


# Integration of newly arrived immigrants in VET and labour market

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SWEDEN

## Timeline



ID number 48660

## Background

During the early 2000s, approximately 30 000 refugees arrived each year in Sweden. With the upheavals in Syria and other parts of the world leading to the refugee crisis in 2015, the number of refugees in Sweden soared to more than 160 000 that year. The high number of newly arrived migrants in a short time could not be absorbed in the Swedish labour market without new targeted policy developments addressing faster integration measures.

## Objectives

Up-skilling of newly arrived immigrants so that they can be integrated in VET and labour market.

## Description

In 2015, the government started consultations with social partners, the Public Employment Service (PES) and other government agencies to create fast tracks for newly arrived migrants and to reduce the time from arrival to entry in occupations that face skills shortages. An agreement involving employer and employee organisations assigned the PES responsibility for creating fast track paths for labour market integration. Employment services at local and regional level managed the programme for newly arrived migrants, including:

- (a) training in vocationally-oriented Swedish;
- (b) speedy validation of skills and competences;
- (c) assessment/recognition of foreign qualifications;
- (d) supplementary training with a focus on occupations that face skills shortages.

Training included key competences depending on individual needs. The modules on teaching the Swedish language to newly arrived migrants were developed within the framework of the online training programme for workplace trainers, implemented by the committee for work-based learning in the professional introductory period of employment

(*Delegationen för arbetsplatslärande vid yrkesintroduktionsanställningar*). Amendments to the Education Act were also adopted in 2015 to make tuition of Swedish for migrants an integrated part of municipal adult education. The aim is to integrate Swedish language learning with other training, such as initial VET modules in adult education. Since 2016, municipalities may also apply for grants for this type of combined programme. The PES also provided enterprises/organisations with support. By May 2016, 22 professions/occupations/sectors were involved. Regulations adopted in spring 2016 allowed for financial support to enterprises/organisations employing newly arrived migrants. By December 2018, a total of 8 022 individuals had participated in the programme.

### **2015 Approved/Agreed**

### **2016 Implementation**

### **2017 Implementation**

### **2018 Implementation**

### **2019 Implementation**

### **2020 Implementation**

In 2020, the Fast tracks programmes were replaced by the Contract education, which is a type of labour market training procured by the Swedish PES from a college or university. Contract education consists of courses for up to six months and change over time in line with the labour market changes. The training is given as a complement to previous academic education. It is provided throughout the country via digital platforms in collaboration with colleges and universities.

Moreover, the Government has commissioned the county administrative boards to allocate funds to projects aiming at training and education for newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers with experience of working in health care or foreign healthcare education.

### **2021 Legislative process**

In spring 2021, the Government has commissioned the county administrative boards to allocate funds to projects aiming at training and education for newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers with experience of working in health care or foreign healthcare education. In 2021, the county administrative boards may use EUR 390 480 for the implementation of this assignment. This is a response to the increased need for health care personnel in response to the outbreak of Covid-19.

Besides, in 2021 the government proposed in a bill, to introduce an obligation for the municipalities to provide a coherent education within municipal adult education (establishment programme) for those newly arrived immigrants who, due to short education, are deemed unable to be matched with work during the programme.

### **2022 Completed**

In 2022, the Parliament (Riksdag) agreed to the government's proposal for changes to the Education Act. Since August 2022, municipalities are therefore obliged to offer newly arrived immigrants with limited educational backgrounds a coherent educational programme in Municipal Adult Education, the so called 'establishment programme'. This programme aims to give participants the knowledge needed to be able to further studies or to establish themselves on the labour market. The education must include an average of at least 23 teaching hours per week and follow a plan that is established by the municipality in which the immigrant resides.

New arrivals with a short education that is not judged to be matched with work during the time in the establishment programme, must mainly take part in municipal adult education in Swedish for immigrants (sfi) or equivalent education at folk high school, social orientation and education in municipal adult education (komvux) at basic or upper secondary level.

Besides, in 2022 the target group of Contract education was extended to align with the decrease of newly arrived immigrants and the ongoing changes on the labour market. Following this, changes were made in the ordinance (2000:634) on labour market training, thus including job seekers already established on the Swedish labour market. Further, the decrease of newly arrived immigrants and changes within the labour market have led to changes regarding the training offer concerning the contents due to the increased number of potential participants. Contract education has developed due to the changes related to the restructuring and increased automation on the labour market, such as contract education for controllers, energy engineers and programmers/full stack developers. The latter also aims to contribute to the competence needs in the north of Sweden where the intention is that participants move to the north of Sweden where there is a great shortage of staff.

Since then, contract education is a regular part of the labour market training offer and the establishment programme runs on a regular basis.

## Bodies responsible

- Public employment service (PES)
- Ministry of Education and Research

## Target group

### Learners

Learners with migrant background, including refugees  
Unemployed and jobseekers

## Thematic categories

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

### European and international dimensions of VET

International qualifications

## European priorities in VET

### VET Recommendation

VET promoting equality of opportunities

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

## Related policy developments

---

2015 **Approved/Agreed**

### Fast track labour market integration for newly arrived migrants

In 2015, the government started consultations with social partners, the Public Employment Service (PES) and other government agencies to create fast tracks for newly arrived migrants and to reduce the time from arrival to entry in occupations that face skills shortages.

 SWEDEN

#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

CVET

---

2022 **Approved/Agreed**

### National strategy for validation

In 2015, a National Delegation for Validation was appointed by the Swedish Government to follow up, support and promote coordinated development work in the area of validation at the regional and national level and to propose a national strategy for validation.

 SWEDEN

#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

---

#### “ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Integration of newly arrived immigrants in VET and labour market: Sweden. In 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/48660>

