


# Increasing flexibility in higher vocational education programmes

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SWEDEN

## Timeline

2020 Pilot 2021 Pilot 2022 Approved/Agreed

ID number 43215

## Background

Higher vocational education (HVE) programmes (EQF level 5 and 6) last one-to-three years and are provided in response to labour market needs. They are adaptable and change over time as labour market changes. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH) evaluates and funds these programmes based on an assessment of needs and quality criteria, including the skills required by employers and industries, as well as the allocation of study places to meet demand. Additionally, external stakeholders such as employers, sector organisations, and central and regional authorities provide valuable input to inform the assessment and decision-making processes.

Over time it has been apparent that in addition to these HVE programmes there is a need for more flexibility.

## Objectives

This policy development aims to ease and speed up gaining higher vocational education (HVE) qualifications at EQF levels 5 and 6 for individuals with considerable professional experience in a given vocational field. Thereby these professionals should be empowered to move on to new and more advanced positions or change career paths through more flexible HVE.

## Description

In 2020, the HVE-flex pilot programme was launched, aiming to ease and speed up gaining higher vocational education (HVE) qualifications at EQF levels 5 and 6. It targets professionals, who already have skills in a working field but, due to new demands in current profession and position, need upskilling and reskilling. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH) is in charge of the HVE-flex programme, which consists of:

- (a) exploring and developing models for validating and recognising non-formal and informal learning. The state subsidy for the validation consists of a fixed amount per student place which varies between SEK 10 2000-10 800 (EUR 887-939), depending on whether providers are entitled for VAT compensation;
- (b) delivering faster and more flexible training pathways (HVE courses) for completion of

HVE programmes and obtaining an HVE qualification that consider the validation of prior learning and so shorten the programme durations. These courses last up to six months and as they do not lead to full qualification on their own, they are not levelled to the Swedish qualifications framework (SeQF). Most courses are offered in digitalisation and automation, green technology and energy efficiency.

### 2020 Pilot

In 2020, the HVE-flex pilot project started and the Swedish government agreed to distribute SEK 29 million (around EUR 2.85 million) annually for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 to the education providers through MYH. A handbook with information on the implementation of HVE-flex courses was published.

The HVE courses have been in high demand since they were introduced, especially during the pandemic as many people were temporarily laid off. An overwhelming majority of learners who enrolled in these courses, believing they will benefit from the training in their working life.

### 2021 Pilot

In 2021, the HVE-flex pilot project continued.

### 2022 Approved/Agreed

In 2022, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education decided that HVE-flex will become permanent. Since then the Agency is working to digitise and implement the HVE-flex programme.

## Bodies responsible

- National Agency for Higher VET

## Target group

### Learners

Adult learners  
Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)

## Thematic categories

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Acquiring key competences  
Integrating green transition and sustainability in VET curricula and programmes  
Integrating digital skills and competences in VET curricula and programmes

### Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

# Subsystem

CVET

## Further reading

[Mission from the government to the National Agency for Higher VET](#)

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[HVE-flex: Fast track to higher VET qualification](#)

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[HVE-flex website overview of the programs](#)

## Related policy developments

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**2025 Implementation**

### Expansion of higher VET

The Swedish Government has increased the funding to the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, to ensure that employers have access to qualified professional skills to create growth.

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#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

CVET

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**2022 Discontinued**

### Knowledge boost initiative: action plan for adult education

The Action plan for adult education (*Kunskapslyftet*, the knowledge boost) was introduced in 2015. It is aimed at supporting the Swedish government's goal of lowering unemployment rates. Relevant legislation/regulation and funding arrangements have been changed/adopted.

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#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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