

SWEDEN

Summary

**Country Report on the Vocational Education and
Training system, REFERNET Cedefop**

and

**Summary report on Vocational Education and
Training (VET) for learners with Special
Educational Needs (SEN)**



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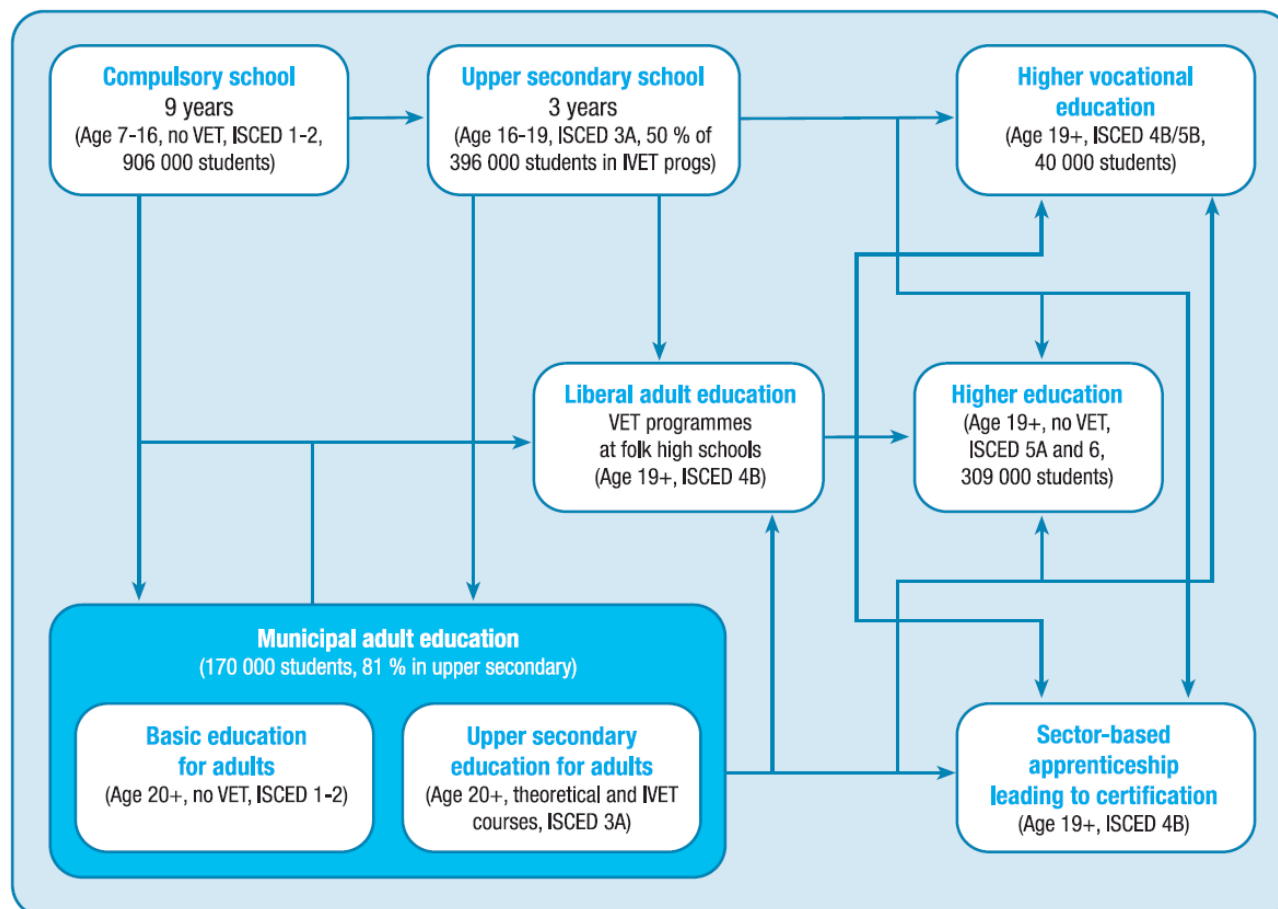
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1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM¹

1.1 Introduction

Vocational education and training (VET) is characterised by high participation. Over 98 % of compulsory school completers continue directly to upper secondary school and half enter initial vocational education and training (IVET). All IVET programmes offer the opportunity to continue to higher education and there is a well-developed adult education system allowing those who did not complete compulsory or upper secondary education to complement their education after the age of 19.

1.2 Diagram of the education and training system



1.3 Definitions

Initial VET (*Grundläggande yrkesutbildning*): in the Swedish context, initial vocational education and training usually refers to the 13 vocationally-oriented programmes at upper secondary school. However, IVET is also offered through municipal adult education and, less common, through programmes at folk high schools, in post-secondary training and/or in supplementary education.

Initial vocational education and training for adults (for those 19 years of age and older). IVET for adults is available through municipal adult education (*Komvux*) as well as through labour market training programmes. In addition, some programmes at folk high

¹ Please note that the information given in the first part *Summary Country Report on the Vocational Education and Training system*, REFERNET Cedefop is not updated since 2009. Incorrect, not updated information may occur.



schools (*Folkhögskolor*), in post-secondary training (*Påbyggnadsutbildning*) and via supplementary education (*Kompletterande utbildningar*) can be considered as IVET at postsecondary level.

Apprenticeship the new upper secondary school system from 2011 will include a new apprenticeship programme (pilots had been launched in the second half of 2008). The 'modern' upper secondary apprenticeship training will entail at least 50 % workbased training and apprentices may or may not earn a wage. From 2011, learners in upper secondary apprenticeship will receive a vocational upper secondary diploma on completion of their studies/training.

Post-secondary training (*Påbyggnadsutbildning*): vocational training programmes for adults designed and adopted locally in consultation with the business community. Post-secondary training was administered under municipal adult education until July 2009 at which point it was moved under a new unified administrative structure for all post-secondary VET. The new Agency for Higher Vocational Education will establish more consistent guidelines for postsecondary training and other post-secondary VET forms.

Post-secondary VET (*Eftergymnasial yrkesutbildning*): unlike post-secondary training which has been a specific VET form in Sweden, post-secondary VET refers to all VET after upper secondary school. Post-secondary VET is a broader term than higher vocational education as it includes all post-secondary VET (higher vocational education, some forms of VET at folk high schools, etc.), not just those forms under the Agency for Higher VET.

Advanced vocational education (*Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning*, KY): post-upper secondary vocational education designed in consultation with employers to meet labour market skill needs. One third of the learning is work-based and programmes typically cover two years but range from one to three years. This VET form was reformed on 1 July 2009.

1.4 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET

Two of the most pressing VET policy challenges are to increase upper secondary completion rates and prepare for demographic change. Since the election of the new government in 2006, decentralisation has been accompanied by calls for more quality assurance by central government agencies. The goal is to address concerns about quality, equal opportunity and conditions in schools. To support this, from 2008, the new Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) has been allocated more resources to conduct more frequent school inspections and implement other quality assurance measures. Another policy trend has taken shape in the government's initiative to gather all postsecondary VET forms under one administrative roof, the Agency for Higher Vocational Education, as of 1 July 2009.

Main policies:

1976 Codetermination Act (*Lag om medbestämmande i arbetslivet – MBL*, SFS 1976:580)

1985 Education Act (*Skollagen*, SFS 1985:1100),

1991 Local Government Act (*Kommunallag*, SFS 1991:900)

1996 Act on study support (*Studiestödslagen*, SFS 1996:605)

2000 Ordinance on labour market training (*Förordningen om arbetsmarknadspolitiska program*, SFS 2000:634)

2009 Law on higher vocational education (*Lag om yrkeshögskolan*, SFS 2009:128)



1.5 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET

National Level: Legislative responsibility for education (including VET) rests with Parliament (Riksdag) and the government. With the exception of the University of Agricultural Sciences, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Jordbruksdepartementet), employment training, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet), and the training of officers and police under the Ministries of Defence and Justice, respectively, virtually all public education comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Research (Utbildningsdepartementet)

There are two central agencies under the Ministry of Education and Research with responsibility for VET: the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket); and the Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*)

Regional/municipal level:

Municipalities (*kommuner*) have overall responsibility for educational activities within the school system. The 1991 Local Government Act (*Kommunallag*, SFS 1991:900) gives the municipalities and county councils (*landsting*) the option of designing their own organisational structures with different committees having different areas of responsibility.

Social partners play a significant role in IVET via advisory committees for vocationally oriented programmes at upper secondary schools. Joint business-labour training boards also play a critical role in certifying many occupations at sectoral level.

1.6 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET

In the largest VET form, upper secondary IVET, there are approximately 11 000 vocational teachers dedicated to purely vocational subjects. VET teachers, therefore, account for approximately 30 % of upper secondary teaching staff. Recruitment procedures for teachers in upper secondary education are open and unregulated.

Upper secondary IVET is typically 85 % school-based and the school-based components are taught by specific subject teachers (*karaktärsämneslärare*) and core subject teachers (*kärnämneslärare*), for general subjects common for all programmes. The 15 % work-based training (*arbetsplatsförlagd utbildning*) component is overseen by trainers for whom there are no formal or general requirements.

1.7 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs

Although there is a wealth of high quality labour market and education data in Sweden, there is limited coordination between Statistics Sweden and bodies responsible for education and training. Instead, the main agency working on this issue (anticipation of future skills) has been the Public Employment Service. Work on this by agencies responsible for VET in Sweden has been more characterised by one-off studies than regular, institutionalised cooperation between responsible agencies for statistics, labour market policy and education and training.

1.8 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs

Overall, the links between labour market skill needs and VET programmes and curricula vary according to the type of VET. For example, the provision of upper secondary IVET, the largest VET form, is largely driven by student choice of programme, while post-secondary VET for adults is often driven by industry skill needs motivated by training providers. The new Agency for Higher Vocational Education, established on 1 July 2009,



has a clear mandate to conduct labour market skill needs analyses to ensure that post-secondary vocational education and training delivery reflects industry skill needs.

1.9 Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET

All educational and vocational guidance (*studie- och yrkesvägledning*) is given in schools or municipalities. In all types of schools, it is the responsibility of the principal/headmaster to ensure that all students receive educational and vocational guidance before choosing from the range of options that the school has to offer and before deciding how best to continue an educational route. Most schools and municipal adult education centres have specially trained counsellors that provide learners with education and vocational guidance. However, there are no nationally determined guidelines regulating the types and number of guidance staff in schools.

1.10 Funding for initial vocational education and training

The largest share of VET funding goes to upper secondary IVET. Upper secondary level IVET is fully funded by municipalities through State funds and municipal taxes. Calculation of State grants is determined by several underlying factors such as the size of the population in the municipality, its age structure, population density, social structure and number of immigrants. Tax revenues and State grants thus provide the majority of resources for compulsory and non-compulsory education in the municipalities. Each municipality determines how it will allocate resources and organise its activities. However, municipalities are obliged to provide their inhabitants with a certain level of services and schooling as determined by the government and central State agencies.

1.11 References

Refernet Sweden and Cedefop (2009) Vocational education and training in Sweden. Short description *Cedefop*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.



2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

1.1 Population

In Sweden there is no legal definition of SEN. Instead, it is the pupil's need that should guide the required support. The municipalities are responsible for providing and maintaining pre-primary, compulsory, upper-secondary and adult education in accordance with the national framework set out by the Parliament and the Government. The local municipalities are independent in terms of organisation and there are different ways of dealing with the work of identifying and investigating individual needs for special support.

If there are signs that a pupil needs special support in order to reach goals, the school principal is responsible for investigating their needs. An action plan will be drawn up, containing information regarding the pupil's needs, what measures will be taken and how these measures will be followed up and evaluated. In some cases, this investigation can be done easily, for example by the school staff involved. In other cases, the investigation is more comprehensive and requires further professionals with further competences, such as a pupil-welfare team made up of a representative of the local school board and a pupil welfare-staff member, who could be a nurse, psychologist, counsellor, SEN teacher or staff from a rehabilitation centre or social services. The parents are always involved.

The 9-year compulsory school is open to all children between the ages of 7 and 16. Almost all pupils continue directly on to an upper-secondary education after their 9th year of compulsory education. Young people can begin upper-secondary school up until 20 years of age.

Pupils who have a disability and need support after finishing school can get special support from the National Employment Agency in acquiring and keeping a job.

1.2 Organisation and Provision of VET programmes

2.2.1 IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.

Lower and upper secondary levels

According to the Education Act (2010:800), the municipality is responsible for carrying out education in accordance with it and other related laws and ordinances. The municipality and the school are free to determine the details of the activities, assuming that the activities adhere to the national norms.

The Education Act includes a stipulation that pupils (including those with special education needs) attending all forms of school, with the exception of pre-primary school and preschool class, should have access to school staff who are able to fulfill their need for guidance in choosing future educational or vocational pursuits. Even those who intend to enter an educational programme should have access to guidance.²

Pupils in upper secondary education can choose from among 18 national programmes according to their interest. Most pupils with functional impairments attend these national programmes. Pupils who are deaf or have hearing disabilities or severe speech and language disorders may attend special upper secondary schools. Pupils with physical disabilities also have this opportunity. Municipalities are obliged to offer upper secondary education to all pupils, including pupils with severe learning disabilities. This is primarily

² Education Act 2010:800, § 29



done through a programme that offers both theoretical studies and practical training (upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities, *gymnasiesärskola*).

For those pupils who have not been able to fulfil the goals of the compulsory school and thus are not eligible to apply to a national programme, individual programmes are available where all pupils have their own study plan and it is possible to combine school with employment.

According to the curricula for the different types of schools, students are to receive support in choosing their future education and vocation. This assumes that the schools co-operate with the labour market and the community at large. The school principal is responsible for the results, within a given framework, and is particularly responsible for promoting collaboration with the labour market so that students receive good qualitative education and are prepared for a vocation or further education.

Contact with the labour market can be established in the first few years of compulsory school. Students with functional impairments can, depending upon the type and degree of disability, require that the school adapts its education and guidance to meet his or her needs. There may be a sensitive balance between the disability of the student and future educational and job opportunities. The school must avoid impeding the student's willingness to develop and improve, whilst helping him or her avoid developing unrealistic ideas.

Workplace-Based Learning (known in Swedish as 'APL') should be included in all vocational programmes at a minimum of 15 weeks. It is the responsibility of the school board to procure places for this form of education and to ensure that they fulfil the demands of the programme. It is the school principal who decides whether all or part of the course will be located at workplaces and how the school-year division will be made. The school board may decide whether and to what extent workplace-based learning should be made available in programmes that are preparatory to higher education. Each pupil should have an instructor at the workplace, and this instructor must be suitable for the assignment and have the required knowledge and experience.

Adult education

Public education for adults is the responsibility of the municipalities. Public education covers municipal adult education, education for adults with learning disabilities and Swedish tuition for immigrants (known in Swedish as 'SFI'). By law, municipalities are obliged to provide adult education. Municipal adult education at the upper secondary level is made up of individual courses.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education was established in 2009 to develop and oversee a new form of publicly funded vocational education at the post upper secondary level. Higher Vocational Education Courses, HVEC's, cover a wide range of vocational areas, but they have one goal in common, namely the provision of advanced vocational education, tailored to the needs of the labour market. In HVEC's a modern approach is taken whereby theoretical learning is integrated and blended with vocational practice at the workplace.

Apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship training in upper secondary schools

As of autumn 2011, apprenticeship training is an available option for pupils in vocational programmes in upper secondary schools. Apprenticeship training has the same entry prerequisites and diploma objectives as equivalent school-based programmes, but pupils spend at least half their study time at one or several workplaces. Apprenticeship training



follows the same subject curricula as school-based vocational education and may be initiated during the first, second or third school year. Pupils who are enrolled in apprenticeship training also qualify for basic eligibility to higher education. Since 1 July 2011 a training contract is to be in place for each pupil and workplace within the upper secondary school apprenticeship training programme. It is the school board that is responsible for seeing to it that the training contract is drawn up. Upper secondary apprenticeship training contributes, among other things, to increased flexibility in vocational education. Consultation between the school and the local labour market makes it possible to model upper secondary apprenticeship training based on local conditions.³

Apprenticeship training for pupils in upper secondary special needs school

In autumn 2011 the Parliament will have passed resolutions regarding a new model for the upper secondary special needs school. When this is done, the National Swedish Agency for Education will draw up new syllabuses. The new model for the upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities will begin to apply at the earliest during the autumn term 2013. Until then, the current curricula and assessment criteria apply to upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities. As the project comes at this turning point between old and new apprenticeship training, we will focus in this document on the proposals that have been put forth for the new educational programme.

According to the proposal, a new upper secondary apprenticeship training programme will be set up within upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities. It will be included as part of upper secondary apprenticeship training (see above). It will be possible to begin training during the first, second, third or fourth school year and training will be available in all programmes and will cover at least half the study period.

Furthermore, the proposal entails giving all pupils in the national programme of upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities the opportunity to take part in Workplace-Based Learning for at least 22 weeks.

Apprenticeship training for adults

Apprenticeship training for adults aims to give learners basic vocational training, better work experience and the chance to learn more about the profession under the guidance of an instructor at a workplace.

The municipality should plan for apprenticeship training in consultation with the Public Employment Service and businesses, organisations and other associations involved in the occupation the training is intended for. When necessary it should be possible to arrange the training on a part-time basis and in combination with other programmes within the public adult education school system. The municipality should also be able to show the need for the education, offer guidance and counselling and, in planning and implementing the training, make the most of the student's previously acquired knowledge and skills.

It is the responsibility of the school principal to see to it that a written agreement for each participating student is drawn up and signed by the municipality, student and representatives of the workplace(s) where a part of the education is to be located (training contract).⁴

³ The National Agency for Education, (in Swedish only)
http://www.skolverket.se/forskola_och_skola/gymnasieutbildning/2.2957

⁴ The National Agency for Education (in Swedish only)
http://www.skolverket.se/forskola_och_skola/vuxenutbildning/larlingsutbildning_for_vuxna



2.2.2 Different types of educational/VET settings

- a) Mainstream educational/VET settings, where learners with SEN are included in mainstream VET courses
 - b) Special VET units attended by learners with SEN within mainstream educational/VET settings
 - c) Special educational/VET settings addressed to learners with SEN
 - d) Others
- a) The majority of educational and vocational programmes in Sweden are intended for everyone, which means that option a) above is the most common option. According to the Education Act, learners with SEN should have access to the support they need.⁵
 - b) Some educational/vocational programmes are intended especially for pupils with learning disabilities and are most often found in mainstream schools (option b). An example of this is vocational programmes for pupils with learning disabilities who receive their education in a mainstream school.
 - c) Upper secondary education for some pupils with learning disabilities (*gymnasiesärskola*) may sometimes be organised in separate settings (option c).
 - d) 2.2.3 The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas etc.)

The Swedish educational system is based on goals. National goals are set up by the Government, and the municipalities, schools, staff members and pupils are to make the goals concrete in their own environment and make their own plans for how to reach the national goals. Quality indicators must therefore stem from educational plans on several levels of the educational system.

Apart from stating the goals of the operation, the National Curriculum also states who has the responsibility for the different tasks of school operation and the fulfilling of the national goals.

In a similar way, there is a system of evaluation which operates on several levels. The school board, staff and pupils do their own evaluations and assist the school board with results and other necessary information. Each school board evaluates their own school operation and uses the material for planning future management and reports to the municipalities. The municipalities are responsible for the implementation of Swedish education and report directly to the National Agency for Education. In turn, the latter reports to the Government. These documents are official and intended to be easily available.

The National Agency for Education has launched a website where results, quality reports and other important documents and plans from all municipalities concerning school operation are available to the public and may be easily compared. The website is available in Swedish only.⁶

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate⁷ has the role of monitoring and inspecting schools and assessing applications to run independent schools. In connection with these supervisory and quality-auditing activities, the Inspectorate provides advice and guidance as to what a school might need to rectify based on legislation requirements.

⁵ Education Act 2010:800, Chap 3 §§ 6-12

⁶ SIRIS: http://siris.skolverket.se/portal/page?_pageid=33,90009&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

⁷ <http://www.skolinspektionen.se/en/About-Skolinspektionen/About-the-Swedish-Schools-Inspectorate/>



Each type of compulsory school – basic school, basic school for pupils with learning disabilities, special school and Samí school – has its own curriculum, which, in combination with the regulations of the National Agency for Education, makes up the overall curriculum for the school. The overall curriculum consists of three parts:

1. The task and core values of the school
2. Comprehensive objectives and guidelines for educational programmes
3. Syllabuses supplemented with knowledge requirements

The first part of the overall curricula has virtually identical wording for all types of schools mentioned above. The second part states the comprehensive objectives and guidelines for the educational programmes, for instance, under the headline ‘The School and the Surrounding World’, where vocational and educational guidance is referred to, as is co-operation with the labour market and other parts of the local society.

The upper secondary school has a similar structure. The documents governing the upper secondary school are the Education Act, the Upper Secondary School Ordinance, the curriculum and the diploma objectives. The diploma objectives are intended to be the foundation for the planning of the education and teaching and the guideline for the education and the design and content of the work of the upper secondary school. All diploma objectives put emphasis on entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship can mean starting and running a business but it can also mean being creative, taking initiative, seeing possibilities and solving problems. It is the Government that sets the diploma objectives, based on proposals by the National Agency for Education.

The documents above are intended to act as a unified whole. They each fulfil a function of their own but they also express a cohesive view. The Education Act has precedence over the other documents.

The target of education in the upper secondary school is a diploma. Pupils in vocational programmes can enrol in either school-based education or apprenticeship training. Both paths lead to a diploma.

Requirements for a diploma: the pupil should have grades amounting to 2,500 credits from the educational programme, of which at least 2,250 should have a mark of Pass or higher. Courses in Swedish or Swedish as a second language should be included, along with English, mathematics and courses common to all programmes. A written diploma project should also be included.

Introductory programmes:

For those pupils who lack the eligibility to apply to a national upper secondary school programme, five introductory programmes are available that provide individually adapted education to meet their needs and offer clear educational alternatives. The introductory programmes are intended to help pupils establish themselves on the labour market and to be the best possible foundation for continued education. Each school is responsible for setting up an individual study plan for these pupils, while it is the responsibility of the pupil’s local municipality to offer the introductory programmes. In addition, a pupil in a compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities has the right to an introduction to work or an individual alternative, if the pupil wishes to take a particular programme and the municipality feels he or she has the prerequisites for it. After the completion of education within an introductory programme, it is the responsibility of the school principal to issue a school-leaving certificate that shows what education the pupil has received.



The goal of the work introductory programme is to give pupils a job-oriented education that will make it easier for them to establish themselves on the labour market or proceed into studies in a vocational programme. Pupils who do not have good enough grades for a vocational programme will qualify for work introduction programmes. The programme may include efforts to increase the pupil's knowledge base. The programme should include work-based learning or a period of work experience.

Upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities (gymnasiesärskolan)

The new upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities will include nine national programmes, whose quality will be assured by a central authority. The programmes will be adapted to the structure of the mainstream upper secondary school, making it easier for the two institutions to collaborate. In addition to a specialisation, all pupils in the national programmes will study Swedish, English, mathematics, physical education, art, music, drama, history, social studies, religion and science.

A new division of course subjects will give each pupil the opportunity to improve his or her skills on an individual level. Those who need more time will receive it, while those who can work faster will be allowed to do so. After completion of education, pupils will receive a school-leaving certificate from upper secondary education for pupils with SEN – confirmation that the pupil has completed the programme.

The new upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities will open its doors to its first pupils in autumn 2013.⁸

2.3 VET programmes and employment

2.3.1 Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes

For each of the vocational programmes there is a national programme council whose task it is to create a flexible educational system that is sensitive to the needs of users and school boards and to improve the correspondence between the content of the vocational programme and the demands of the labour market. The councils are composed of a broad range of business representatives and representatives of employer and employee organisations within the profession the programme is designed for. Included in the task of the national programme councils is seeking out the viewpoints of pupils.

For the vocational programmes there are also one or several local programme councils responsible for collaboration between the school and the labour market. They are also expected to contribute to an organised and close collaboration between school boards and users.

The organisers of the education work closely with local employers and businesses in finding places for the pupils' work experience period. Schools avail themselves of various methods and means for matching pupils with the local labour market and establishing contacts with employers. The schools we have been in contact with use variations of the 'Supported Employment' method.

The Swedish Public Employment Service, which becomes an important partner towards the end of the programme and after completion, has the overall task of matching the jobseeker with an employer. When this applies to young people with special needs or functional impairments, there are a number of measures the agency can use to reach the goal of obtaining work.

⁸ Ministry of Education and Research, Press release. (2011), *Ny gymnasiesärskola med högre kvalitet*. 18 October 2011.



2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged 14-25, enrolled in VET programmes for the academic year 2010/2011, and to their transition to employment)

2.4.1 Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.

As mentioned above, there is no legal definition of SEN in Sweden. Education follows the principle that the focus should be on what kind of support the pupil needs, with legislation regulating 'access to equal education'. This means that pupils in need of special support should not be treated or defined as a group that is any different from other pupils, for which reason there is no separate statement of their rights. Thus, there is no overall data available about learners with SEN, as there is no data available on the individual level. Also, the aim of Swedish data legislation is to prevent the violation of personal integrity during the process of personal data collection (Personal Data Act).

No groups are excluded from the Swedish educational system and Sweden has chosen not to categorise pupils according to SEN or disabilities. Swedish official statistics cover only the number of pupils in special schools or in schools with special programmes for pupils with learning disabilities (*särskola*). One reason for not using a more detailed categorisation is that such classification systems always seem to involve difficult reliability problems and the risk of arbitrary interpretations by those using the classification in practice.

2.4.2 Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.

See 2.1.1 (no data available).

2.4.3 Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level

See 2.1.1 (no data available).

2.4.4 Brief definition and explanation of "drop out". Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level.

There is no specific definition of 'dropout' in Sweden. Poor attendance mainly occurs during grades 7-9. No difference has been noted in terms of gender. Long-term absence often starts as a random absence. The reasons can include factors like social or psychosocial problems, lack of support from home or problems on the part of the school in dealing with disruptive pupils. Upper secondary school surveys of absence indicate that the number of switchers, dropouts, deferrers and those with high absence tend to have increased in recent years.⁹

Referring to the Swedish national level, it is the National Agency for Education that is responsible for statistic data collection regarding education. However, due to the above-mentioned legislation (see answer to Q6), the Agency has no data on the individual level regarding pupils with SEN.

⁹ Ministry of Education and Research (2009), *The Development of Education – National Report of Sweden*.



The data that *is* available only shows that there are some pupils in upper secondary education who from one school year to the other, for some undefined reason, cannot be found in the collected data.

2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level

See 2.1.1 (no data available).

2.5 Legislation and policy

2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation

As explained in the answer to 2.3.1, national goals are set by the Government, and the municipalities, schools, individual staff and pupils are to make the goals concrete in their own environment and make their own plans for their activities to reach the national goals. Quality indicators must therefore stem from educational plans on several levels of the educational system.

According to the Education Act (2010:800) pupils in all types of schools, with the exception of pre-primary school and preschool class, are to have access to a study and vocational guidance officer.¹⁰ The curriculum for the compulsory school and compulsory education for students with learning disabilities states that study and vocational guidance counsellors, or staff performing equivalent tasks, should inform and guide pupils prior to the next stage of their education and vocational orientation, and focus particularly on the opportunities for pupils with functional impairments.¹¹ The curriculum for the voluntary types of schools states that school principals in upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities are responsible for the support to pupils at their Workplace-Based Education (APU) and during the transition afterwards.

According to the Discrimination Act, employers are not allowed to discriminate against employees, job applicants or pupils with disabilities who are engaged in a period of work experience.¹²

In addition, the Public Employment Service is responsible for disability issues in the area of the labour market, which it is expected to handle in a cohesive, supportive and proactive way. The school, the Public Employment Service and the Social Insurance Office should work together to facilitate the transition from school to working life.¹³

After graduation, young people with disabilities can receive support from the Public Employment Service (see Q17 below) and/or be engaged in daily activities with a vocational focus, such as the 'Supported Employment' method. It is the task of the municipality to offer daily activities for people of working age who lack employment and are not enrolled in education.¹⁴

¹⁰ Education Act (2010:800), chapter 2, § 29

¹¹ Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the leisure-time centre 2011 Chap 2, 2.6

¹² Equality Ombudsman (www.do.se)

¹³ The Swedish Public Employment Service. (2007). Förordning (2007:1030) med instruktion för Arbetsförmedlingen, §5, §15

¹⁴ The National Board of Health and Welfare. (1993). *Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments* (1993:387), § 9 **LSS**



2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment

A new structure for Upper Secondary Education was introduced in July 2011. The differences in vocational or academic programmes are more distinct and there is a new model of individual solutions for pupils not eligible for upper secondary school. The aim of the new structure is to **better respond to the needs of young graduates** regardless of whether they continue to higher education or enter directly into the labour market. The Government wishes to see **closer links between education and working life** in the vocational programmes. The provision of different study paths in the upper secondary school is based on the principle that motivation for taking part in education is greatest when pupils' choices are satisfied, but that the **future needs of the labour market** should also be taken into account. To enable pupils in compulsory school to make informed choices about their educational path, both they and their parents should have access to **good counselling information**.¹⁵

According to the Government's strategy for disability policy¹⁶ young people with functional impairment generally experience significant problems in establishing themselves on the labour market. Special efforts are therefore being made to give young people with disabilities education or work. It is especially important to take further measures that can help young people with functional impairment get support and help in transitioning to a job or other occupation after graduation. For this reason, the Government has expanded the possibility for young people who are leaving upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities (gymnasiesärskola) to participate in apprenticeships or adult education. As of spring 2011, vocational adult education is available to all pupils from upper secondary SEN schools. These investments make it possible for the Government to provide apprenticeship positions to more pupils.

In addition, the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, in collaboration with the Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Coordination (*Handisam*), has been tasked with analysing which programmes at the higher vocational level can be adapted to facilitate admission of more people with functional impairments.

2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework

There is a division of responsibility between the Parliament, the Government and the municipalities or independent school owners. The Parliament adopts education legislation and decides on major school reforms and general curricula. A new Swedish Education Act (2010:800) came into effect on 1 July 2011.

The Government has the overall responsibility for education and sets the framework, including national goals, regulations and national improvement initiatives for education. The municipalities are responsible for providing and operating pre-primary, compulsory, upper secondary and adult education in accordance with the national framework.

The Swedish Education Act constitutes the basis for all education from pre-primary to upper-secondary level as well as the right to education for adults. Based on the Education Act, the Parliament, Government and/or National Agency for Education provides a more detailed framework regarding curricula, ordinances, recommendations and national development initiatives. Other areas governing the educational system include national tests, evaluations and inspections.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education and Research. (2009). *From Preschool Pedagogy to Nanotechnology – Education and Research in Sweden*.

¹⁶ The Swedish Government/Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (2011) En strategi för genomförande av funktionshinderpolitiken 2011-2016



The Government's responsibility for national evaluations is carried out by the national agencies in their respective field of responsibility. Agencies in the field of education support the process of raising standards and achieving the goals of all parts of the educational system. The organisation is comprised of three authorities:

- The National Agency for Education
- The Swedish Schools Inspectorate
- The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools

The municipalities have the major financial responsibility for education. The municipalities have the responsibility of organising educational programmes in accordance with existing legislation.

2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market

The Government's responsibility is carried out by agencies in the field of education, see the answer in 2.5.3.

The task of the National Agency for Education (NAE) is to actively work for the achievement of set goals. The agency directs, supports, follows up and evaluates the work of municipalities and schools (including VET programmes) with the purpose of improving quality and the result of activities to ensure that all pupils have access to equal education. The NAE establishes frameworks and guidelines for how the education is to be conducted and assessed using goal documents, syllabuses, tests, grading criteria and general guidelines. The agency is also responsible for the national testing system. Together with universities and other institutes of higher education the agency develops national tests and diagnostic material to ensure equality in the assessment of pupils. The NAE is also responsible for distributing and evaluating government grants for the achievement of goal fulfilment and for guaranteeing quality in activities. It is responsible for the national training of head teachers and for the professional development of teachers. The NAE is also responsible for collecting, analysing and publishing relevant statistics in the field. It follows up the conditions of the various activities, how they are conducted and how the results develop, through the continual collection of data from the municipalities. This allows comparison of different organisers and activities.

The Swedish School Inspectorate has the task of checking whether the municipalities and schools fulfil their responsibilities in relation to the regulations set out in the Education Act. The Inspectorate also evaluates how well educational activities and schools are functioning in relation to the national objectives and the national curriculum. Above all the Inspectorate checks to see if municipalities and schools have systems for self-evaluation and strategies for self-improvement efforts. The Inspectorate areas are chosen with respect to local responsibilities and the autonomies of the schools.

The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, SPSM, has the task of coordinating the Government's support for special needs education. The aim is to ensure that children, young people and adults with functional impairments will be able to develop and receive an education based on equality, participation, accessibility and companionship. SPSM offers support to school managements in matters relating to special needs education, access to teaching materials, the operation of special needs schools and the allocation of government funding to pupils with functional impairments and education providers.



2.6 VET teachers, trainers and other professionals

2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers etc.)

- A) required qualifications
- B) initial training
- C) in-service training possibilities

Required qualifications and initial training (A, B)

Teachers of theoretical subjects have their teacher training from university or another institute of higher education.

Vocational teachers (upper secondary school teachers of vocational subjects) also have relevant higher education training and work experience.

Study and career counsellors have higher education training from the Study and Careers Counselling programme within the higher education system.

Placement officers at the Swedish Public Employment Service have higher education training of at least three years, or have long experience of the profession, as well as good knowledge of the labour market and society through at least two years' work experience.¹⁷

In-service training possibilities (C)

In-service training possibilities vary from school to school and municipality to municipality. It is up to the individual school board, school or municipality to decide. Further education can be obtained through university studies, private education or SPSM.

2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes

As mentioned in the answer to Q2, the new Education Act includes a provision whereby pupils (including pupils in need of special support) in all types of schools, with the exception of pre-primary school and preschool class, are to have access to staff with the skills required to meet their need for guidance when choosing a future educational or vocational career. Even those who intend to enrol in an educational programme should have access to guidance.

All pupils should be given the necessary information and conditions for making a well-founded choice of study and career. They should be able to analyse different choices and take a stand on questions surrounding their future.

Study and career counsellors have a good deal of contact with pupils as well as with teachers and parents. Their task is to provide information about programmes, professions and the labour market. They meet groups of pupils or parents and have individual talks. Personal guidance is an important task. It can also be the task of the study and career counsellors to find various kinds of work experience placements.¹⁸

2.7 Funding

- a) Financial support and/or incentives for learners with SEN and families
- b) Financial support and/or incentives for companies to employ young people with SEN

a) *Financial support and/or incentives for learners with SEN and families:*

¹⁷ The Swedish Public Employment Service, <http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/>

¹⁸ The National Agency for Education, <http://www.skolverket.se/>, and The Swedish Public Employment Service, <http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/>



All education throughout the public school system is free. The Swedish system of school financing is designed to promote high participation in education. The forms of support that reach the greatest number of people are financial aid for young pupils in upper secondary school (grants only) and post-secondary students (student grants and student loans). Within the post-secondary student aid system it is possible to receive supplementary loans for extra expenses.

Municipalities are responsible for the provision of education and the education system is financed with locally collected tax revenues. Each school is provided with an amount of money based on the number of pupils at that school and is responsible for allocating these means in such a way that all individual needs are met. Normally, students or their parents are not charged for teaching materials, school meals, health services and transport. There are no separate state funds for special education.

For pupils in need of special support, technical aids are available from the regional counties, and adaptations of teaching materials are provided by the state. Schools and teachers can turn to local resource centres which in turn can consult the Swedish Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools.

Upper secondary education is also free of charge. Financial assistance from the Government is available for adults attending most post-compulsory school education, in the form of personal subsidies and loans.

b) Financial support and/or incentives for companies to employ young people with SEN:

The Public Employment Service has a large number of measures at its disposal to help people who might be experiencing difficulties in establishing themselves on the labour market. These measures apply for instance to people with reduced work capacity, such as that which may result from functional impairment.

The principle, as with all placements, is to find the right person for the job; someone with the right skills, background and personality for that particular job. When someone with a functional impairment is given a job, the employment/placement officer and experts can help the employer with tailored support that helps compensate for the practical consequences of the functional impairment. Supportive measures can be divided into three groups: practical aids, support from another person and financial reductions.

Practical aids can include adapting the work environment to the employee or providing tools such as a technical aid of some kind. This support can be given to both the employer and the employee.

Support from another person can be provided if the person with disability needs to practise his or her work assignments or needs help in carrying them out. The employee then receives individual support from a specially trained employment officer (an SIUS consultant), or the employer can receive compensation for the time another employee devotes to helping the new employee.

Financial reductions mean that the employer receives a subsidy for part of the employee's wages, or compensation for the extra expenses that can come from employing someone with special needs. This financial support can be offered over a shorter or longer period and is intended to compensate for the employee's reduced work capacity. The size of the support depends on two factors, wage cost and the employee's work capacity.¹⁹

¹⁹ The Swedish Public Employment Service, <http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/>



2.8 References

Ministry of Education and Research. (2009). *The Development of Education – National report of Sweden.*

Ministry of Education and Research. (2009). *From Preschool Pedagogy to Nanotechnology – Education and Research in Sweden.*

Ministry of Education and Research. (2010). *Education Act 2010:800*

The National Agency for Education. (2012) *Overview of the Swedish upper secondary school.*

The National Board of Health and Welfare. (1993). *Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (1993:387), LSS*

The Swedish Government. (2011). *Official Reports of the Swedish Government, SOU 2011:8*

The Swedish Government /Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. (2011) *En strategi för genomförande av funktionshinderpolitiken 2011-2016*

The Swedish Public Employment Service. (2007). *Förordning (2007:1030) med instruktion för Arbetsförmedlingen.*

2.9 Links

Equality Ombudsman (www.do.se)

The National Agency for Education. *SIRIS:*

http://sir.is.skolverket.se/portal/page?_pageid=33,90009&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

The National Agency for Education.

http://www.skolverket.se/forskola_och_skola/vuxenutbildning/larlingsutbildning_for_vuxna

The Swedish Public Employment Service. <http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/>

The Swedish School Inspectorate. <http://www.skolinspektionen.se/en/About-Skolinspektionen/About-the-Swedish-Schools-Inspectorate/>