

REFERENCE YEAR 2023

UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Content updates and contributors

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Q1. Is there a stable legal basis for apprenticeships in your country?

		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN DEVELOPMENT

Apprenticeship in Sweden was first introduced with a stable legal basis in 2011, as part of the publicly financed school system, in the context of a school reform that aimed at bringing VET closer to the labour market and making it more attractive.

The legal framework of apprenticeship education in the formal education system consists of the following laws:

- School Law (Skollagen 2010:800);
- Upper Secondary School Ordinance (Gymnasieförordningen 2010:2039);
- Adult Education Ordinance (Förordning 2011:1108 om vuxenutbildning);
- Act on Apprenticeship Employment (Lag 2014:421 om gymnasial lärlingsanställning);
- Ordinance on state subsidy for regional adult VET (Förordning 2016:937 om statsbidrag för regional yrkesinriktad vuxenutbildning).
- Ordinance on state subsidy for secondary apprentice education (Förordning 2011:947)

Some sectors, such as construction and installation ('Sector that builds society'), have a long history of hosting apprenticeships, following the upper secondary school-based vocational education (see also Q3, Q5). This type of traditional apprenticeships is regulated by agreements between social partners.

Q2. Is there an official definition of 'apprenticeship' or 'apprentice' in your country?



✓ YES

✓ NO

Within the formal education system in Sweden, there is one apprenticeship scheme, with four officially distinct target groups and each of them with a separate official definition (and corresponding legal base). These are:

1. Upper secondary school apprenticeships for youth (gymnasial lärlingsutbildning);
2. Special needs upper secondary school apprenticeships (lärlingsutbildning i gymnasial särskola);
3. Apprenticeships education for adults (lärlingsutbildning för vuxna);
4. Apprenticeship education for adults with special needs (lärlingsutbildning inom särskild utbildning för vuxna).

The School Law (2010:800 (Skollag 2010:800)) outlines the following: 'Within vocational programmes, there may be upper secondary school apprenticeship education, which may start in the first, second or third year of education. Upper secondary apprenticeship education shall take place at one or several workplaces.' Chapter 16, § 11

Q3. At which level do apprenticeship schemes exist in your country?



✓ AT UPPER
SECONDARY LEVEL



✓ AT POST-
SECONDARY (NOT
TERTIARY)



✓ AT TERTIARY
LEVEL



✓ AT SECTORAL
LEVEL

Apprenticeship within the formal education system is an alternative pathway to study a vocational programme at upper secondary school (the other being the school-based pathway). The main difference between these two pathways is the proportion of workplace-based learning. For the school-based pathway, at least 15 weeks of the entire programme should be provided as workplace-based learning. For the apprenticeship education, more than half of the programme should be provided at the workplace, from the moment a learner chooses this pathway (possible to do in the first, second or third year of the programme). In other words, if more than half the learning takes place at a

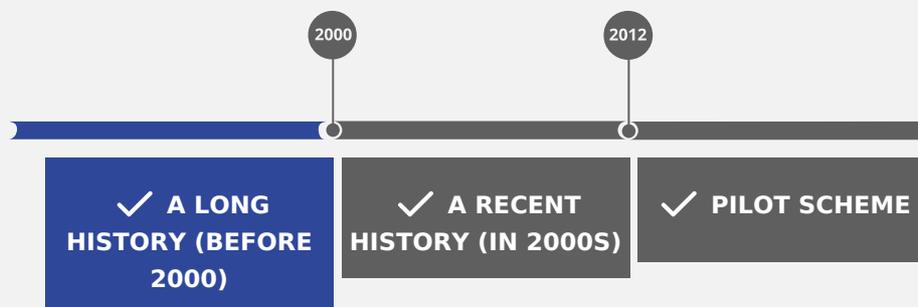
workplace, it is referred to as upper secondary apprenticeship education (lärlingsutbildning).

Governance and regulations are, with a few exceptions, the same irrespective of whether the vocational programme is school-based or an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship for adults (see Q2) leads to the same qualifications as the apprenticeship track of the upper secondary education. Apprenticeship for adults is offered typically in the context of municipality-led education.

Outside the education system, some sectors, such as construction and installation ('Sector that builds society'), have a long tradition in offering apprenticeships, following the upper secondary school-based vocational education. To become a fully qualified and fully paid worker, according to the standards in the agreements between these sector stakeholders, it is necessary to complete a regulated volume of working hours as an apprentice, with special instructions on workplace learning content (see also Q5). Although limited in terms of sectors, the traditional scheme still attracts a significant number of learners (appx 10,000 compared to the 17,000 apprentices in the upper secondary education apprenticeship track, according to Skolverket).

Q4. How well-established are apprenticeship schemes in your country?



Apprenticeships in sectors related to construction date back to about 100 years. This type of apprenticeships still exists outside the education system, based on trade union and employer agreements (see also Q3, Q5).

Within the school system, different forms of apprenticeship schemes have been tested and piloted. The present upper secondary scheme was piloted in 2008-2011. Its piloting contributed to the 2011 reform, which introduced apprenticeships as an alternative, parallel path to school-based to vocational education at the upper secondary level.

Q5. Relevant information that is essential to understanding the specificity of apprenticeships in the country.

Since the middle of the 20th century school-based education has been the main way of organising initial VET in Sweden. Responsibility for VET in upper secondary school lies therefore within the education sector. The same is true for apprenticeship education within the school system: even though more than half the education is provided at workplace in a company, VET schools remain responsible for the implementation of apprenticeships, such as finding workplaces, recruiting pupils, and quality assurance of the training.

Some occupations, especially within the building and installation sector ('Sector that builds society'), e.g. construction, heating, plumbing require workplace training (traditional apprenticeships) following graduation from the formal upper secondary school. This scheme is outside the school system, and is regulated by the trade union and the industry and not according to the Swedish government's definition of apprenticeship in upper secondary school.

At post-secondary level, Higher Vocational Education (Yrkeshögskolan) offers programmes that include significant work placements, so called Learning in a Work Environment (Lärande i arbete, LIA) that correspond to appx 30% of the programme duration. Although not formally apprenticeships, they lead to nationally recognised qualifications and have been gaining ground among employers and learners.