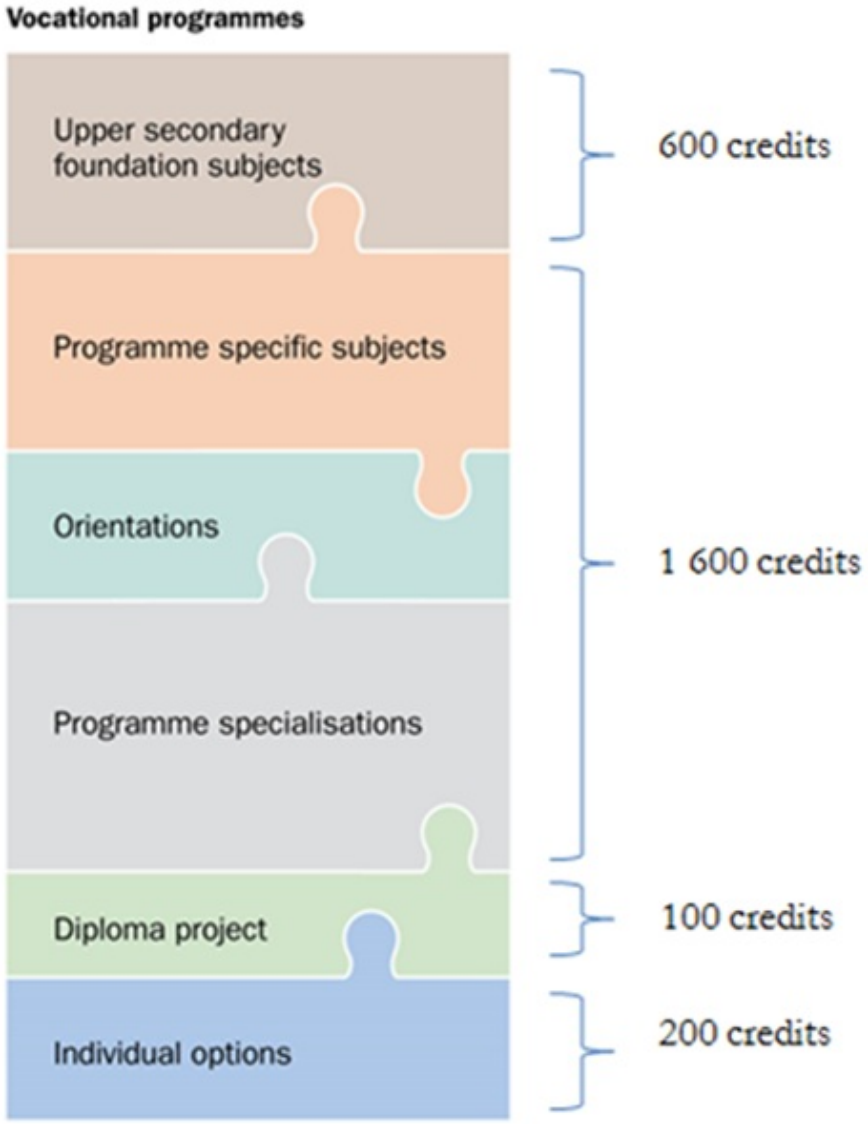
Responsible body	Responsibility
Parliament	• Education Act
Government	• Ordinances, including the curricula • Diploma goals • Programme specific content and orientations of VET and HE programmes • Syllabuses (foundation subjects)
The National Agency for Education	• Content of orientations of VET and HE programmes • Syllabuses (all other subjects) • Regulations • General guidelines • Support to providers
Stakeholders, social partners (National programme councils)	• Advice to The National Agency for Education
Municipalities	• Funding
Governing bodies of school organisers (municipalities and independent organisers).	• Provision of education
The Schools Inspectorate	• Approval of independent schools • Inspections and quality auditing.

Source: Skolverket.

Within the framework of national vocational upper secondary programmes, there is scope for flexibility and local adaptation. The core content, which consists of foundation subjects, programme-specific subjects, is nationally determined by the Government. The foundation subjects are the same for all VET learners, the programme-specific subjects are the same for all learners in one of the programmes, and the courses in orientations are the same for learners in an orientation within a programme.

There are also programme specialisations. The National Agency for Education determines which courses and subjects adhere to the diploma goals of the programmes and makes these available for each programme specialisation. Schools can combine these different courses to create programme specialisations that meet the regional and local needs of the labour market and enable learners to focus their studies on a specific vocational outcome. Formally, the local adaptations in programme specialisations are decided by the organiser’s governing board: the local government for State schools and the school organiser for independent schools.

General programme structure for vocational programmes in upper secondary school



Source: Skolverket.

Governance for higher VET

Employers and industry representatives play a significant role in the planning of a higher VET programme and have an influence on its content. In contrast to upper secondary vocational education, education providers determine the content of the programmes in higher vocational education. The goals and orientation of the education and training programmes are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competences which learners are to have attained on completion. Information about the courses included and assessment criteria must also be given. In their applications, education providers also include information about the companies or organisations which have actively participated in developing and planning the programme. The Swedish Agency for Higher Vocational Education independently determines, following an application

procedure, the programmes to be included as higher vocational education.

One important element in higher vocational education is learners' involvement in, and their opportunities to influence, the structure and delivery of the education. Each programme must have a plan to ensure that this is achieved. Teaching and teaching materials are determined by the governing group of the education provider, which is also responsible for carrying out systematic quality monitoring. The Agency of Higher VET also supervises the programmes through inspections and quality auditing.

Employers and industry contribute to and influence programme content by participating as lecturers, joining in projects, hosting study visits and offering work placements. Higher vocational education must also contribute to developing learner competences in entrepreneurship. Higher vocational education may also operate in the form of distance courses (13).

CHAPTER 8.
VET financing mechanisms

Funding of upper secondary VET

Municipalities in Sweden are responsible for providing primary and secondary education to their residents, but residents are free to choose an education provider. Municipal and central government tax revenues provide the funding for primary and secondary education; they are equally entirely financed by public funds. A major part of school funding comes from municipal tax revenues, but parts also come from central government State grants to municipalities. Almost SEK 47 billion (EUR 3.93 billion) (14) was spent on upper secondary education in 2021. The municipal tax revenues provided 72% of the funding (15).

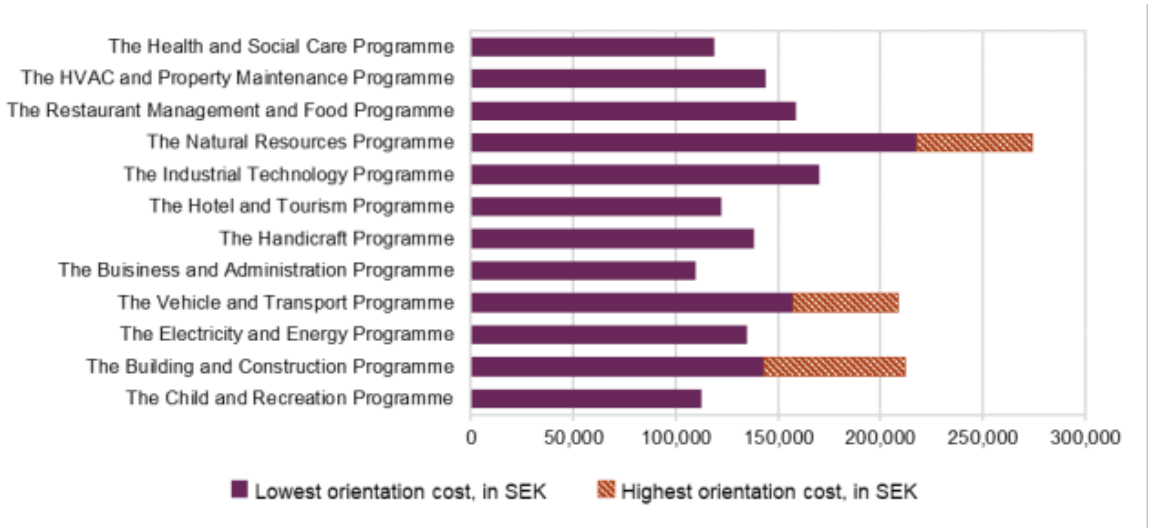
Since access to education should be equal regardless of where in Sweden one lives, several State grants and other equity measures are available to ensure that all residents have access to education of the same quality.

All municipalities are guaranteed equivalent financial conditions in accordance with a special equalisation system. The general central government grant is, therefore, based on a number of different parameters such as population, population structure, social structure and the number of immigrants. Each municipality determines how it will allocate resources, as this general central government grant is not earmarked and is supplemented by targeted central government grants for specific initiatives, such as apprenticeship education, adult vocational education and projects to develop the quality of work-based learning.

There are considerable differences in calculated cost between the different programmes, with vocational programmes being both the most diverse and also on the more costly end of the spectrum. The National Agency for Education has developed a system of calculating how much a learner should cost on average for a particular programme (*riksprislistan*). For some programmes there are differences in cost between orientations. This system is used by municipalities when financing education through the voucher system in independent schools. The most costly VET programme generates a voucher of more than twice as much as the least costly (see figure below).

Regardless of the governing body, both upper secondary school and municipal adult education at upper secondary level are free of charge for the learner. In adult education, however, learners must pay for their teaching materials themselves.

Average voucher cost per upper secondary VET programme per year as determined by the National Agency for Education, 2021



Source: National Agency for Education *Riksprislista för ersättning till fristående skolor 2024* [National price list for compensation for independent schools 2024].
NB: EUR 1 was equivalent to SEK 11.62 on October 9, 2023

Funding and State grants to adult municipal VET education

Municipalities are responsible for adult upper secondary education, but usually outsource to providers, public or private, in the education market. The Swedish Government has a goal to lower unemployment rates and provides a large share of the municipal funding for adult education through State grants. One part of the government strategy is to invest in vocational education and apprentice education for adults, in order to counter a shortage of skilled labour while giving people the opportunity to retrain for a new profession. The strategy also aims to reach groups who have not completed upper secondary education or who have vocational upper secondary education that needs to be supplemented.

On January 1, 2017 the ordinance on state grants for regional vocational adult training came in force. Regional vocational adult education (*regionalt yrkesvux*) aims to strengthen regional cooperation to meet labour market needs better, which will be further increased in 2025. The regulation contains provisions on government grants for such training at secondary level in municipal adult education, if it is carried out in cooperation between a number of municipalities and employers and can include combined studies in Swedish as a second language and VET.

Funding of higher VET

Higher vocational education programmes may be organised by State higher education institutions, municipalities, county councils and individuals or legal entities. These programmes are partially financed through public funding and are free of charge for the learner; an exception is for minor costs for a particular reason like a study visit and for teaching materials. Learners who attend publicly funded programmes are eligible for student aid.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*) approves and allocates state grants in response to applications from education providers. The Government has increased its funding for the HVE-scheme. The number of students has been

increased from 33 684 in 2007 to 84 470 in 2023. A higher vocational education programme that has been approved may be offered a limited number of times as determined by the agency. Then a new application must be made to the agency to ensure that the competences provided by the programme meet the needs of the labour market.

Funding of liberal (non-formal) adult education

Currently, there are approximately 150 folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*) in Sweden. Most are run by non-governmental organisations, non-commercial organisations, foundations or associations, and trade unions, but county councils and regions can also be their governing bodies. The 10 largest adult education associations are also run by non-governmental organisations, associations and other organisations. Study circles and other activities are often provided by local or regional associations.

Liberal adult education is largely financed through support from the State, regions and municipalities. State support makes up around 70% of the grants to adult education associations and to folk high schools. Conditions for State grants to folk high schools and adult education associations are regulated in the State grants for adult education Ordinance. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (*Folkbildningsrådet*), a non-profit association, has been tasked by the Government to distribute grants, and also to follow up and evaluate activities. Tuition in folk high schools is free of charge and, in certain cases, gives the right to student aid. However, participants are required to pay for course literature, study material, lunch and any eventual residential costs. Study circles and other activities run by adult education associations are subject to fees and do not qualify for student aid (16).

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[14] SKR. *Så mycket kostar skolan* [How much does school cost]

[15] Skolverket (2022). *Kostnader för skolväsendet och annan pedagogisk verksamhet 2021* [Costs for the school system and other educational operations in 2021].

CHAPTER 9.
Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

There are two categories of teacher and trainer in VET programmes:

- vocational teachers;
- general subject teachers.

In addition, there are trainers (practical training instructors at the workplaces supporting and monitoring students' learning) deemed suitable for the task by the employer but without any formal qualification.

The Education Act of 2010 defines the educational requirements for being a teacher. Teachers of upper secondary education need to have a tertiary teaching degree. Teachers of vocational programmes need to have a vocational qualification at least at SeQF level 5, one SeQF level above the level s/he will teach (upper secondary VET programmes lead to SeQF level 4). The qualification is a vocational basic diploma awarded after 90 ECTS credits, out of which 30 ECTS credits comes from teacher induction.

In autumn 2011, four different programmes in teacher education were set up, one of which was designed specifically for vocational education teachers. Vocational teacher education included a core of education methodology, particularly general teaching knowledge and skills, as well as induction. Teachers of general subjects in VET programmes had to meet the same requirements as teachers in higher education preparatory programmes. According to the Education Act, teachers have to go through a certification process carried out by the National Agency for Education.

Entry requirements for vocational teacher training are graduation from upper secondary school and mastery of the relevant vocation. The Swedish Council for Higher Education (*Universitets- och Högskolerådet*, UHR) has specified, through an ordinance, entry requirements for each vocational subject for vocational teacher training. The ordinance states that specialised knowledge, obtained by experience and theory in the field, is required.

Due to the lack of qualified teachers, non-qualified, non-certified teachers can be also temporarily employed for a maximum of 1 year. The duration of their employment is restricted, to allow formally qualified teachers to take over this position. The legislation states that non-certified teachers have to be supervised by a certified teacher to assess and grade learners.

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

The Education Act of 2010 states the educational requirements for being a teacher in the Swedish school system; continuous professional development (CPD) is included as the responsibility of the head teacher and school founder. The legislation does not, however, give any specific information on how CPD should be carried out; this is regulated by the agreements of the labour market's social partners.

CPD for teachers is regulated by agreements between the social partners. A supplement to the general labour standards held in an agreement between the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR), the employers' organisation for municipalities and local

governments, and the employee organisations regulates the conditions that apply to teachers. The supplement defines the time allocation during the academic school year for teachers employed by municipalities. Some independent, private actor governing boards of VET schools use the same agreements as publicly organised schools; other independent governing boards do not.

The agreement sets teachers' total worktime, and the regulated time that the employer controls, over 1 year. CPD is part of the regulated time and, as such, the time that the employer should allocate and plan for. The time allocated for CPD averages 104 hours, or nearly 6% of the total worktime for teachers in 1 year. Many adult education teachers are employed according to the same annual framework but with a different time allocation, as adult education does not follow an academic year with school holidays and summer recess. The agreement states that the time spent for teacher CPD should be distributed for teachers to develop good conditions for students' learning. It is at the discretion of the head teacher to distribute the CPD time and resources to optimise the learning outcomes locally. The allocation of CPD time, resources and focus areas is often negotiated with the employees. The provision for CPD is decentralised, meaning that each founder and school is responsible for CPD within the framework defined by the legislation and the labour agreements. As a consequence of the decentralised system, there is no systematically collected nationwide data on CPD for teachers in general or for vocational teachers in particular (17).

For more information visit Cedefop project page on Teachers' and Trainers' professional development and our interactive toolkits for VET practitioners: Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving and Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs. You may also read Cedefop/ReferNet country reports on Teachers and Trainers in a Changing World and Cedefop comparative analysis.

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[17] See also Skolverket (2016). *Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of vocational education and training: mapping their professional development in the EU - Sweden*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

CHAPTER 10.
Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

State agencies, like Statistics Sweden (*SCB*) and the public employment services, PES (*Arbetsförmedlingen*) monitor the Swedish labour market and publish their analyses regularly. The public employment service also offers an occupational barometer *Yrkesprognoser*, a search engine for predicting future employment prospects for various professions.

However, skill needs and the provision of VET are not interlinked in Sweden. The provision of VET (and other upper secondary) programmes in upper secondary school is largely determined by the preferences of the learners, who choose their education. Since providers operate in a competitive market, they adjust supply according to the learners' demands. Ideally there would be a balance between the demand for education - the need for competence among the different business sectors on the one hand - and the supply, the provision of educated and skilled workers on the other. There appears to be a gap between demand and supply: there is a shortage of competence in some sectors and too many people educated in upper secondary school in fields in which there is no shortage. Guidance, information and similar incentives are the 'soft' means by which learners can be attracted and steered to specific vocational education programmes.

There are also structural challenges in the Swedish VET system when it comes to the municipalities' potential to offer a broad supply of programmes and specialisations at upper secondary level. Municipalities are sometimes too small entities to be able to offer a wide range of different upper secondary programmes and orientations.

Municipalities can cooperate in confederations to coordinate the supply of upper secondary programmes, but challenges remain in this field, particularly in IVET, due to decreasing interest in VET paired with high costs for organising some VET programmes. Therefore, a commission of enquiry has been appointed to develop a regionally based model for financing and steering of education at upper secondary level (including municipal adult education). Amendments were made to the Education Act in June 2022. The amendments came into effect in July 2023. According to the new legislation, municipalities need to cooperate with at least two other municipalities when planning upper secondary VET. In addition, municipalities have to consider the needs of the labour market as well as students' demands. It should also be made clear to the student what the education contains and what it may lead to.

For further information please see also the national country reports on skills anticipation.

See also Cedefop's skills forecast and European Skills Index.

10.2 Designing qualifications

Government design of the IVET structure

Since few professions are regulated in Sweden, most qualifications are determined by stakeholders and social partners. The Parliament, the Government and State agencies are responsible for education and have set up a structure for education provision to meet the needs of the individual, society and the labour market.

Consultation rounds and open consultation through meetings and websites are examples of methods used to collect views and proposals. If a revision is seen as necessary, the National

Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) organises an extensive review to inform the relevant parties of the decision on a new subject or course. Focus groups of teachers and learners are consulted; the work in progress is published on the agency's website for teachers and stakeholders to express their opinions; proposals are written and the agency assures the quality, e.g. that curricula align with the legislation. Before the National Agency decides on a new subject or course, other national agencies, interest groups, social partners and stakeholders (including school organisers) receive a copy of the proposed changes and have a chance to comment. If a large section of the consultees or a single influential group is opposed to the proposal, the National Agency for Education may decide not to proceed or to revise the proposal. The same process is used for core and foundation courses which are decided by the Government. In these instances, the National Agency for Education acts on behalf of the Government and makes proposals to the Government after following the same review process.

When the quality assurance of the design, assessment, certification and review of the process is thorough and transparent, it is more likely that the final proposals will be accepted. If everyone concerned has a chance to express their opinions, the proposed education standards expressed in the documents are more likely to be adjusted to suit the needs of social partners and stakeholders and to be of a higher quality.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes (meaning what a learner is expected to know, be able to do and understand at the end of a learning sequence) in upper secondary education are expressed in the curricula, diploma goals and subject syllabuses which describe the aim and long-term goals of the subject, the core content, and assessment criteria for each of the courses. Learning outcomes in Swedish upper secondary education are expressed as the learners' 'ability to', 'knowledge about', 'understanding of' and 'skills in'. Assessment criteria relate to these outcomes and are expressed using active verbs.

Gap between diplomas and expected qualifications in upper secondary VET

Within the structural framework it is foreseen that all VET programmes should cover 2 500 - 2 800 credits and last 3 years. Typically, 1 600 credits are allocated to VET-subjects; the remaining credits are allocated to foundation subjects (Swedish, English, maths, physical health, natural science, and social science), diploma projects and to individual options. There are, however, some industries that argue that there is too little vocational training in upper secondary education to reach a qualification needed in their sector. For traditional handicrafts like hairdressers, for example, graduates must work as employees for 3 000 hours before being able to take the exam leading to a journeyman certificate. Therefore, the vocational outcome of the hairdresser orientation of the handicrafts programme only leads to the informal title 'aspiring hairdresser.' Final examinations are performed by the hairdressers' association, but the qualification is still placed at the SeQF level 4 (EQF level 4) based on the level of acquired knowledge, skills, and competences (18).

Designing education in dialogue with stakeholders in upper secondary VET

In structured consultation, the National Agency for Education meets with schools and stakeholders to ensure that subjects and courses can be used to build qualifications which meet the needs of working life. For each vocational programme there is a national programme council with a broad cross-section of industry representatives and social partners in the vocational area for which the programme provides education and training. Some programme councils include representatives from public authorities like the Swedish public employment service (PES). One of the tasks of each programme council is to advise and support the National Agency for Education in the adaptation, development and modernisation of the supply of education and the content of vocational education. This helps to ensure that the competences required by the labour market are met. The programme councils fulfil a consultative function and can suggest revisions but are not decision-making bodies.

At local level, there must be one or several local programme councils (*lokala programråd*) for

cooperation between school and working life; they cover all vocational programmes in every upper secondary school. How these councils are organised and what their tasks are is not regulated. Possible tasks could be assisting the provider in arranging placements of work-based learning and participating in organising and assessing diploma projects. A local programme council may also advise the school about skills needed locally and which courses the school could use in programme specialisations to meet local needs.

Other forms of cooperation with stakeholders

There are many initiatives for cooperation at the regional level between school and working life, unregulated by the State. For example, actors on the labour market have initiated *Teknikcollege* (*Technical college*) and *Vård- och omsorgscollege* (*Health and medical care college*), a form of cooperation within the framework of upper secondary and tertiary education. Behind the *Teknikcollege* is the Industrial Council (*Industrirådet*) and different employer and employee organisations in the technology and industrial sectors. The *Teknikcollege* wishes to be a long-term competence provider that also works actively to promote quality in upper and post-secondary VET. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, (SKR) together with a trade union, the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union (*Kommunal*) and the Association of Private Care Providers (*Vårdföretagarna*), started a similar initiative in a college for health and medical care, with a focus on ensuring the supply of skilled workers and further training for existing staff, as well as increasing quality in work-based learning for young people and adults.

Partial qualifications in VET

In October 2016 the Government commissioned the National Agency for Education to recommend vocational training 'packages' for adults. These 'packages' are clusters of courses agreed with the industry as entry points into the labour market. They will not only consist of partial qualifications, but will also include building blocks that may be transferred and accumulated towards a full qualification. In April 2017 the objective was amended to include the bridging programmes aimed at young, mostly recently arrived immigrants, who are not eligible for admission to an upper secondary VET programme. More than eighty packages covering a wide range of vocational areas had been developed by June 2021 but more are being continuously developed. In addition to this the National Agency for Education also developed seven vocational packages for adults with learning disabilities.

Designing qualifications in higher VET

In accordance with legislation and within the restrictions of funding allocations for higher vocational education programmes (*yrkeshögskoleutbildningar*) the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*) independently determines, following an application procedure, the programmes to be included as higher vocational education. In contrast to upper secondary vocational education, it is the education providers who design the programmes in higher vocational education.

Programmes in higher vocational education must correspond to labour market needs. For this reason, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education analyses and collects information about the skills in short supply in different industries and regions. The information is then used, together with the VET provider’s application, as a basis for assessing the programmes that are to be available in higher vocational education. External stakeholders such as employers and industry organisations, as well as central and regional authorities, also play an important contributory role in supplying information to the assessment and decision-making processes. The qualification demands imposed by employers and industries thus determine the programmes to be approved, where in Sweden they are offered, and how many study places are allocated to each programme.

The Labour Market Council (*arbetsmarknadsråd*) is a special body linked to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. The task of the council is to support the agency with information about the labour market: the vocational areas under development, the new qualifications that may be required, and the qualifications that need to be phased out. The

members of the council, which is chaired by the head of the agency, are representatives of the public employment service and the social partners. The council members also function as a channel to their respective organisations in terms of synchronising the analyses.

For education and training programmes that require nationally equivalent content, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education issues regulations on what knowledge, skills and competences all learners must have attained on completion.

Designing qualifications outside the formal education system

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för Yrkeshögskolan*) has been appointed by the Swedish Government as the national coordination point for the Swedish national qualifications framework, the SeQF. All government regulated education is referred to the SeQF in an ordinance, but qualification awarding bodies outside the formal education system may apply to the agency to refer their qualification to the SeQF. A precondition is that the awarding body conducts systematic quality assurance of the qualification. A group of experts reviews the application and serves as an advisory body to the Director General who determines the SeQF-level of the qualification. These decisions are valid for 10 years.

More information on national qualifications frameworks and the qualifications types can be found in the NQF online tool

[18] The Swedish ordinance defining SeQF uses the term 'competences' for the EQF category 'responsibility and autonomy.'

CHAPTER 11.
Quality assurance

The extent to which the State governs the goals and contents of formal VET varies between different education forms. The following table shows the various responsibilities of agencies and governing bodies for controlling VET provision and assuring its quality.

Responsibility of goals, contents, diplomas and quality assurance in VET

Diploma/education	Responsible for goals and contents	Responsible for awarding diploma certificates	Responsible for quality assurance
Vocational diploma at upper secondary level	Government; The National Agency for Education	School's/education provider's headmaster/director	The governing body of the school provider; The Swedish Schools Inspectorate
Diploma in higher vocational education and Advanced diploma in higher vocational education	Education providers	Education providers	Education providers; Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education

Source: Skolverket.

Quality assurance for upper secondary VET

All school organiser governing bodies in Sweden are required by law to have a systematic quality assurance process in place. Quality assurance arrangements are not regulated in detail but it is common for schools to use indicators such as average grades, participation rates, completion rates and placement rates in their analysis. Most organisers also survey their learners' opinions on the education, facilities and their well-being.

Responsibility for supervision and quality auditing of both upper secondary school and municipal adult education rests with the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*). Regular supervision of schools is carried out on the basis of a number of assessment areas and points; quality auditing follows up a specific area. Vocational education, and especially apprenticeship education, is very much in focus within both regular supervision and quality auditing. Structured cooperation between education providers and the workplace has been shown to be an important factor for success in work-based learning.

Even though the education providers are responsible for carrying out systematic quality assessment, the Government supports and stimulates the development of quality in VET via different initiatives and specific funding schemes. This may include specific tasks delegated to the Swedish National Agency, e.g. to develop guidelines for work-based learning. Also, the Government has decided on an extensive funding scheme consisting of grants to schools wishing to develop the quality of work-based learning.

Quality assurance for tertiary VET

Programmes in higher vocational education are supervised by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*) through inspections and quality auditing. Programmes are checked for compliance with existing legislation and other provisions. The agency performs three different types of inspection: introductory, regular and ad-hoc inspections following up particular issues or problems.

Introductory inspection is carried out for new programmes that start or have just started. The aim of such inspections is to determine whether there are the preconditions in place to deliver new, good quality programmes. Ad hoc inspections are carried out if there are complaints from a learner about the education programme itself or the education provider. The ad hoc inspections only examine the complaint area.

Quality assurance for qualifications outside the formal education system

Bodies outside the formal education system that have their qualifications placed in the national qualifications framework must apply systematic quality assurance processes in their education programmes. Their quality assurance process must be described in their application. EQAVET principles are guiding principles but not formalised in a template.

CHAPTER 12.
Validation of prior learning

Validation in municipal adult education at upper secondary level is possible within all courses and must be based on the learner's circumstances and needs. It is mainly used to allow customising the content of studies according to a learner’s needs and shortening education duration, or to assess knowledge and skills that are required for eligibility for a particular education. The learner receives a certificate through validation, instead of a grade or diploma.

If the learner wishes to obtain a formal grade, he or she must pass an extended test covering all the content of the particular course. A 16 to 20 year-old learner in upper secondary education may also validate his or her knowledge and skills through an extended test. The purpose of this test, however, is not to individualise the learning to progress more rapidly through the education programme; it lets the learner have a second chance, if he or she has received a fail grade, or cover courses not previously studied if the learner changes programme or orientation. Documented knowledge and skills achieved by studies abroad, or through other means, may be credited to the learner at a pass level without the extended tests (19).

For more information about validation arrangements, please visit Cedefop’s European database on validation of non-formal and informal learning.

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[19] Cedefop (2023). *Vocational education and training in Sweden: short description*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

CHAPTER 13.
Incentives for learners

Incentives for VET learners

Individuals with different backgrounds and in different life situations are given the possibility to study, thanks to a system of study allowances and student aid. Learners have the right to different forms of financial support for both upper secondary and tertiary studies. Also, employees have the right to take leave of absence to attend education.

Swedish study support gives everyone the opportunity to study, irrespective of their financial background. The form and the size of the support vary depending on age and life situation and also on the scope and level of studies. The Swedish Board for Study Support (Centrala Studiestödsnämnden, CSN) is responsible for and administers most of the learner support. The education programmes entitled to support are determined by the Swedish Government through the Study Support Ordinance. Special investments in higher levels of grant are used as an incentive for further studies. This applies, for instance, to higher grants to learners in vocational education, where one aim is to encourage more unemployed people over the age of 25 to apply for vocational education.

The support is part of education policy and aims to increase social justice. It grants equal access to education for both men and women, and levels out differences between individuals and groups in the population. In 2022 more than 550 500 individuals aged 20 and above received financial support. Of these, almost 66% were women and 25% received support for studies at upper secondary level. Of all adults studying at post-secondary level and receiving support, 13% were studying in a HVET programme.

Study support (Studiestöd) is the umbrella term for all study aid in the Swedish education system which includes grants and loans for different age groups. In 2020, the total support handed out was SEK 38,6.75 billion (EUR 3.35 billion) and the total debt the Swedish population has to the government is SEK 263 billion (EUR 22.87 billion). A total of 1 730 300 persons (almost 16,4% of the population) have *studiestöd* which include loans from the State, as reported in the reference above.

Study allowance for learners under the age of 20

Study allowance (*studiehjälp*) in the form of grants, supplementary allowance and boarding supplement can be paid to learners under the age of 20 who are studying in upper secondary school, municipal adult education or folk high schools. Under certain circumstances the grant can also be awarded for studies abroad. One prerequisite for receiving this grant is that the learner studies full-time and participates in the relevant courses. This means, for example, that a learner who is frequently absent runs the risk of losing the support and may be liable for repayment. The school has an obligation to report to the Swedish Board for Study Support when a learner is absent without a valid reason.

Learners who wish to live and study in a place other than their home municipality may apply for a boarding supplement from the Swedish Board for Study Support or from the municipality. This applies in cases where the specific education is not provided by the home municipality, or where the education programme is open to national admission. The grant makes it possible for learners to participate in specialist vocational education that is provided at only a few places in the country. In 2014 a supplement was introduced for learners attending apprenticeship education (*lärlingsutbildning*) in upper secondary school. The supplement is designed to cover extra living costs, for example travel to the workplace and lunch.

Learners attending apprenticeship education in upper secondary school may be employed in what is called an upper secondary apprentice position (*Gymnasial lärlingsanställning*, *GLA*). As a result, upper secondary apprentices can be offered employment while still in education, in accordance with adapted labour law provisions. An apprentice employed in such a position is remunerated by the employer and not entitled to the supplement.

Student aid for learners aged 20 and above

Student aid (*studiemedel*) can be granted to learners in post-secondary education, such as higher vocational education, supplementary education, and vocational education in folk high schools. Learners studying at upper secondary level who have reached the age of 20 are also entitled to student aid. They can apply for grants and loans and also for certain supplementary allowances. Parents of minors, for example, can receive a supplementary allowance. To be eligible for further funding learners must demonstrate satisfactory results in previous studies. The contribution for full-time learners is, at most, SEK 913 (EUR 79.4 as of 29.9.2023) per week and the loan at most SEK 1 039 (EUR 90.35 as of 29.9.2023) per week. The loan has a low interest rate (0.59% in 2023).

Despite the generous study support system there is still a part of the population refraining from education due to economic reasons. The Government has therefore in 2017 introduced a new study allowance, the education entry grant (20), that municipalities have been able to distribute since mid-2017. The education entry grant is designed to recruit unemployed people, aged 25-56, with short previous education who need education at the primary or upper-secondary level to strengthen their ability to establish themselves on the labour market.

Current initiatives in State-funded adult education and training

The Swedish Government has been implementing a major education initiative for lifelong learning and higher employment since 2015. It involves State-funded training places in vocational adult education programmes at upper secondary level, higher vocational education, education at folk high schools as well as at universities and colleges. The objective of the initiative is mainly reskilling and upskilling unemployed people; it also reaches out to adults lacking upper secondary education, or having secondary vocational education needing to be completed. Expanding the number of training places also provides adults with a general education increased opportunity to enrol in vocational education and training (VET). A substantial part of the initiative has been targeted towards upper secondary VET and apprenticeships for adults.

VET has traditionally been organised by each municipality. To stimulate cooperation towards a broad supply of education and training corresponding to the needs in the different regions, the Government requires in its State grant of 2017, cooperation between at least three municipalities on the planning and supply of education and training at the regional level. The needs of the labour market should be met and planning should therefore be done in consultation with the public employment services and with different actors responsible for regional development.

Since 2009, Sweden's municipalities have had the opportunity to apply for State subsidies for an expanded implementation of VET for adults. In January 2016, the number of available places was expanded for the target group in need of vocational training, combined with studies in Swedish for immigrants or Swedish as a second language.

As of January 2017, constellations of three municipalities or more have been able to apply for State subsidies for adult VET to cover a broader range of potential learners. These subsidies can be combined with courses in Swedish for immigrants or Swedish as a second language at compulsory school level. The aim is to provide newly arrived immigrants with the opportunity to enrol in vocational education, thereby contributing to improved integration through access to the labour market.

[20] The Swedish Board of Student Finance (CSN). *Studiestartsstöd (Study entry grant);* CSN.

Nytt studielån för alla som får lån från 2022 *(New student loan for everyone who receives a loan from 2022)*.

[21] Cedefop (2023). *Vocational education and training in Sweden: short description*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

For employers who are offering work places in the scope of introduction agreements, the public employment services pays employment taxes of 31.42% as well as a compensation of SEK 115 (EUR 11) per day for the trainer in the workplace.

Companies which provide training places receive State grants to improve their cooperation at regional level with upper secondary VET providers (adult education programmes included). The funding scheme covers both school-based VET and apprenticeships. Enterprises that participate in apprenticeship may receive State-funded grants if their workplace trainers have participated in training-the-trainer programmes. The aim is to encourage more training enterprises to have qualified trainers.

Non-financial incentives are provided to encourage employers to train vocational learners. The Swedish National Agency for Education oversees apprenticeship centers, which collaborate with various stakeholders like VET providers, municipalities, social partners, and enterprises. These centers offer workshops and support to companies, social partners, and VET institutions (21).

CHAPTER 15.
Guidance and counselling

Falling interest in upper secondary vocational programmes has led to an increased focus on, and investment in, information activities and study and career guidance. Continuous changes in Swedish VET create the need for information and guidance to provide everyone with an overall view of the available study paths and what they can lead to. Increasing the attractiveness and quality of VET is an important priority for the Swedish Government.

Information and guidance about study and career paths is integrated into different activities. The curriculum for upper secondary education states that the head teacher is responsible for ensuring that 'study and guidance counselling is organised in such a way that learners receive information and guidance prior to making study choices in the school, and before choosing their future education paths and professions'; one of the explicit goals of the curriculum is that all learners 'are familiar with the conditions of working life, especially within their study area, as well as the opportunities for further education, work placement and work in Sweden and other countries.' The curriculum for compulsory school mirrors the curriculum in upper secondary school regarding study and guidance counselling; the legislation to provide practical vocational orientation (*Praktisk yrkesorientering, PRAO*) in compulsory school came into effect in 2018 . The vocational orientation is compulsory and requires that learners in years 8 and 9 spend a minimum of 10 days in a workplace or, if the school cannot provide sufficient work-placements, in a vocational programme in upper secondary school.

The governing body or education provider has the main responsibility for guiding and recruiting VET learners. General information on study and career paths, and on the labour market for different professions, is supplied by national authorities and industry organisations. Both the National Agency for Education and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education are tasked to inform and disseminate knowledge about their respective areas. The National Agency for Education also functions as a national reference point for information on VET in Sweden and other EU countries, as well as countries in the EEA area.

Many national websites provide information and guidance for young people and adults. The portal *Utbildningsguiden* (education guide) includes search tools for education paths and providers. It contains information about possible vocational outcomes, the situation on the labour market in the field, and funding and information on other important considerations when choosing a study path.

Information provided by the Swedish Public Employment Service focuses on finding jobs in different professions. The portal *hitta yrkesprognoser* (find vocational prognoses) shows the labour market situation and future prospects for about 210 professions and contains information about national forecasts for 1-, 5- and 10-year periods: 1-year forecasts are also available at regional level. The portal also provides descriptions of different professions and possible education paths.

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (*Folkbildningsrådet*) is responsible for the information services of the Swedish folk high schools (*Folkhögskolornas informationstjänst*), whose tasks include contributing to the recruitment of course participants. The portal *Folkhögskola.nu* provides general information on vocational education and other courses offered by folk high schools.

Vocational boards (*yrkesnämnder*) and other industry organisations supply information about professions and career paths through different means, and also about formal and non-formal education in their fields. This may cover websites, participation in industry specific trade fairs or

inspiration days.

All these activities and web portals must also function to support study and vocational guidance counsellors in their work. Euroguidance Sweden is a national resource centre for counselling, which supports counsellors in their role of providing information about opportunities for studying and work placement abroad.

The municipalities are responsible for ensuring that young people and adults are offered education at upper secondary level. Before learners choose upper secondary school, many municipalities and regions take part in upper secondary fairs and open houses where schools and programmes are presented. Information meetings and guidance counselling are offered to those who wish to study in municipal adult education at upper secondary level. Education providers frequently market their education and courses via advertisements, web sites and direct marketing.

The Swedish National Agency for Education launched in 2018 the web-based skills mapping tool that can be used to assist learners and other stakeholders in planning an upper secondary education diploma within the framework of municipal adult education. The target group is people who have experience in professional work, or equivalent experiences, and need to have their vocational skills and competences validated. The tool is specifically adapted to newly arrived immigrants and aims to assist in making more individuals aware of their skills; this, in turn, can shorten their study time and contribute to improved integration through access to the labour market. The skills mapping tool is useful both in adult education and in upper secondary school, and for young new arrivals with work experience; it can also contribute to improved transitions between upper secondary school and municipal adult education.

Guidance counselling is also an important task of the public employment service (Arbetsförmedlingen) aimed at improving matching between job seekers and working life. In addition to the *hitta yrken*, job seekers are offered study and vocational guidance through brief telephone coaching sessions, or personal meetings with a counsellor at drop-in sessions. The public employment service is also responsible for what are called preparatory activities (*introduction till arbete*) aimed at aiding job seekers' choice of work. The initiatives are tailored to the individuals and may be of a counselling, rehabilitation or orientation nature. They are intended for job seekers who need to prepare themselves for a labour market policy programme or a job.

The Ordinance on university of applied sciences (*Förordningen om yrkeshögskolan*) lays down the responsibility of the governing bodies of education providers for ensuring that there is guidance and counselling on alternative study paths, admissions and entry, as well as vocational guidance. In their application to deliver education within the framework of higher vocational education, education providers must describe how this counselling will be provided. Student fairs, where information on higher vocational education providers, universities and university colleges is presented, are held regionally and in cooperation with education providers and the social partners. There are also industry-specific trade fairs, where education at both upper secondary and tertiary level is presented.

General information about higher vocational education is available through the web site of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. The agency also provides a web site intended for potential learners. Besides general information about higher vocational education, this web site contains information about current higher vocational education programmes and links to various education provider web sites. Information about higher education studies is made available through the portal *studera.nu*.

Study and career guidance is readily available for learners at all levels of the education system. There is, however, a challenge to reach those individuals who do not actively participate in education. Outreach and guidance measures to youths and young adults who are not in employment, education or training is further discussed in the ReferNet national report on guidance and outreach for the inactive and unemployed (22).

Please also see:

- guidance and outreach Sweden national report;
- Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit;
- Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices;
- National guidance systems: Sweden

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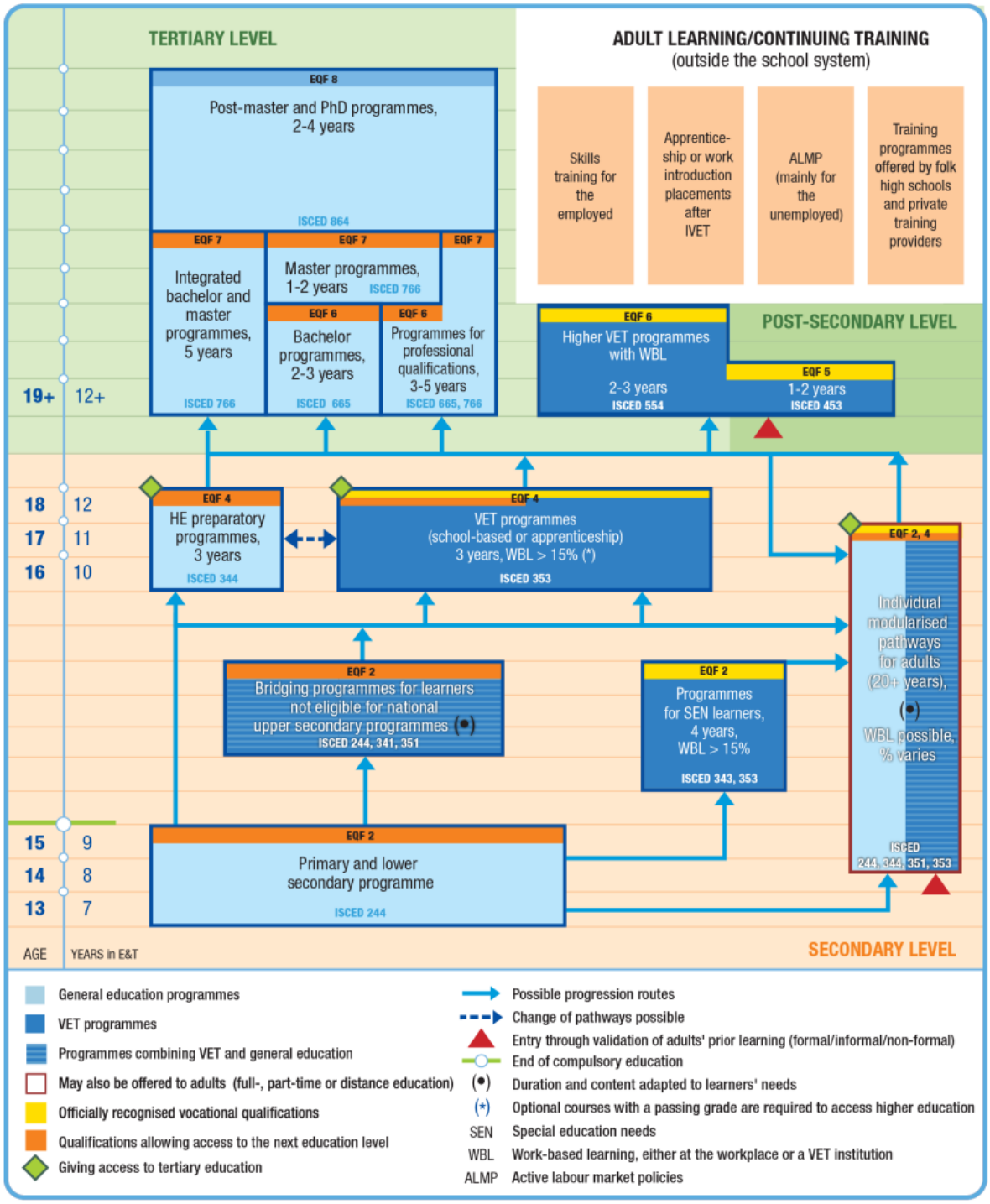
[22] Information is based on: Cedefop (2023). *Vocational education and training in Sweden: short description*. Luxembourg: Publications Office; Skolverket, ReferNet Sweden (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Sweden*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018.

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop, & Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Sweden: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions* [Database]. www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/sweden-u3

VET Programme Types

EQF EQF 2

Bridging programmes for learners not eligible for national upper secondary programmes ISCED 244, 341, 351

Bridging programmes for learners not eligible for national upper secondary programmes (introduktionsprogram) leading to ISCED 244, 341, 351

EQF level	EQF 2	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	244, 341, 351
Usual entry grade	10	**Usual completion grade**	10-12
Usual entry age	16	**Usual completion age**	19
Length of a programme (years)	3 years in average, however duration can be adapted to learners need		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✗ Some of the bridging programmes include IVET courses, leading to a certain number of credits, which can be counted as partial qualification when later following a VET programme.	**Is it continuing VET?**	✗

Is it offered free of charge?	✗	**Is it available for adults?**	✗ However, the equivalent education (corresponding to a compulsory school qualification) is available in adult municipal education for those adults with lower education levels.
ECVET or other credits	Bridging programmes are intended to ensure learners are eligible to apply for a national programme at upper secondary level or prepared for a vocation; the education is not credit-based. Courses from upper secondary education can, however, be included and these courses will generate credits in accordance with upper secondary education.		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning; • work practice.		
Main providers	In addition to the public municipal bodies, private entities may also be approved as VET providers and organise and run independent upper secondary schools after approval from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. Independent schools are regulated by the same legislation and governing documents as municipal schools.		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	WBL is possible, but not mandatory.		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In-company practice.		
Main target groups	Learners who are not eligible for an upper secondary school national programme may, until they turn 20, apply for one of the four bridging programmes, nationally referred to as introductory programmes (*introduktionsprogram*). These programmes offer learners an individually adapted education, which satisfies their varying education needs and provides clear education paths. These paths may lead to entrance into the labour market, but also provide a foundation for further education by giving access to upper secondary programmes.		
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The learner is eligible for a national programme in upper secondary education if he or she has passing grades in Swedish, English, maths and five more subjects from compulsory school. The maximum age to begin the programme is 20; if a learner is older, he or she will be referred to municipal adult education.		
Assessment of learning outcomes	The teacher assesses the learning and also grades the learner according to criteria of the knowledge requirements for each course.		

Diplomas/certificates provided	After an introductory programme has been completed, the headteacher issues an upper secondary school certificate (*Gymnasieintyg*) specifying the education the learner has received.
Examples of qualifications	The learner may study upper secondary courses leading to a partial qualification.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who successfully complete the individualised programme can access general and vocational upper secondary programmes.
Destination of graduates	In one out of the four bridging programmes that mainly focus on vocational content, 50% of the learners that began the programme in 2013 had completed a full upper secondary VET education in 5 years. Of these, 34% and 15% respectively, completed all requirements for an upper secondary VET diploma in 5 years (23) .
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ The teacher validates the knowledge. The bridging programme is predominantly aimed to fill in the 'gaps' for a completed compulsory education to ensure learners are eligible for upper secondary education.
General education subjects	✓ Most of the time general education subjects are part of this programme to ensure that graduates will have the necessary qualifications to enter upper secondary programmes. Eligibility criteria for upper secondary education are passing grades in Swedish, English, maths and five more subjects from compulsory education. In theory, a learner may have passed Swedish, English, maths but not the other five required subjects. However, that is quite rare.
Key competences	✓ The curriculum of upper secondary education applies and contains all key competences.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ The same course construction as in compulsory school and upper secondary school.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[23] [BOX_1 *Uppföljning av gymnasieskolan 2019* [Follow-up of high school 2019].

EQF 2

Programmes

for SEN learners, leading

4 years,

WBL >15%

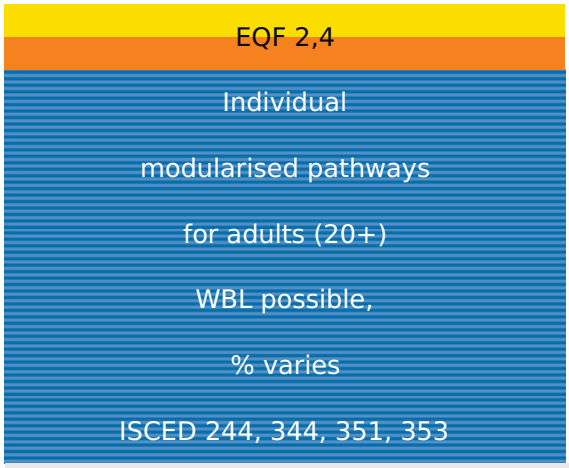
ISCED 343 and 353

Programmes for SEN learners (Gymnasiesärskolan) leading to EQF 2, ISCED 343 and 353

EQF level	2	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	343, 353
Usual entry grade	10	**Usual completion grade**	13
Usual entry age	16	**Usual completion age**	20
Length of a programme (years)	4		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	Information not available	**Is it continuing VET?**	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	**Is it available for adults?**	✓ There is equivalent education for adults with learning disabilities (*komvux som anpassad utbildning)* that, just like municipal adult education, is built on courses instead of programmes.
ECVET or other credits	2500 credits during 4 years and 3600 hours.		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning; • work-based learning in companies (minimum of 22 weeks).		

Main providers	In addition to the public municipal bodies, private entities may also be approved as VET providers and organise and run independent upper secondary schools after approval from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. Independent schools are regulated by the same legislation and governing documents as municipal schools.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	> 15%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In-company practice.
Main target groups	Programmes are available to young people with special educational needs. An equivalent education is available for adults with special needs, but based on courses instead of programmes.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Special needs upper secondary schools offer national and individual programmes to learners with intellectual disability. Learners with special needs are individually assessed and placed in a national programme or individualised programme; the latter targets learners with more special and demanding needs.
Assessment of learning outcomes	The teacher assesses the skills and knowledge and grades the learner according to set criteria required for each course. Grades are awarded for each course completed in the national programmes. If a learner passes, he/she is awarded grade E, D, C, B or A. The highest grade is A and the lowest is E. If a learner does not achieve the standard required for grade E, he/she receives the grade F.
Diplomas/certificates provided	When learners have completed their education in national or individual programmes, they receive a special needs upper secondary school certificate (*Gymnasiebevis i anpassad gymnasieskola*). The certificate describes which skills and experiences the learner has acquired from the special needs upper secondary school and contains details of: • the programme; • subject areas or courses that the learner has studied; • grades; • the learner's work-based learning or placement; • the special needs upper secondary school work placement.
Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Learners can continue in SEN education for adults; this is not considered as progression.

Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	Information not available
General education subjects	✓ Apart from the same general foundation subjects as in upper secondary education, an aesthetic subject is included. The courses are adjusted to the learner's preconditions and needs.
Key competences	✓ The curriculum of upper secondary education applies and contains all key competences.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ The same course construction as in compulsory school and upper secondary school. Grade F, (not passing) is not applicable.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available



Individual modularised pathways for adults (grundläggande nivå/compulsory level and gymnasial komvux/upper secondary level, including komvux som anpassad utbildning (special needs education for adults with learning disabilities) at ISCED 244, 344, 351, 353.

EQF level	2,4	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	244, 344, 351, 353
Usual entry grade	Minimum age is 20.	**Usual completion grade**	Not applicable
Usual entry age	After age 20.	**Usual completion age**	Not applicable
Length of a programme (years)	It is individualised.		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓ It can be initial VET, or general education.	**Is it continuing VET?**	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓ All adults are entitled to free education either to gain eligibility to tertiary education, or to complete an upper secondary degree.	**Is it available for adults?**	✓

ECVET or other credits	A learner in municipal adult education must accumulate 2 400 credits to obtain a diploma. 2 250 of these credits must be passed.
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning; • work practice (practical training at school and work-based learning in company).

Main providers	Municipal adult education is funded by the municipality and State grants to the municipalities. The municipalities either provide education or procure education from different providers.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	WBL is not compulsory, but there are incentives through State grants available for providers if 70% of the education is provided though WBL in IVET for adult apprentices. For adults with learning disabilities following special education, 50% of the education has to be provided as WBL for receiving State grants.
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In-company practice.
Main target groups	Programmes are available for adults without compulsory education, not having enough knowledge of Swedish, or who are not eligible to access tertiary education.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	All adults are entitled to free education to complete compulsory education, plus Swedish for immigrants, as well as the upper secondary courses to gain eligibility to tertiary education. But there is a distinction between eligibility and the right to education. In short, there is no right for adults to study a VET programme. An adult with a qualification at EQF 4 is not entitled to a second adult municipal VET education (but not prevented if the municipality is willing to finance it). However, all adults are entitled to study Swedish or English, courses needed for eligibility to higher education.
Assessment of learning outcomes	The teacher assesses the learning and also grades the learner according to criteria of the knowledge requirements for each course.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Municipal adult education at upper secondary level aims at providing adults with knowledge up to the upper secondary leaving certificate, granting them access to tertiary education. Nationally determined programmes do not exist in municipal adult education; instead, courses are offered based on the needs and circumstances of the adult learner.
Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Depending on the chosen programmes, graduates can acquire an upper secondary leaving certificate granting them access to tertiary education. They can also acquire vocational qualifications equivalent to IVET diplomas for the young or partial IVET qualifications.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	All learners should be individually assessed, and their previous knowledge validated to provide individualised education. A learner who has validated part of a course does not have to attend classes for that part of the course. If a learner wishes to receive grades in the validated courses, he or she will need to complete an extended test in the course.
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓ The curriculum of adult municipal education applies and contains all key competences. However, not all key competences are applicable to all individuals since a learner may only study one subject or course.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ The same course construction as in compulsory school and upper secondary school.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Learners in municipal adult education do not study a programme, but courses which can be combined in various ways. Therefore, the data for adult VET are not comparable to those of upper secondary VET and, due to a lag in official data, the latest analytical report on how fast adult learners found a job on the labour market is based on data for learners' courses in 2016-17 ((24)).About 62% of adults who have studied vocational courses for at least one year, had found a job in the year after completing their studies; for those adults who have studied vocational courses for a shorter duration, this applied only to 50% of them.

[24] Skolverket (2020). *Etableringen på arbetsmarknaden och fortsatta studier efter avslutad kommunal vuxenutbildning åren 2016-2017* [The establishment in the labor market and continued studies after completing municipal adult education in the years 2016-2017]. Skolverket report 2020:1798.

EQF 4

VET programmes (school-based or apprenticeship)

3 years,

WBL >15% (*)

ISCED 353

VET programmes comprising school-based education (skolförlagd utbildning) or apprenticeship education (lärlingsutbildning) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 353.

EQF level	4	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	353
Usual entry grade	10	**Usual completion grade**	12
Usual entry age	16	**Usual completion age**	19
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	**Is it continuing VET?**	✗ Unless someone returns to complete their education for a diploma after longer leave.
Is it offered free of charge?	✓ All upper secondary education for those under the age of 20 is free of charge. After age 20, learners have to pay for their own learning materials (like books).	**Is it available for adults?**	✓ All courses are available in municipal adult education.

ECVET or other credits	A learner in upper secondary school should accumulate 2 500 upper secondary credits. 2 250 of these credits must be passed to receive an upper secondary qualification and diploma.

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning; • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships.
Main providers	In addition to the public municipal bodies, private entities may also be approved as VET providers and organise and run independent upper secondary schools after approval from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. Independent schools are regulated by the same legislation and governing documents as municipal schools.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>15% Or a minimum of 15 weeks, 23 hours per week, out of a total of 2 430 hours.
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school; • in-company practice.
Main target groups	Programmes are accessible to young people under the age of 20.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners need to have completed compulsory school, with passing grades in Swedish, English, maths and five more subjects before they turn 20 years of age.
Assessment of learning outcomes	The teacher assesses the learning and also grades the learner according to criteria of the knowledge requirements for each course.
Diplomas/certificates provided	After completing upper secondary education, learners receive *gymnasieexamen* (upper secondary diploma). In VET, the diploma is *Yrkesexamen* (vocational diploma).
Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Depending on the chosen individual modularised pathway, learners can progress to higher VET programmes at post-secondary level and to tertiary level.
Destination of graduates	Graduates can directly enter the labour market, or progress to HVET studies or other tertiary education.
Awards through validation of prior learning	A learner may take an extended exam to receive a grade instead of participating in a course. The procedure also applies for learners that have a fail grade or wish to gain a higher grade.
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓

Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ Subjects are modularised in courses and learning outcomes are defined though core content and knowledge requirements for each course.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Of all upper secondary learners in national programmes, 32% are taking part in a VET programme in 2022/23. Of all learners in bridging programmes, 20.5% are in the VET-oriented vocational introduction (*yrkesintroduktion*); after completion most of them are continuing with following an upper secondary VET programmes.

EQF 5

Higher VET programmes with WBL, 1-2 years
ISCED 453

Higher VET programmes at EQF level 5, ISCED 453

EQF level	5	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	453
Usual entry grade	12	**Usual completion grade**	13-14
Usual entry age	19	**Usual completion age**	20-21
Length of a programme (years)	1-2 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✗	**Is it continuing VET?**	✓ Mostly.
Is it offered free of charge?	It is free of charge with some exceptions.	**Is it available for adults?**	✓

ECVET or other credits	The duration is calculated in HVET points; 200 points correspond to 1 year of full-time studies.
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning; • work practice; • part-time studies (approximately one tenth of the programmes); • distance learning.
Main providers	Higher vocational education programmes may be organised by State higher education institutions, municipalities, county councils and individuals or legal entities.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	WBL is not mandatory, but encouraged, in the 1-year HVET programme.
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In-company training.
Main target groups	Programmes are available to all young people and adults who have successfully completed the upper secondary school leaving exam or who have the informal or non-formal training that provides prerequisite competence for completing the programme.

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Entry requirement for leaners is the upper secondary school leaving certificate. The VET provider decides on specific entry requirements and many programmes also impose specific entry requirements including, for example, credit for specific courses in upper secondary school or work experience in the field. The provider may also declare an applicant eligible following what is known as an open assessment of qualifications, despite not fulfilling general and/or specific entry requirements. Within higher vocational education, validation may be used to provide a basis for decisions regarding admission to programmes. Knowledge, skills and competences acquired through training, job experience or otherwise may also be validated and recognised as part of a programme. The education provider is responsible for the validation process.
Assessment of learning outcomes	The higher VET graduate receives a diploma in higher vocational education (*yrkeshögskoleexamen*) if the learner has received at least the lowest passing grade in all courses of the programme, knowledge, skills and competences equal to EQF level 5 (SeQF level 5) and has accumulated at least 200 higher vocational education credits. The credit system differs from that of academic education and credits cannot automatically be transferred from higher VET to an academic institution. Each university, however, has the right to validate and transfer the credits from higher VET if it is deemed appropriate.
Diplomas/certificates provided	The VET graduate receives a diploma in higher vocational education (*yrkeshögskoleexamen*), which is recognised as part of the formal education system and allows learners to enter the labour market. Graduation from this programme, does not offer learners access to any additional progression pathways.
Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	The credit system of these higher VET programmes differs from that of academic education and credits cannot automatically be transferred from higher VET to an academic institution. Each university, however, has the right to validate and transfer the credits from higher VET if it is deemed appropriate.
Destination of graduates	The graduates normally enter the labour market.
Awards through validation of prior learning	The education provider has a possibility to accept learners without the formal eligibility requirements if it is estimated that the applicant will be able to fulfil the programme. The education provider validates and decides in each individual case.
General education subjects	✓ Approximately 90% of the programmes in higher vocational education also offer training in Swedish specific to the vocational field as additional support.

Key competences	✓ Approximately 90% of the programmes in higher vocational education also offer training in Swedish specific to the vocational field as additional support.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ The education provider has to define the learning outcomes in the application to the Agency for Higher Vocational Education to have the programme accepted.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

EQF 6

Higher VET programmes with WBL, 2-3 years ISCED 554

Higher VET programmes at EQF level 6, ISCED 554

EQF level	6	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	554
Usual entry grade	12	**Usual completion grade**	13/14
Usual entry age	19	**Usual completion age**	20-21
Length of a programme (years)	2-3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✗	**Is it continuing VET?**	✓ Mostly.
Is it offered free of charge?	It is free of charge with some exceptions.	**Is it available for adults?**	✓

ECVET or other credits	The duration is calculated in HVET points; 200 points correspond to 1 year of full-time studies.
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning; • work practice; • part-time studies (approximately one tenth of the programmes); • distance learning.
Main providers	Higher vocational education programmes may be organised by State higher education institutions, municipalities, county councils and individuals or legal entities.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	All programmes of 400 points (2 years full-time studies) have a minimum of 25% WBL.
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In-company training

Main target groups	Programmes are available to all young people and adults, who have successfully completed the upper secondary school leaving exam or who have the informal or non-formal training that provide prerequisite competence for completing the programme.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Entry requirement for leaners is the upper secondary school leaving certificate. The VET provider decides on specific entry requirements and many programmes also impose specific entry requirements including, for example, credit for specific courses in upper secondary school or work experience in the field. The provider may also declare an applicant eligible following what is known as an open assessment of qualifications, despite not fulfilling general and/or specific entry requirements. Within higher vocational education, validation may be used to provide a basis for decisions regarding admission to programmes. Knowledge, skills and competences acquired through training, job experience or otherwise may also be validated and recognised as part of a programme. The education provider is responsible for the validation process.
Assessment of learning outcomes	The graduate receives an advanced diploma in higher vocational education (*kvalificerad yrkeshögskoleexamen*) if the learner has received at least the lowest passing grade in all courses included in the programme, has attained knowledge, skills, and competences at a SeQF Level 6, has accumulated at least 400 higher vocational education credits and has completed a diploma project. A minimum of 25% workplace training must also have been included in the programme, in line with the ordinance of higher vocational education. The credit system differs from that of academic education and credits cannot automatically be transferred from higher VET to an academic institution. Each university, however, has the right to validate and transfer the credits from higher VET if it is deemed appropriate.
Diplomas/certificates provided	The VET graduate receives an advanced diploma in higher vocational education (*kvalificerad yrkeshögskoleexamen*) allowing them to enter the labour market. Graduation from this programme, does not offer access to any additional progression pathways.
Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	The credit system of these higher VET programmes differs from that of academic education and credits cannot automatically be transferred from higher VET to an academic institution. Each university, however, has the right to validate and transfer the credits from higher VET if it is deemed appropriate.
Destination of graduates	The programmes are intended to lead to a working position.

Awards through validation of prior learning	The education provider has the option to accept learners without the formal eligibility requirements if it is estimated that the applicant will be able to fulfil the programme. The education provider validates and decides in each individual case.
General education subjects	✓ Approximately 90% of the programmes in higher vocational education also offer training in Swedish specific to the vocational field as additional support.
Key competences	✓ Approximately 90% of the programmes in higher vocational education also offer training in Swedish specific to the vocational field as additional support.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ The education provider has to define the learning outcomes in the application to the Agency for Higher Vocational Education to have the programme accepted.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

References

[8] Sweden has redefined this category. Learners enrolled in bridging programmes are no longer included in this category. This means that the category contains fewer youths than before.

[10] Cedefop (2023). *Vocational education and training in Sweden: short description.* Luxembourg: Publications Office.

[11] Cedefop (2018). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-17: Sweden.* Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies. and Skolverket, ReferNet Sweden (2014). *Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes - Sweden.* Cedefop ReferNet network series on apprenticeship and WBL.

[13] Information is based on: Skolverket, ReferNet Sweden (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Sweden*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018. Cedefop (2023). *Vocational education and training in Sweden: short description*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

[16] Information is based on Skolverket, ReferNet Sweden (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Sweden*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018.