


Supporting apprenticeship

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SWEDEN

Timeline

2015 Implementation	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation	

ID number 28522

Background

Following the 2011 reform of upper secondary education, which also aimed to align programmes to the needs of the economy, IVET programmes were reformed and apprenticeships were introduced. Upper secondary VET in school-based programmes includes a compulsory work-based learning component (at least 15% of the programme) or it may be offered as an apprenticeship (at least 50% of learning takes place at a workplace – *lärlingsutbildning*). Financial incentives for VET providers (State grants) were in place to support engagement in VET; financial incentives for apprentices were introduced in 2014. In the same year, an apprenticeship centre was created, with the task to support the development of the apprenticeship at a local level. Forecasts of skill needs up to 2030 identified the need to strengthen the work-based learning component of VET programmes at all levels and to strengthen links between education and businesses.

Objectives

To strengthen the work-based learning component of VET programmes at all levels and to strengthen links between education and businesses.

Description

Swedish National Agency for Education has been playing a key role in the development of apprenticeship. It cooperates with a wide range of stakeholders (VET providers, municipalities, social partners and enterprises); it provides advice to VET institutions and employers, trains supervisors at workplaces, and stimulates cooperation at regional level between schools and businesses. Since 2015, it has organised workshops and provided guidance and support to companies and social partners. National and regional coordinators have been set up to assist schools in cooperating with local enterprises. In 2018/19 there were 12 400 apprentices representing 12% of all learners in national VET programmes. This is an increase of 207% of enrolled apprentices since 2013/14.

2015 Implementation

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In the academic year 2019/20, the number of apprentices further increased to 13 560 which corresponds to 13.4% of all upper secondary VET students.

2020 Implementation

During autumn 2020, the number of apprentices in upper secondary education for young people further increased to 15 302. This is an increase of 255% in enrolled apprentices since 2013/14. This represents approximately 5% of all upper secondary learners.

The National Agency for Education received, in 2020, a government mission to analyse how the financial incentives have developed and been used, and their effects on permeability and placements in the workplace for apprentices in comparison to students in school-based VET. The National Agency for Education may also propose how the apprenticeship pathway can be developed further.

2021 Implementation

The National Agency for Education finished its mission report in 2021. One result was that the number of apprentices in upper secondary education for young people decreased to 15 216. The report also suggests measures aimed at further strengthening apprenticeship.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, the number of apprentices has increased to 16 257. The National Agency for Education supports schools continuously to increase further the number of apprentices.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, the number of apprentices has increased to 16 548 pupils. The National Agency for Education supports schools continuously to increase further the number of apprentices.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, the National Agency for Education supports schools continuously to increase further the number of apprentices.

2025 Implementation

In 2025, the National Agency for Education supports schools continuously to increase further the number of apprentices.

Bodies responsible

- National Agency for Education

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Cedefop ReferNet Sweden \(2014\). Apprenticeship centre established in 2014](#)

[Cedefop ReferNet Sweden \(2015\). Working life gains in influence on vocational education and training \(VET\)](#)

[Cedefop ReferNet Sweden \(2015\). More apprentices in upper secondary school](#)

[Follow-up of upper secondary school 2020](#)

[Missions of the National Agency for Education in the budgetary year 2020](#)

[Follow-up of upper secondary school 2020](#)

[Missions of the National Agency for Education in the budgetary year 2022](#)

[Follow-up of upper secondary school 2023 \(Uppföljning av gymnasieskolan 2023\)](#)

[Missions of the National Agency for Education in the budgetary year 2023](#)

[Missions of the National Agency for Education in the budgetary year 2024](#)

Related policy developments

2018 Approved/Agreed

Financial incentives for VET learners

The State grants measure (used as an incentive for education providers to offer VET as an apprenticeship path) was expanded in 2018 to also offer learners in bridging programmes (programmes for learners not eligible for national upper secondary programmes) financial support to cover their extra I

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

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Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025
update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28522>