

Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Sweden

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Introduction

The educational and vocational guidance system in Sweden is highly linked to the national educational and employment systems, as the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Employment and the related national agencies are the main actors involved. This link is highlighted not only by the existing practices, but also by the institutional and legislative framework in terms of implementation, quality assurance, funding, monitoring, and assessment. Since 2022 a new actor in the guidance field are the 'job security and transition councils' (*Trygghet i anställningen och omställningsråd*) in the labour market.

The Swedish guidance system is grounded on coordination and collaboration among various bodies and organisations, something that also reflects Swedish legislation on access to guidance according to the different types of entitlements (see section on [Access to guidance](#)). Guidance is provided by schools, PES providers, universities and the transition councils, while practitioners either receive basic academic education, or in-service training. Additionally, professional associations, such as the Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors and the Swedish Teachers' Union support practitioners' professionalisation and training. Recent discussions on career guidance have been focused on skills supply – referring to the digital and green transitions as well as guiding more individuals towards STEM education.

Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

On national level, a [government-initiated collaboration](#) program (*Regereingens samverkansprogram*) involving national agencies was active in 2019-2022. This initiative included joint efforts to enhance career guidance as part of skills development and lifelong learning. One key outcome was the creation of a [common digital entry point](#) (*Information och verktyg från myndigheten*) to access career guidance tools and services from different national providers.

In 2022, the cooperation between national stakeholders in the field continued under the [Governmental cooperation for skills supply and lifelong learning](#) (*Myndighetssamverkan för kompetensförsörjning och livslångt lärande, MSV KLL*). Several national agencies were tasked by the government to collaborate on ensuring a well-functioning skills supply system. A working group on career guidance was established, consisting of representatives from both national agencies and social partners. The group identified a need to elevate lifelong guidance to a strategic policy level and, in 2024, submitted a [report](#) on Lifelong career guidance to meet future skills needs (*Livslång vägledning för framtidens kompetensbehov*) to the Government Offices. The report emphasised lifelong guidance as a key factor in societal development and presented recommendations at three levels:

- Strengthening lifelong guidance in Sweden at the policy level;
- Expanding access to lifelong guidance across all sectors;
- Improving the quality of career guidance services.

A forum for cooperation between national stakeholders in the area of guidance (*Myndighetsnätverket för vägledningsfrågor*) was established already in 2012 by main actors in the field (Public Employment Service, National Agency for Education and Euroguidance Sweden). It was established as an arena for exchange between Swedish stakeholders in lifelong guidance. Forum members are representatives from national agencies working within education and employment as well as representatives from the national career guidance education, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, SALAR (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, SKR*) and The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (*Folkbildningsrådet*). The National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) acts as chair of the network. The network deals with common issues, such as:

1. collecting knowledge and understanding of what is done in the guidance field;
2. creating a common description of the Swedish guidance system;
3. discussing and finding concrete solutions for improving the interaction between different education levels and between education and the labour market;
4. finding forms for quality assurance and evaluation within the guidance field;
5. finding areas for cooperation.

The forum has developed working definitions for guidance in Sweden in 2025:

- **Study- and vocational guidance** or **study- and career guidance** are equivalent to the Swedish term "*studie- och yrkesvägledning*". It includes both educational and occupational guidance, supporting individuals in making informed decisions about their learning and career paths across different stages of life. It is mostly used within the Swedish school system and regulated in the school curricula.
- **Educational guidance** (*studievägledning*) is more specific form of guidance that centre's on choices within the education system, such as selecting programs, courses, or institutions. It focuses on study-related decisions and is mostly used within higher education.
- **Career guidance** (*karriärvägledning*) is sometimes used as an equivalent to the term "study- and vocational guidance", but often also for guidance that centre's on choices within future work and employment within higher education. This term is also used outside the education system, within the employment services and/or by organisations dealing with transitions in working life.
- **Lifelong guidance** (*livslång vägledning*) emphasises the availability and continuity of guidance services throughout an individual's life—from early education through to retirement. It highlights the importance of supporting people at all life stages and in different life roles.
- **Guidance counsellor, Career counsellor or Career guidance counsellor** (*vägledare, studie- och yrkesvägledare, karriärvägledare*) are used for those working in the field in all sectors.
- **Study counsellor** (*studievägledare*) is mostly used for those working with guidance within higher education

At regional level, the regions are appointed to strengthening cooperation between national agencies, private and public employers and the different education providers at different levels of education, to strengthen and secure the supply of skills in the region, through regional competence platforms (*Regionala kompetensplattformar*). The regions also provide an infrastructure for validation of skills and often lead projects to support employers in developing their internal human resource strategies. This has been a voluntary assignment for the regions between 2010 and 2022 but since 2022 it is a formal assignment by national law.

Between 2012 and 2018, SALAR led an ESF-funded project called "Plug In." This was Sweden's largest collaborative initiative to prevent early school

leaving, involving eight regions and 70 municipalities and comprising targeted interventions that include guidance and counselling, including coaching and motivational interviewing. Results included improvements in student optimism and self-image, strengthening skills and capacity for lifelong learning. A report on the project is available here: [Plug In Report](#) (also see sections on [Guidance for early leavers](#) and [Guidance for NEET](#))

In 2019, this work continued with the “Mission Completed Education” project, a professional development initiative aimed at improving conditions for local authorities and school leaders in Sweden. The goal was to support research-based, systematic efforts to prevent early school leaving and encourage the return of students who had left upper secondary education without completing their studies. In 2021, SALAR and the Swedish Government entered into a formal agreement to gather and disseminate knowledge, develop tools, and support municipalities in their efforts to reduce early school leaving. More details can be found here: [School to Work Platform](#).

On international level, [Euroguidance Sweden](#) supports cooperation and collaboration in the guidance field by providing international exchange opportunities for Swedish guidance practitioners. This gives them the possibility to cooperate with colleagues in other countries and puts them in a better position to support nationwide efforts in learning mobility. Euroguidance Sweden is hosted by the [Swedish Council for Higher Education](#), UHR. In association with the Swedish EU presidency in 2023, a European Lifelong guidance conference, *New Scenes for Career Guidance*, was arranged jointly by the Swedish Council for Higher Education, The Swedish National Agency for Education, and the Swedish National Public Employment Service. Cedefop and the Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors were partners. 158 participants from 33 countries pointed out the lack of sufficient governance structures/national strategy for guidance as the biggest challenge in the field. All results from the conference were compile in a [report](#).

Furthermore, the cooperation between the centre in Sweden and Euroguidance centres in Europe support the development of the European dimension of lifelong guidance and facilitate exchange with other international, guidance related actors such as IAEVG, CareersNet, and many others. All with an aim to strengthen lifelong guidance in Europe and provide competence development for guidance practitioner in all 38 network countries.

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Access to guidance

Sweden has a long tradition in providing public guidance services, which are grounded on the principles of universal entitlement and access and that services should be free of charge. Guidance provision offered by the private sector is rather limited, with the exception of some job agencies and companies specialised in career guidance and coaching. The mission to offer guidance services for schools, higher education institutions and the public employment service is regulated by law.

Guidance in compulsory school, secondary school and adult education

The Swedish Education Act (2010, 800) states that students in compulsory school, secondary school and adult education have the right to receive career guidance based on their needs, from trained guidance counsellors. Chapter 2, para. 29, states: “*Pupils in all school types except in preschool and preschool class are to have access to staff with such expertise that their need for guidance before making choices of future educational and professional activities can be satisfied*”. In para. 30 it states that “*To be employed without a time limitation for study and career guidance, the applicant must have an education intended for such work*”. (translated by Euroguidance Sweden). Study- and career guidance is also regulated in the curricula for compulsory school, upper secondary school, and adult education, and should be an integrated part of teaching and the entire schooling ([Skolverket](#), 2022).

The Swedish National Agency for Education ([Skolverket](#)), is the administrative authority for the Swedish public-school system that functions independently but must operate according to the guidelines that the Ministry of Education and Research issues. Due to Sweden’s decentralised system, the local municipalities are responsible for providing guidance services throughout the educational system, in accordance with the national goals that have been set ([Euroguidance Sweden](#), 2025). Alongside the public school system in Sweden, there are independent schools. These schools are characterised by having a different principal organiser (owner) than the municipality. To operate an independent school, the owner must have an approval from the Swedish School Inspectorate. All independent schools are nationally recruiting and are financed through municipal grants from the students’ home municipalities ([Skolverket](#), 2024). Study and career guidance is part also of these school's mission and is regulated by the same laws and curricula as in municipal schools.

To ensure consistent implementation of relevant school legislation and to effectively support each municipality in designing its own guidance and counselling services, Skolverket has established general guidelines on career education and guidance (*Skolverkets allmänna råd Arbete med studie- och yrkesvägledning*, 2013) (see also section on [Evidence, monitoring and assessment](#)). The general guidelines will be revised during 2026 due to changed regulations.

According to statistics, each guidance practitioner in the school system has a great number of pupils to support. In school years 7 to 9 in compulsory school there were 478 pupils for each guidance practitioner in 2024/25. In upper secondary school the corresponding figure was 502 pupils 2024/25 ([Skolverket](#), n.d.).

Guidance in non-formal adult education

Folk high schools are obliged to offer guidance services for their students as stipulated in the conditions to receive their [State grants](#). The Swedish National Council of Adult Education ([Folkbildningsrådet](#)) is a non-profit association responsible for both the governmental funds’ allocation to folk high schools and their evaluation. The Information Service of the Swedish Folk High Schools ([Folkhögskolornas serviceorganisation](#), FSO) provides general information about these schools and contributes to the development of a common framework for their guidance and counselling services (FSO, 2025).

Academic guidance services at universities and university colleges

The Higher Education Ordinance (SFS, 1993, 100) stipulates that university students should have access to educational guidance and career orientation. Universities are also responsible for facilitating students' transition into working life.

Higher education institutions (HEI) have independent decision-making authority within the framework of the regulations and parameters laid down by the Government. The HEI themselves decide how to plan their operations, utilise their resources and organise their activities in guidance and counselling. The national agency relevant in this area is the Swedish Council for Higher Education (*Universitets- och högskolerådet*, UHR), tasked with stimulating interest in higher education and promoting widening participation and internationalisation. The agency is also contracted to manage admissions to higher education in Sweden. As a result, guidance counsellors are an important target group for the agency.

Career guidance at the Swedish public employment service (PES)

Guidance, included in the core mission of PES (*arbetsförmedlingen*), is regulated in several ordinances:

1. regulation on the labour market policy actions (*Förordning, 2000: 628 om den arbetsmarknadspolitiska verksamheten [Ordinance (2000:628) on labour market policy activities]*, para. 8), which states that guidance is one of the ways in which the services should be offered;
2. regulation on labour market policy programmes (*Förordning, 2000: 634, om arbetsmarknadspolitiska program [Ordinance (2000:634) on labour market policy programmes]*), where guidance is seen as part of preparatory interventions, which refer to individually adapted labour market policy interventions for those who need to prepare specifically for another labour market policy program, education or work;
3. regulation on the job guarantee for young people (*Förordning, 2007, 813 om jobbgarantin för ungdomar [Ordinance (2007:813) on job guarantee for young people]*), which stipulates that young people should be offered guidance and counselling.

The Swedish PES has developed a national strategy for career guidance (*Arbetsförmedlingens nationella strategi för karriärvägledning – vägar till karriärkompetens*, Af-2018/0017 8563), which is an internal guiding document for all employment offices throughout Sweden. However, the career guidance services offered by PES are primarily provided by private actors, who are contracted and monitored by PES.

Career guidance for the employed

The so-called “Transition package for improved flexibility, adaptability, and security in the labour market” that was launched in 2022 is based on an agreement between trade unions and employers in the private sector and involves a reformed labour law allowing for more flexibility for employers and security for workers. It provides all employees with better opportunities for career transitions and skills development throughout their working lives, while also intended to strengthen Sweden's competitiveness. Now individuals established in the labour market have access to basic support for career transitions, including career guidance. The package also includes a study allowance for retraining and further education. These services are provided by the ‘job security and transition councils’. Based on their employer, individuals can find out which one they belong to with the help of a [search tool](#).

On-line services

There are several publicly funded websites (see section [Career information, ICT in guidance](#)) that offer information about education and working life in Sweden. These online services mainly provide information and advice, rather than e-guidance; but many online career guidance tools are available.

Career fairs

Career fairs are frequently organised by local employers and upper secondary schools, usually aimed at pupils in year nine. Two well-known national career fairs are the [SACO](#) and [Nolia](#) fairs, organised on an annual basis. The aim of these fairs is to provide students with information related to their opportunities when taking the next step in education or working life (Euroguidance Sweden, 2025).

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Quality assurance

Quality assurance in guidance services is included in the respective overall systems in the education and employment sectors in Sweden.

Schools and adult education

To meet the demand for guidance for students in all school forms, as stated in the Education Act (*Skollag 2010: 800*), the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) issues general guidelines for educational and vocational guidance in schools. The guidelines provide recommendations related to the implementation of educational and vocational guidance in schools, in order to ensure the uniform application of the national legislation. They intend to assure high-quality study and career guidance, and to provide inspiration to those who work with guidance. These guidelines need to be applied in practice, unless the school organiser and the municipality provide evidence that the stipulated demands can be met in another way. The guidelines are accompanied by comments based on verified practice as well as contemporary research in career guidance and assessment, in order to provide clarifications for the advice provided. They also aim to form a basis for planning, organising, implementing and assessing career education in compulsory school, upper secondary school, upper secondary vocational education and adult education (*Skolverkets allmänna råd Arbete med studie- och yrkesvägledning [The Swedish National Agency for Education's general advice on working with study and career guidance]*, 2013). Revised guidelines will be published in 2026.

In addition to providing a definition of what study and career guidance is, the guidelines are divided into five main sections focusing on: steering and

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leading guidance work (school owners and school heads); assuring the quality of guidance personnel and the competence needed; teaching and cooperation among schools, in education and working life (school heads, teachers, guidance professionals); impartial and balanced information for students needed for choosing among school programmes and occupations (local municipal authorities, school heads, guidance professionals); and, planning and carrying out the guidance dialogue (school heads and guidance professionals). A key component of the dialogue is that the student's context, background and needs are at the centre and that the student's own individual development plan is used throughout general and vocational upper secondary school and in adult education, as relevant.

The development of support material has been part of the National Agency for Education's work to strengthen study and vocational guidance in the schools. The publications *Studie- och yrkesvägledning i Undervisningen* [Study- and career guidance in the teaching process] is one example. It is primarily aimed at teachers in upper secondary school, but also principals, guidance counsellors and other staff in the school. The purpose is to show the benefits of integrating career guidance in teaching and see it as a responsibility of the whole school.

The National Agency for Education has also developed tools for self-assessment of career guidance in the schools, which they offer through their [website](#).

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*), conducts regular supervision of all municipal and independent schools, from compulsory school to adult education, also in the area of guidance. Their role is to monitor, examine and provide advice as to what a school needs to ratify on the basis of the requirements of legislation. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate may evaluate guidance services by means of supervision and quality audits. Their assessment through supervision states in which areas a school is failing to meet national requirements and areas of improvement are discussed - with those responsible from the municipality or principal organiser (*huvudman*) and the school in question. They may also make use of penalties and apply pressure so that a principal organiser rectifies its activities. If the principal organiser does not act or seriously disregards its obligations, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate may decide to impose a conditional fine. In the case of an independent school, its license to operate may be revoked.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate also conducts regular and thematic quality audits, with the purpose of monitoring the quality in schools and to contribute to improvement by highlighting important development areas. A thematic audit is an in-depth audit of a limited area within the school system. The audits are based on the national objectives and guidelines, supported by research results and proven experience. There have been several thematic quality audits with a special focus on the quality in guidance services in different school forms. For example, in 2025, a [review of the quality of career guidance in municipal adult education \(Komvux\)](#) was published, with a focus on the basic and upper secondary levels (*Skolinspektionen, rapport 2025:9* [Swedish School Inspectorate, report 2025:9]).

Higher education

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (*Universitetskanslersämbetet*) evaluates the quality of higher education and research. They are responsible for official statistics and monitor compliance with laws and regulations among universities and university colleges. The quality assurance system for higher education consists of the following four components:

- Institutional reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance processes;
- Programme evaluations;
- Appraisal of applications for degree-awarding powers;
- Thematic evaluations.

The aim of programme evaluations is to monitor the programmes' outcomes and to contribute to the higher education institution's own quality improvements for the reviewed programmes. The programme evaluations emphasise the actual conditions and results, that is, how the programme meets the requirements of applicable laws and ordinances. Consideration should also be given to Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Furthermore, the programme evaluations will focus on how the programmes ensure that students are given good opportunities to achieve the qualitative targets of the System of Qualifications, and how the HEI ensures that students have achieved the qualification objectives upon graduation. For instance, the three-year full-time university programme leading to a bachelor's degree in career counselling, offered by Malmö University, Stockholm University and Umeå University, is evaluated in this way.

According to the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), quality work in relation to actions at HEIs should be a common concern of both the university's employees and the students. This means that guidance services offered at HEIs are the subject of the universities' own quality assurance work, though there is no available collected information on if and how this is carried out.

The thematic evaluations conducted by the Higher Education Authority covers all universities. Themes may include, for example, broadening participation, internationalisation, sustainable development, gender equality, the usefulness of education and preparation for working life. Career guidance has not yet been a theme.

Public employment service (Arbetsförmedlingen)

Quality and follow up of guidance services is included in the PES National strategy for career guidance, (*Arbetsförmedlingens nationella strategi för karriärvägledning - vägar till karriärkompetens*, Af-2018/0017 8563). The strategy states that the authority should have "a long-term plan for how competence initiatives and method support should be developed and quality assured, as well as clear criteria for the skills required to work with career guidance" (Translation by Euroguidance Sweden).

(See section [Access to guidance](#) for more information).

The PES head office also promotes professional development of officers with a counselling role, by developing in-service education modules. Guidance methods in focus for quality assurance include the guidance interview and group counselling.

Ethics

The [Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors](#) (*Sveriges Vägledarförening*, SAGC), a non-profit association "that works to reinforce and develop career guidance as a field of activity and as a profession" (*Sveriges Vägledarförening*, 2018), has approximately 400 guidance practitioners as members working across various sectors (i.e. schools, adult education, higher education and employment offices. SAGC has developed a Declaration of Ethical Principles, which aims to "act as a source of support for those who work with guidance, and those who come into contact with guidance", including in handling ethical dilemmas (ibid.). For instance, according to the Declaration, guidance may be provided on occasions where conflicts between the interests of the individual and those of the society/organisation may emerge, as well as where various needs and obligations require careful consideration.

The Association's professional ethics "are founded on values that can be traced back to the UN Declaration on Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the EU Resolution on Guidance 9286/04" and the 2007 OECD publication, *Career Guidance - a Handbook for Policy Makers* (*Sveriges Vägledarförening*, 2018). Ethical guidelines in relation to digitalisation in the field were added in 2024. SAGC has also appointed a [Council of Ethics](#) (*Etiska rådet*) the main aim of which is to develop and monitor any relevant ethical issues that may arise, as well as to provide support when dilemmas and decisions are especially complex (*Sveriges Vägledarförening*, 2020). SAGH is a member organisation of the IAEVG (International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance).

The [Swedish Teachers' Union](#) (*Sveriges lärare*) is a trade union for teachers and study and career counsellors. (approximately 2,500 out of 300,000 members are guidance professionals). They offer a journal (*Vi Vägledare* [We Guides]) for guidance counsellors and has established a [national council](#) for study and career guidance. The focus is on developing a description of work tasks and salary criteria for guidance counsellors and they are also pursuing the issue of a protected title.

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Career management skills

The Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) have worked together to formulate the way that career management skills can be used in a Nordic context and to formulate concepts and together analyse how the countries have managed to implement CMS. Based on the work of the group, professor Rie Thomsen of Aarhus University published the report *A Nordic perspective on career competences and guidance - Career choices and career learning* (2014). The report is a result of a project carried out by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELPGN) in collaboration with the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL).

The report shows that Sweden, through efforts of the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), within the government mission to strengthen study and vocational guidance and through the general guidelines for study and career guidance, has taken steps in developing guidance towards being a structured part of lifelong learning. The report proposes, among other things, continued Nordic cooperation aimed at creating a framework for career competences. Support is provided to share knowledge about how to organise guidance and how to develop CMS in schools.

In Sweden, CMS is translated to "*Valkompetens*" (Competence to choose). It is a central concept within the guidance field and used to clarify what is required (skills) of individuals when making educational and professional choices. The publication *Välja för framtiden* [Make choices for the future] from the National Agency for Education [Skolverket] has been delivered to all schools in Sweden. The purpose is to inspire discussion and personal reflection on how a strengthened and developed study and career guidance can be promoted and designed, as well as how everyone who works in the school can work to support this process. CMS are presented as a key in this process.

The concept of CMS is also defined in the National Agency's general guidelines for career guidance in schools, as follows:

"In order to handle situations where choices occur, the pupils need to develop a number of skills that show structured ways of gathering, analysing, and organising themselves, the educational and vocational information as well as having skills to make and implement decisions and manage transitions and changes in life. In other words, the pupils should be given the opportunity to develop skills to manage choices."

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Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Several initiatives at national level in Sweden have been focusing on the effectiveness of guidance services over the last 10 years.

A survey, *Guidance as a prerequisite for success in school and life (Vägledning en förutsättning för att lyckas i skolan och livet, 2017)* conducted by the former National Union of Teachers (*Lärarnas Riksförbund*), asked 1,500 pupils about the career guidance they received in compulsory school. The survey showed that:

1. the element of compensatory guidance was limited in the guidance conversations with school pupils. They pointed out that guidance should serve a compensatory role in evening out unequal pupil backgrounds and enhancing equal opportunities;
2. pupils with foreign-born parents are more dissatisfied with the individual guidance they received than pupils of parents born in Sweden.

A governmental study appointed by the Ministry for Education and Research in 2017, was given the task to improve guidance services in Swedish schools. The rationale was to suggest possible measures to reduce the bias related to gender, social background and disabilities when making educational and vocational choices, analyse how the role of guidance can be strengthened in schools and how digital guidance services can be developed. The proposal *Choices for the future - career guidance for the individual and society (Framtidsval - karriärvägledning för individ och samhälle, SOU 2019: 4)* points out the following needs:

1. clarification of what guidance is, that it can be both individual and general, and should be called 'career guidance' (*karriärvägledning*);
2. clarification of pupils' access to individual career guidance;
3. clear requirements for individual career guidance to be offered on certain occasions;
4. strengthening of the general career guidance perspective in various subjects in compulsory school;
5. a new compulsory element with allocated time, referred to as *Future choice*, should be introduced in compulsory school, primary school and special school (Translation by Euroguidance Sweden).

The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) conducted a [member survey mid-life guidance](#) to shed light on areas for improving conditions for career development among adult employees. The survey showed that:

1. 25% of the employees surveyed are in need of guidance;
2. less than half can access guidance through their employer;
3. among those who accessed guidance, 26% of the men and 21% of the women considered it insufficient.

The TCO concluded that universities need to improve marketing their guidance services and work more pro-actively.

Another government investigation initiated by the Ministry of Employment, Guidance for the future labour market (*Vägledning för framtidens arbetsmarknad*, SOU 2017: 82), proposed that the public employment service should:

1. explore how a digital platform for lifelong guidance can be set up and operated jointly by several national agencies. The platform should meet individuals' need for information and guidance as well as provide information on funding for studies and validation;
2. develop an implementation plan for how the PES guidance services can be strengthened, including information on how PES intends to organise its guidance services and work with quality assurance and follow-up.

The national strategy for career guidance (see section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#)) was partly an answer to these demands. In addition, PES conducted a study on a digital platform for lifelong guidance (*Digital platform för livslång vägledning*, Af-2018/0019 2596). The study offered proposals for how a digital platform for lifelong guidance could be set up and operated jointly by several national agencies. The Employment Service coordinated the study and reported it to the Government in December 2018. It was a feasibility study that included a concept proposal for the platform and proposals on how the service should be managed and communicated. The proposal also included calculations on the costs of operation, maintenance and development.

A Swedish version of *Investing in career guidance* (Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO), *Invester i studie- och yrkesvägledning*, was translated and published by the National Agency for Education in 2022. It highlights how well-functioning educational and career guidance helps people make the most of their potential, contributes to more efficient economies, and allows society to become more equitable, for stakeholders within the Swedish school system.

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Career information, ICT in guidance

There are many publicly funded websites offering career information for the Swedish public. These online services mainly provide information on education and work, and minimal professional e-guidance, but there are online guidance tools on offer.

The following are guidance-related public digital services in education and employment.

Swedish National Agency for Education

Through the public website [Utbildningsguiden](#) (Education guide), users may find information on different kinds of education forms, learning opportunities and learning institutions at all levels. Users may also find digital career guidance tools (available in Swedish):

- **Guide for choosing an education or a profession:** A tool that takes the users on a Guidance Journey, enabling them to make informed decisions. The Guidance Journey consists of three parts: Here I am, Where I want to be, and How do I get there.
- **Finding a profession that suits you:** Here, the user will get suggestions for professions that may suit them based on their capacities and interests. They can create their own profile or choose a ready-made profile that fits.
- **Vocational inspiration:** For users that don't know what job they want, they can randomly generate different professions to learn more about them and get inspired. There are hundreds of professions to explore.

Information on the Swedish education system and upper secondary school programmes is offered in 14 different languages for newly arrived students and parents (see section [Guidance for immigrants](#)).

Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och högskolerådet, UHR)

The website [Studera.nu](#) (study.now), administered by the Swedish Council for Higher Education, informs and inspires on the way towards higher education. Users can find information on studies, from undergraduate to doctoral level as well as on student life, and studying abroad. Information is available in 12 languages.

There are also online guidance tools related to study choices on offer (available in Swedish):

- **Which future jobs suit you?** The test suggests higher educational programs that might suit the users and make them in demand in the labour market. Sometimes something completely different than they expected turns up, which widens the users' perspectives.
- **Education and Future:** In the Education and Future service, users find information about different professions. They can see which higher educational programs provide the skills needed for a certain job and get insights into the labour market forecasts—both today and in five years.
- **Find and compare higher education opportunities:** Here users can search among courses and programmes – get admission statistics and labour market forecasts for each education and compare them with each other.

Students can apply for programmes and courses online via [www.antagning.se](#), the central national site for applications to higher education institutions, where applicants will find everything they need to know about the admission process. Applicants may submit their applications online and follow the process until receiving their admissions decision. There is a corresponding site for foreign applicants on [Universityadmissions.se](#).

To make its different expert areas available to guidance professionals, UHR has set up a special website, [www.uhr.se/syv](#), for guidance professionals. Namely, information and guidance related to admission regulations, evaluation of foreign qualifications, mobility guidance and studies abroad are provided. These areas are also subject to further training events for Swedish guidance professionals, provided both online and through conferences and presentations. An example is the distance course for guidance counsellors provided by the Swedish Euroguidance Centre (further information can be found [here](#)).

Swedish public employment service (Arbetsförmedlingen)

Information on labour market vacancies is provided through the Swedish public employment service [website](#). They offer an online tool called "career guidance on your own" (*Karriärvägledning på egen hand*). The tool consists of three parts. Each part includes different exercises where users are expected to reflect on the results. These exercises are similar to those used by professional career coaches. Each step can be documented in the "My Job-Self" template. After completing the three parts, users will have mapped out their skills, identified potential professions and created a plan for moving forward.

Other tools on offer (in Swedish) are:

- **The interest guide**

The interest guide is a career test. Users answer twelve questions and receive a job profile. The results can help users to understand what is important to them in a job and can be useful when writing job applications. They will also get suggestions for professions that match their interests.

- **Discover Other Professions**

This is an AI tool for those who want to change jobs or find a new career. The tool can help users explore new paths in their professional journey.

Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Sweden

Based on a previous job, the tool provides suggestions for other professions where employers seek similar skills or where the job tasks are comparable.

The PES also provides occupation films on YouTube, which offer insight into different professions and interviews with professionals to inform and inspire in the process of choosing an occupation. With VR glasses young people can take a virtual reality tour in different professions, with the help of their own mobile phone, (further information can be found [here](#)).

Joint national digital service for newly arrived

[Informationsverige.se](#) is the county administrative board's common portal for society information for new arrivals. Several Swedish agencies have contributed to bring all the relevant information together in one place. It is offered in several different languages. Referrals are made to all the different information providers and the tools on offer.

Local and regional e-guidance services

Guidance services in some municipalities offer their clients online guidance through a chat function, as a complement to face-to-face meetings, e-mail and/or phone conversations. Examples of existing regional platforms include:

- [Snacka med SYV - Studie- och yrkesvägledning online](#) (Talk to a guidance counsellor, provided by the company Academedia)
- [Digital Studievägledare | Landing](#) (Digital Councelling, an app developed by Kista Science Tower)
- [Välkommen till din studie- och yrkesvägledare på nätet! - Digital studie- och karriärvägledning](#) (Welcome to your online guidance counsellor, provided by guidance counsellor Joakim Cao from Lund University on his website [Digisyv](#))

In addition, on the website [digicaa](#), he provides support for guidance professionals on the use of AI in their work.

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Training and qualifications

Training for guidance practitioners in Sweden is offered as undergraduate academic education, in-service training and in the form of various further training opportunities, as outlined below.

Academic education

Three universities - Malmö University, Stockholm University, and Umeå University, offer a three-year Bachelor-level programme leading to a Bachelor of arts in study and career guidance (180 ECTS), that start each autumn and are delivered both online (distance course) and on campus. The degree includes interdisciplinary courses within the social and behavioural science field as well as practical training periods in schools or other workplaces of relevance. The studies include the basics of psychology, pedagogy and sociology that are necessary to understand people's career processes, i.e., choices, learning and changes in relation to future and career. Furthermore, the students develop knowledge of how society, working life and education are governed, organised and functioning. On the postgraduate level, Stockholm University provides a Master's programme in pedagogy with a specialisation in career development and guidance (120 ECTS), adopting a more in-depth approach. This involves career construction from an individual and societal perspective and the ability to autonomously manage career-related issues. (Stockholm university 2025).

In-service training provided by the employer

In-service training may include training for:

1. study counsellors at universities: employees with a general academic degree, working as study counsellors participate in training in guidance theory and practice;
2. employment officers working with guidance at the public employment offices: employees participate in modules in guidance methods and practices (Euroguidance, 2025).

Further training aimed at guidance practitioners

Further training opportunities may include:

1. training provided by the employer: further training and information days for guidance practitioners in municipalities on current topics and developments of relevance to the guidance community;
2. competence development provided by national agencies: training, on-line courses, webinars and conferences organised for guidance practitioners about the expert areas of the different stakeholders, and in connection to special missions and projects;
3. competence development provided by interest organisations, such as the [Swedish Teachers' Union](#) and the [Swedish Association for Guidance Counsellors](#) (Euroguidance, 2025).

To be hired in the public-school system a degree in Career counselling is mandatory (see section [Access to guidance](#), for more information on students' right to career guidance). Guidance staff working at universities do not always have this degree. For the study counsellors working in individual departments, a major in the subject area concerned is considered beneficial. University counsellors often participate in in-service training about

theories and methods in study and career counselling. At the employment offices, some officers working with guidance hold a degree in career counselling, but many have also gone through the public employment service's own in-service training.

Euroguidance Sweden offers further training on the European dimension in guidance for Swedish guidance practitioners, through online courses and presentations at municipality further training events as well as by offering lectures for HEI undergraduate career guidance education.

Research

Research in the career guidance field is conducted at all the above-mentioned institutions, offering career guidance education. For example, at the Department of Education and Didactics at Stockholm university, research is conducted on the following themes:

- The pedagogy of coaching and guidance;
- Dialogicity and power in guidance conversations;
- Career guidance and political governance;
- Whiteness, gender, and career development in higher education;
- Justice, recognition, and the creation of differences in guidance;
- Guidance and disability.

There is also the research school Finding ways in times of great future challenges (**Finna vägar i en tid av stora framtidsutmaningar** (FinnFram) focused on career learning, career guidance, and transitions between school, further education, and work. The research school is organised in collaboration between Umeå, Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö universities and includes nine doctoral students. The program will run until 2026, with the aim to broaden the scientific knowledge base in the field.

Based on the curriculum's principle of "quality in study and career guidance – the responsibility of the entire school", the first goal of the school is to develop teacher educators' ability to analyse to what extent and how career guidance is directly or indirectly involved in all school activities. The second goal of the research school is to make a contribution to the international research field on career learning, guidance, and transitions between school, further education, and work.

Nordic researchers in the field cooperate and disseminate results through the **Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance**. Fredrik Hertzberg from the Department of Education at Stockholm University and Jaana Kettunen from the Finnish Institute for Educational Research at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland act as chief editors of the journal. There, articles focus on the individual's relation to education and work and on career transitions and guidance in institutional, social and policy contexts. Articles from diverse disciplines and theoretical perspectives are welcomed given the multidisciplinary nature of the field, for example pedagogy, sociology, psychology and political science, but also ethnology, history and anthropology.

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Funding career guidance

Most Swedish guidance services are public and therefore publicly financed; the underlying principle has always been that everyone is entitled to guidance, which should be free of charge. The public funding of guidance services in Sweden is part of the total funding for the education and employment sectors. Usually, no budget is specifically designated for guidance-related actions, unless in connection to special initiatives or investments.

An historical example of a special investment is the Swedish Budget bill 2013 (the Government's proposal for central government budget revenue and expenditure for the fiscal year 2013, Area 16, Education and Research), where it was said that rapid reform of the education system created a need for special competence development activities to improve the quality of guidance. Therefore, the Swedish Government proposed an allocation of SEK 10 million in 2013 (approximately EUR 1.1 million), mainly for training guidance counsellors, and indicated the same amount in 2014 and 2015. This special funding resulted in several different education initiatives aimed at study and career counsellors, teachers and school leaders in both municipal and independent schools. These activities lasted until the end of 2019.

The **transition package for improved flexibility, adaptability, and security in the labour market** that was launched in 2022 is based on an agreement between trade unions and employers in the private sector. It is a significant initiative that gives everyone who is established in the labour market the possibility to receive basic support for transitions. This includes career guidance. The package also includes study allowance for transition and re-training.

In 2024, much of the discussions on career guidance in Sweden are focused on skills supply – new priorities that were given to the working groups within the government-initiated collaboration between national agencies on skills supply, referring to the digital and green transitions as well as guiding more people towards STEM education.

The government has taken several initiatives for the re-skilling and upskilling of adults. In the budget bill for 2024, the government set aside SEK 25 million for a pilot activity with a new form of vocational education at upper secondary level for adults. They have also given higher education institutions a task to investigate their condition to develop a flexible and qualified range of courses and programmes to support adults in transition. They foresee that the new study allowance for transitions will make more adults study at the university.

Adults in transition constitute a new client group for Swedish guidance practitioners and the transition support organisations are new employers, hiring guidance practitioners for their work with upskilling and re-skilling of adults.

When it comes to national web services in education and employment, national funding is provided for system development, maintenance, service delivery, and continuous development. The funding is given to national agencies, depending on tasks and assignments. The agencies set their own priorities on how to use the funding, within the framework of the appropriation documents (government documents that frame the work of the agencies).

Guidance is not always explicitly mentioned in these documents; if it is, it is usually as part of broader initiatives and assignments. Guidance is, therefore, not always the first priority, but usually considered an important part of information delivery in education and employment, in order to provide orientation for users and help individuals in the capacity to make well-informed choices. The basic idea is that publicly funded digital services are on the user's side: neutral, updated, trustworthy, objective and free from commercials.

Sources

- Swedish Government. (2023). *Flexibility, adaptability and security in the labour market*. <https://www.government.se/information-material/2022/04/flexibility-adaptability-and-security>

Career guidance for school pupils

Career guidance is considered to be a responsibility of the whole school. The main way of introducing career education and guidance in schools, is through the teaching process as well as through various kinds of general and guidance-related information (i.e. information on society, working life, work experience) either individually or in groups. School staff collectively implement career guidance and education, which involves supporting students in building the skills and capacity for exploring, identifying and specifying their interests, so that they can make well informed decisions about different educational and vocational alternatives. Even though there are no obligatory courses in career education, counsellors arrange informative sessions in primary and secondary education, focusing mainly on students' decision-making in selecting different education pathways at transition points (i.e. students in year nine discuss their future plans in the context of selecting an upper secondary school programme).

Guidance for VET participants

The Swedish Education Act (Sveriges Riksdag, 2010:800) ensures that students in schools and adult education have the right to career guidance tailored to their needs, provided by trained guidance counsellors. This system supports students in compulsory and secondary education, as well as those in adult education.

Sweden has 18 national upper-secondary school programmes, including six university-preparatory programmes and 12 vocational programmes. Since municipalities oversee schools, they are the primary providers of career guidance within the school system. This includes not only VET students in upper secondary schools (see section on [Career guidance for school pupils](#)). Since adult education is part of this system, also students in Higher Vocational Education are able to access guidance through the municipal adult education (Komvux).

Source

- Sveriges Riksdag. (2010). *Skollag 2010: 800 [The Swedish Education Act]*. https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800

Guidance for higher education students

The Swedish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) organise their services' provision either through a central and comprehensive centre or a local departmental service, which is usually connected with a small central office. Smaller universities, however, have only a central guidance unit.

The central guidance services are usually the primary contact point for prospective students who need support in relation to: their educational options, updating on developments in relevant disciplines, available mobility programmes; and in choosing specialisations in the context of labour market needs. There is normally both a drop-in service and a meeting booking system. In addition, local departmental services may employ a counsellor who offers support and information in specific disciplines (usually that of the Department). For instance, information can include job vacancies, summer jobs, internships and companies interested in supporting students to complete their degree projects. Furthermore, to facilitate and ease graduates' transition into the labour market, some Universities have a career centre that can assist individuals in making career choices and/or preparing job applications (Euroguidance Sweden, 2025).

Source

- Euroguidance Sweden. (2015). *Career Guidance in Sweden*. https://www.uhr.se/globalassets/syv/utlandsvistelse/euroguidance/fler-rapporter/career-guidance_uppslag.pdf

Guidance for adult learners

The government have taken several initiatives for the re-skilling and upskilling of adults in 2024 and 2025. A new form of vocational education at upper secondary level for adults has been initiated and higher education institutions have been given a task to investigate their condition to develop a flexible and qualified range of courses and programmes to support adults in transition.

Guidance services for adult learners can be found within the school system, for those who study a compulsory or upper secondary school programme.

In some municipalities, there are local guidance and information centres (*Vägledningscentrum*) which are under the responsibility of that particular municipality. They are open for adults and guidance services are offered through different channels (Euroguidance Sweden, 2015), namely:

1. career guidance based on specific individual needs and wishes, to identify possibilities, alternatives, obstacles and how to overcome them;
2. general information on educational programmes, application forms, requirements, study allowances;
3. self-service, ICT-based resources for career information searches or for interest tests.

For adults studying in a Folk high school (*folkhögskola*), the school's guidance services are available. Each school is obligated to provide guidance services for their students. Folk high schools provide popular adult education with a variety of course offerings at different levels, and some provide boarding facilities. In terms of school owners or operators, over 100 out of 151 folk high schools are managed by popular movements, NGOs or non-profit bodies, around 40 by country councils and regions, and one of them by a municipality.

For adults in transition, the job security and transition councils offer career guidance support and adults studying at a university, have access to the guidance services on offer there.

Source

- Euroguidance Sweden. (2015). *Career Guidance in Sweden*. https://www.uhr.se/globalassets/syv/utlandsvistelse/euroguidance/fler-rapporter/career-guidance_uppslag.pdf

Guidance for the employed

The [job security and transition councils](#) (*Trygghet i anställningen och omställningsråd*) offer career guidance support for those established in the labour market. They focus is on personalised support tailored to each individual's needs and possibilities. Examples of intervention areas:

- Assessment of skills and qualities
- Motivational conversations
- Assistance in finding and applying for jobs
- Interview coaching
- Liaising with employers
- Workplace visits and work-based activities
- Educational and career guidance

To some extent, support and guidance for this target group can also be found at the universities, in the PES online services as well as from the different trade unions.

Guidance for unemployed adults

Career guidance services for those in search of work are mainly provided by the Public Employment Service (PES), but also in some cases by municipalities, through local employment and support centers (Jobbtorg). The career guidance that is offered through PES is divided into three levels:

- Career guidance information. Information on occupations, education and labour market prospects with the opportunity to ask and receive answers to questions of a general nature. The information is available to all individuals and is mainly given via digital channels
- Career orientation. It should supplement the information and give the individual the opportunity to get answers to more person-specific questions about education and the labour market – support for orientation
- At the third level qualified career guidance offers systematic and process-oriented support, so that the individual becomes more aware of his own circumstances and can consider them against the demands and opportunities of the labour market to increase the individual's competence to make well-considered choices

The career guidance information and orientation services described above are provided through so-called personal remote meetings, which include phone calls, chat, and video sessions with small client groups. These services are delivered by trained study and career counsellors at PES and are intended only for newly registered unemployed individuals who do not require in-depth support. Those who become long-term unemployed, or who need more assistance from the beginning, are instead referred to more in-depth or [process-oriented guidance](#), as outlined in point three, or to other advanced support services offered by PES. This third level of qualified career guidance is purchased by PES from private providers.

Guidance for early leavers

In most cases, study and career guidance is included in the municipal activity responsibility (KAA) for youth aged 16–20, which aims to help upper secondary students return to their studies.

In 2021, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, SALAR (Sveriges kommuner och regioner) and the Swedish Government entered into a formal agreement to gather and disseminate knowledge, develop tools, and support municipalities in their efforts to reduce early school leaving. Transnational exchange and learning within the European Union and the Baltic Sea region have played a key role in achieving the project's objectives. To facilitate collaboration, SALAR has established a sustainable platform, "School to Work," which enables transnational exchange and capacity building in addressing early school leaving and supporting young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). More details can be found here: [School to Work Platform](#).

Several shorter-term but foundational projects have been carried out with diverse stakeholders that comprise elements of lifelong guidance in the area of early school leaving and supporting youth in developing skills to prevent exclusion from the labour market and education and training. Between 2012 and 2018, SALAR led an ESF-funded project called "Plug In", which was Sweden's largest collaborative initiative to prevent early school leaving, involving eight regions and 70 municipalities. It comprised targeted interventions in the area of guidance and counselling, including coaching and motivational interviewing. Results included improvements in student optimism and self-image, strengthening skills and capacity for lifelong learning. A report on the project is available here: [Plug In Report](#).

In 2019, this work continued with the "Mission Completed Education" project, a professional development initiative aimed at improving conditions for local authorities and school leaders in Sweden. The goal was to support research-based, systematic efforts to prevent early school leaving and encourage the return of students who had left upper secondary education without completing their studies.

(See section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#). See also the related section [Guidance for NEET](#)).

Guidance for NEET

In most cases, study and career guidance is included in the municipal activity responsibility (KAA) for youth aged 16–20, which aims to help upper secondary students return to their studies. The content of KAA is largely governed by municipal self-governance and can vary greatly depending on geographical location.

For the older target group of NEETs, aged 20–29, there is study and career guidance available through Municipal adult education (Komvux) and local projects targeting this group. Should they be registered as unemployed, the Public Employment Service career guidance services are available.

Through studies at a Folk High School, individuals who, for various reasons, have left the formal school system early can obtain a certificate that enables continued studies at municipal adult education (Komvux), vocational college, or university. They can then also receive study- and career guidance through the Folk High Schools.

In a publication [Nationellt samordnat stöd till unga som varken arbetar eller studerar](#) (2021) (Nationally coordinated support for young people who are neither working nor studying), the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) proposed that municipalities should be required to offer career guidance to those who are at risk of or about to leave lower or upper secondary education. Some municipalities offer this, but not all.

(See section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#) as well as the linked section on [Guidance for early leavers](#) and related projects also addressing the needs of NEET populations).

Guidance for young people at risk

See sections on [Guidance for early leavers](#) and [Guidance for NEET](#) as well as the section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#), which features various guidance efforts addressing young people at risk.

Guidance for persons with disabilities

In Sweden, career guidance for individuals with disabilities is rooted in a strong framework of inclusion, equality, and accessibility. The Swedish government aligns its [disability policy](#) with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

As of 2025, approximately 12% of Sweden's working-age population (16–65 years) lives with a disability, and about 8% have a disability that affects their ability to work. (according to Statistics Sweden - [The labour market situation for people with disabilities](#)) To bridge this gap, Sweden offers several support mechanisms:

The Swedish public employment service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*) provides tailored career counselling, job matching, and workplace adaptation services. They also offer wage subsidies and assistive technologies to employers who hire individuals with disabilities ([Funktionsnedsättning, få stöd så här - Arbetsförmedlingen](#)). Part of this is SIUS - Special Support for Introduction and Follow-up (*Särskild stödperson för introduktions- och uppföljningsstöd*). SIUS is a specialised support service for jobseekers with disabilities who need help transitioning into employment. A trained SIUS officer works closely

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with both the jobseeker and the employer, offering hands-on support during the introduction phase and follow-up for up to 12 months. This method, based on the supported employment model, has proven effective in helping individuals with neuropsychiatric and intellectual disabilities enter and stay in the workforce.

Sweden's National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (*Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten* (SPSM)) plays an important role in preparing individuals with disabilities for successful careers by:

- Supporting inclusive education through special needs resources, adapted teaching materials, and funding;
- Offering advisory services to schools and adult education providers on how to create accessible learning environments;
- Bridging research and practice by disseminating evidence-based strategies in special education.

While SPSM does not directly provide career counselling, they have several different web-based [support materials](#) and study packages for guidance counsellors and others who work in schools and preschools.

Sweden is also advancing in the use of accessible and assistive technologies in the workplace with tools that help individuals overcome barriers and perform their jobs effectively and which can be viewed in the context of lifelong guidance where these tools provide opportunities for enhancing capacities for career development. Sweden's innovation agency, [Vinnova](#), has financed several projects in the area of digital aids: [Digital aids - innovations that make life easier! \(Vinnova\)](#).

Source

- Statistics Sweden (accessed 20 August 2025): *The labour market situation for people with disabilities*. <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/labour-market/disabled-persons/the-labour-market-situation-for-people-with-disabilities/>

Guidance for immigrants

There have been numerous policy developments in guidance, support and other services for new immigrants. Every sixth person of the current Swedish population was born in another country. What happens after immigration remains a debate around the country ([Sweden.se](#), official site of Sweden administered by the Swedish Institute).

The Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) is the central administrative authority on asylum, which handles applications from people who want to take up permanent residence in Sweden, visit, seek protection from persecution or get Swedish citizenship. The agency also assigns unaccompanied minors to a municipality, which then becomes the child's home for the duration of the asylum process. When a refugee is granted a residence permit in Sweden, the agency gives compensation from the state to the municipalities and county councils.

Several authorities and organisations are involved in the migration chain. One of the most important actors being the public employment service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*), which has overall responsibility to coordinate various measures to support newly arrived immigrants' introduction to working life in Sweden and to draw up an 'establishment plan' tailored to each participant. The establishment role has undergone many changes since 2010 when key legislation was passed. In 2018, obligatory education was introduced for certain participants who lack upper secondary education (requiring coordination with folk high schools and municipal adult education), along with greater emphasis on ICT tools and on improved validation (of non-formal and information learning) services and, through accompanying benefits, access to more categories of education institutions than previously (technical colleges and higher VET institutions) (*Rapport Förbättra genomförandet av etableringsuppdraget, Arbetsförmedlingen*, 2018). Gender equality is emphasised in the approach to services for immigrants and financial support is available.

Some categories of newly arrived adult immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers can apply to participate in an [establishment or introduction programme](#), which can last up to 24 months, and also take into consideration full and part-time participation, special needs, parental leave and other conditions. The aim of the programme is for newly arrived immigrants between the ages of 20 and 64, to learn Swedish, find a job, and become self-sufficient as quickly as possible. It targets immigrants who are actively seeking work or who will study.

The beneficiary and the employment officer together plan what activities suit the applicant best, to be able to learn Swedish and find a job as quickly as possible. Activities include: language training for those without basic skills in Swedish, at [Swedish for Immigrants](#) (SFI); social orientation course; courses at different education levels, to develop or build on existing skills; work-experience placement support when looking for work; and help and guidance for those considering starting their own business.

Validation practices, which involve career guidance are also part of the establishment programme services, are an important tool for immigrants in their pathway to integration.

Newly arrived refugee students in Sweden are offered career guidance on the same terms as other students. The quantity and the quality of the services are dependent on local routines, regulations, and career guidance counsellors' recognition of newly arrived migrant students' knowledge and education strategies regarding allocation of resources. Career guidance in lower secondary education is primarily engaged with the task of choosing upper secondary education. For newly arrived students, several alternatives are at hand in the Swedish education system. Young refugees who do not meet the standards of eligibility are generally recommended to apply for the language introduction programme (Hertzberg, 2017).

Upper secondary school students are in the majority among children and young people newly arrived in Sweden. According to Sundelin (2015), making informed choices about the future is much more difficult and more complex for those who lack a Swedish education background. In this way, guidance conversations are the students' primary meaningful resource for planning a future in a new context and career guidance is central to the success of the newly arrived, from education to working life.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, SALAR (*Sveriges kommuner och regioner*) have coordinated a project called "IMprove" in collaboration with four regions in Sweden. Funded by the ESF, this initiative aimed to develop a model to support newly arrived immigrant students in transitioning from an introduction program to further education and integration into the workforce. The project specifically focused on students in the language introductory program. Over two years, local methods and strategies were developed to identify key success factors, which have been incorporated into the IMprove Model. This model, featuring best practices, was distributed to local authorities and schools across Sweden. The main areas of focus include effective instructional methods, cohesive study paths, and tailored education and career guidance for newly arrived immigrant students at the upper secondary level. Further details are available here: [IMprove Project](#).

Gender-based policies

One of the core values in Swedish career guidance is to support individuals in making well-informed choices and well-considered decisions, that are not limited by gender, social background or ethnicity (*Att välja för framtiden, skolans stöd genom vägledning och lärande - Skolverket [Choosing for the future, school support through guidance and learning - Swedish National Agency for Education]*).

Despite decades of gender equality efforts, the Swedish labour market remains highly gender segregated (SCB, 2019, [Gender disparity in educational choices after upper secondary school](#)). Women and men tend to choose different educational paths and professions, which affects both individuals' life opportunities and the country's ability to meet future labour market needs. To address this, several Swedish authorities and organisations are implementing initiatives focused on gender-conscious educational and career guidance.

On behalf of the Swedish government, the Gender Equality Agency (*Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*) is leading a multi-year initiative to strengthen inter-agency collaboration on gender-based educational and career choices (*Samverkan om könsbundna studie- och yrkesval | Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*). The goals of the initiative include:

- Identifying joint actions that cannot be achieved by individual actors alone.
- Developing national policy in the area of gender-equal guidance.
- Promoting [gender-equal recruitment in the welfare sector](#), where gender segregation is particularly pronounced.

They have also compiled existing research and knowledge about gender differences in educational choices in the report "Choises by gender" (Val Efter Eget Kön, 2024).

Commissioned by the Gender Equality Authority, [Oxford Research](#) is conducting a comparative study of international practices aimed at reducing gender-based educational and career choices. The study aims to identify effective methods and policies that could inform Swedish strategies and inspire new approaches to guidance and recruitment.

The [Swedish National Agency](#) emphasises the importance of early, continuous, and inclusive career guidance. In accordance with the governing documents, everyone at the school must contribute to ensuring that the student's educational and career choices are not limited by gender or by social or cultural background. Within the national program councils of the upper secondary school, the theme during the most recent period has been to counteract gender-based educational and career choices.

In Higher Education and in Higher Vocational Education efforts are also made to counteract gender-based study and career choices. For example the [Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education](#) (*Myndigheten för Yrkehögskolan*, MYH) has developed support material for gender-equal education (*Jämställd utbildning – Ett stödmaterial för arbetet med jämställdhet inom yrkehögskolan - Myndigheten för yrkehögskolan*).

Last, several Swedish authorities are tasked with integrating a gender equality perspective into their operations (JiM) including in guidance provision. The authorities must also, in collaboration with relevant actors, contribute to increasing gender equality in society (*Jämställdhetsintegrering i statliga myndigheter - JiM - Regeringen.se*.)

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