


Apprenticeship education in upper secondary schools

Gymnasial lärlingsutbildning

 Sweden

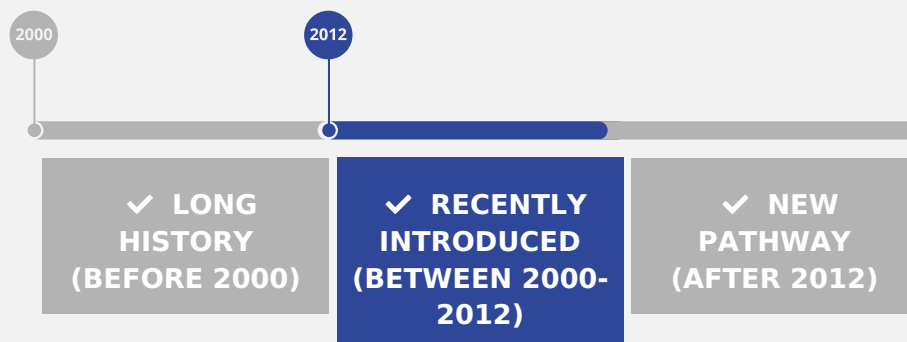
Reference year 2023

Content updates and contributors

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1 Scheme history

Q1. When was the scheme introduced?



Apprenticeship as part of upper secondary education was introduced in 2011.

Q2. How did the apprenticeship scheme originate?



✓ TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP (MASTER-APPRENTICE RELATION) TO PREPARE APPRENTICES FOR THE OCCUPATION



✓ SCHOOL-BASED VET TRACK BY INCLUDING MORE WORK-BASED LEARNING TO SUPPLY SKILLED WORKFORCE TO MATCH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS



✓ EX-NOVO



✓ OTHER

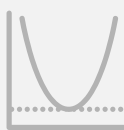
It originated from formal VET at upper secondary level including more workplace learning than the regular school-based VET pathway.

2 Beneficiaries

Q3. Does the legal basis define the minimum and maximum age limits for enrolment of the target group of this scheme?



✓ MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AGE LIMITS DEFINED



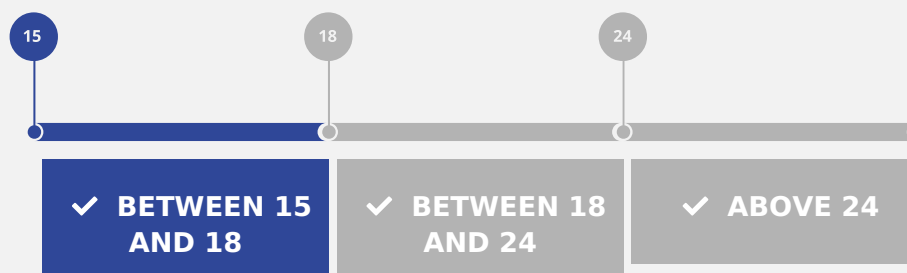
✓ MINIMUM AGE LIMITS DEFINED ONLY



✓ OTHER

The scheme is offered as a pathway (track) of upper secondary education. Law sets only the maximum age limit to enrol to upper secondary education, which is 20 years old. Learner above 20 need to enrol to adult education programmes.

Q4. What is the average age of learners in practice?



Average age of learners in the upper secondary scheme is between 15 and 18, given the enrolment limit of 20 years of age.

In general, most apprentices in Sweden are adults, either in the Publicly financed system or in the scheme governed by the Social partners (www.ecy.com, www.vvsyn.se, www.byn.se). Normally their ages is between 19 years up to 45.

Q5. How many learners are enrolled in this scheme?

Unlike VET as a whole, the number of upper secondary VET learners enrolled in an apprenticeship programme (24) has grown steadily since its introduction in 2011, with an average annual increase of over 1 000 learners, from 5 600 in 2013/14 to 12 280 in 2020/21.

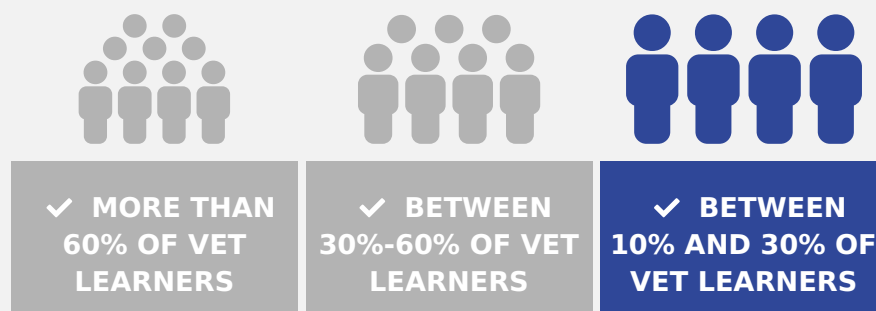
The government ambition is to increase both participation and apprenticeship quality.

Source: Cedefop, VET in Europe database: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/sweden-u2>

According to Skolverket (National Agency for Education) latest data, approximately 17,000 apprentices are enrolled in the in the publicly financed apprenticeship system.

As a comparison, approximately 10.000 apprentices are enrolled in the system governed by the social partners (traditional apprenticeships, in the 'Sector that builds society').

Q6. What is the share of apprentices enrolled in this scheme in relation to all VET students for the corresponding educational level(s)?





✓ LESS THAN
10% OF VET
LEARNERS

12% of students in upper secondary VET.
(3% of all upper secondary education).
See www.skolverket.se for updated data.

3 Qualifications

Q7. Are the qualifications included in the National Qualification Framework (NQF)?



✓ YES



✓ NO



✓ THERE IS NO
NQF

In the Swedish National Qualifications Framework (SeQF), apprenticeship qualifications from the upper secondary pathway are placed at Level 4, corresponding to EQF level 4.

Q8. Is the scheme included in the ISCED 2011 mapping?



✓ YES

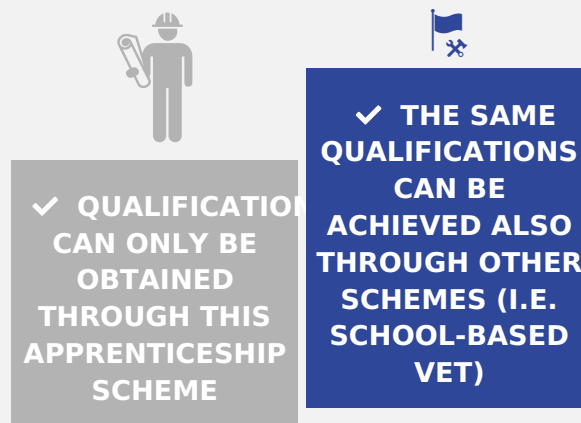
scheme



✓ NO

Programme code 304 in the ISCED mapping.
ISCED 354 for learners in upper secondary level.
ISCED 343,353 for learners 17-20 years with special educational needs.

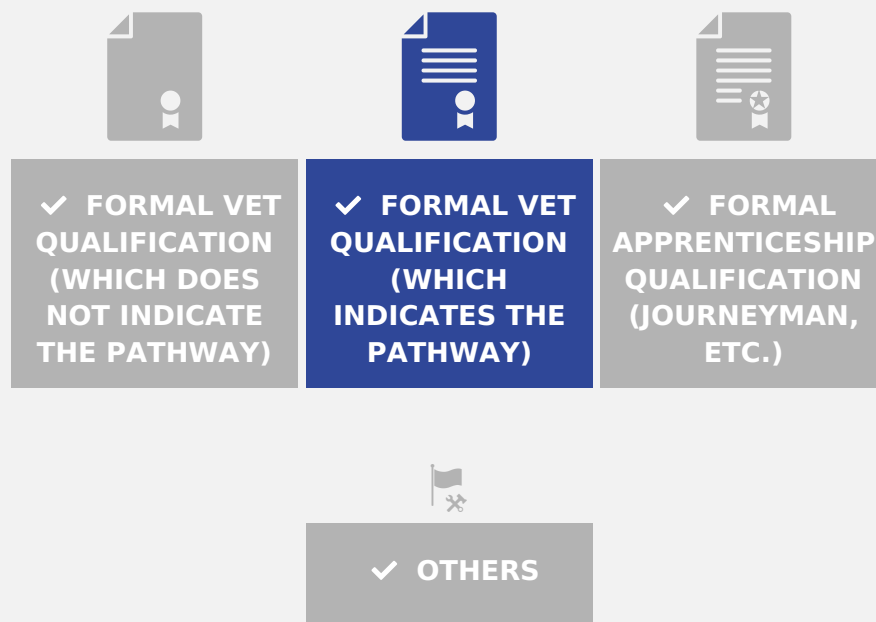
Q9. Are the qualifications offered only through apprenticeships?



After completing upper secondary, either through the school-based track or the apprenticeship track, learners receive a Vocational Diploma for upper secondary education.

So, the final qualification (is the same for both tracks (as well as for adults in adult education at upper secondary level, see Q2 of the country fiche).

Q10. Which is the type of qualification obtained through the apprenticeship scheme?



Normally, the final qualification indicates that the student has been an apprentice, but in some minor cases.

Before considering new graduates fully qualified for a given trade, in some sectors, an additional period of on-the-job training or work placement in a company (färdigutbildning) is required after the completion to the Vocational Diploma (See also the country fiche).

Q11. Does the scheme provide direct access to higher education?



✓ YES	✓ NO
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Students who have apprenticeship qualifications from upper secondary level may continue studying within higher vocational education programmes.

Q12. What is the typical duration of the apprenticeship programme?

The national curriculum steers vocational study programmes at upper secondary level.

Within upper secondary education, learners can select to join the apprenticeship track in the first, second or the third school year. From the moment apprenticeship starts, at least half of the learning must take place at the workplace (School Law (2010:800, 11 §)).

For those taking the apprenticeship pathway in the 3rd year, the workplace component was extended from 15 to 20 weeks during that year.

(In the case of adult apprenticeships, at least 70% of the learning must be undertaken in the workplace in order for the training to qualify as apprenticeship, for the additional state subsidy).

4 Governance

Q13. Is there any organization at the national level with roles in co-ordinating the scheme?



✓ YES	✓ NO
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There is no such organisation.

However, an Apprenticeship centre was set up at the National Agency for education, following government decision (2023) to further support VET-providers, employers and social partners in developing apprenticeship education and the quality of workplace-based learning.

The centre is run by the Swedish National Agency for Education and its tasks cover to different extent all policy challenges of apprenticeship, including supporting and giving advice to VET providers, employers and social partners on, for example, the organisation

of apprenticeship education and training for supervisors at workplaces, as well as stimulating cooperation at regional level between schools and the world of work.

Q14. What is the role of chambers, employers' and employees' representatives, sectoral councils (if existent), in shaping apprenticeship content, as per regulation?

The form consists of three buttons arranged horizontally. The first button is grey and labeled '✓ ROLE IN DESIGNING QUALIFICATION'. The second button is blue and labeled '✓ ROLE IN DESIGNING CURRICULA'. The third button is blue and labeled '✓ OTHER'. Above the first button is a document icon. Above the second button is a clipboard icon. Above the third button is a flag icon. Below the buttons is a large grey 'X' mark and a grey button labeled '✓ NO ROLE'.

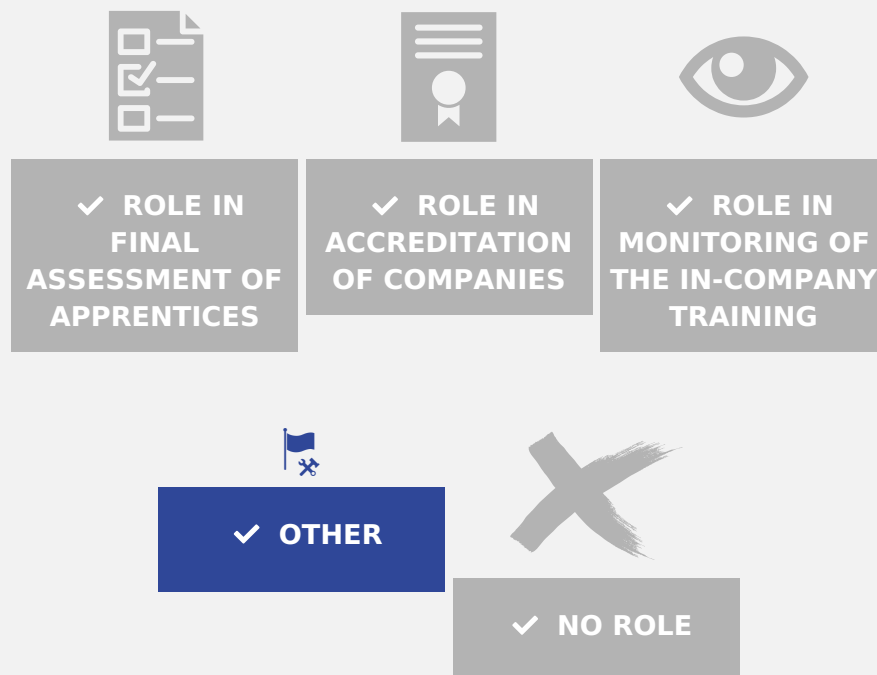
There are 12 national programme councils (nationella programråd), one for each of the 12 national vocational programmes, consisting of 6 to 10 representatives from industry, representatives of employer and employee organisations within the specific vocational area, and some national or regional authorities.

The national programme councils work as permanent forums for dialogue between the National Agency for Education (Skolverket) and labour-market stakeholders on the quality, content and organisation of VET. They are not decision-making bodies, as they have a consultative function with respect to the National Agency for Education. The overall aim of their work is to make the VET pathway at upper secondary level more responsive to the needs of stakeholders and to improve correspondence between VET programmes and labour market demands (Skolverk, 2012).

As the apprenticeship scheme is a mode of delivery for VET programmes, they are key players also in relation to the scheme.

For each apprenticeship education for adults, it is required that a vocational council (yrkesråd) is established. The council shall include representatives of employees and employers and representatives of the teachers and students of the apprenticeship education. Other school staff and other relevant stakeholders from working life may also be included. Vocational councils are regulated in the Ordinance on state subsidy for regional adult VET (Förordning 2016:937 om statsbidrag för regional yrkesinriktad vuxenutbildning).

Q15. What is the role of chambers, employers' and employees' representatives in implementing the apprenticeship scheme, as per regulation?



At the local level, every upper secondary school offering VET programmes, regardless of the scheme, can organise one or several local programme councils (lokala programråd) to support closer cooperation between education providers, employers and their representative organisations, and trade unions on each specific programme the school offers, including the apprenticeship track of upper secondary VET.

Although the law does not specify their tasks, the local programme councils may assist schools on several levels: arrange workplace-based learning placements for their students for both schemes; organise and assess diploma projects; and address issues such as workplace environment, workplace safety, working hours, and the expectations of the different stakeholders, as far as students' presence at the workplace is concerned (Cedefop, Flash TCR on apprenticeships in Sweden, p. 35).

Q16. What are the main roles of key state actors?

The National Agency for Education:

- runs the Apprenticeship Center (supporting VET providers, employers and social partners on the organisation of apprenticeship education, supporting training of workplace supervisors, stimulating cooperation at regional level between schools and the world of work)
- Offers the platform for the sectoral programme councils, which aim to make upper secondary VET better aligned and more responsive to the needs of stakeholders and the labour market

National and regional authorities sit in the programme councils.

Upper secondary schools offer the school-based component of the VET programme and are responsible for finding apprenticeship placements in companies. They also decide on how to organise, plan and follow up on the implementation of the apprenticeship.

They also set up local programme councils to support closer cooperation with employers and their representative organisations, and trade unions.

5 Training at the workplace

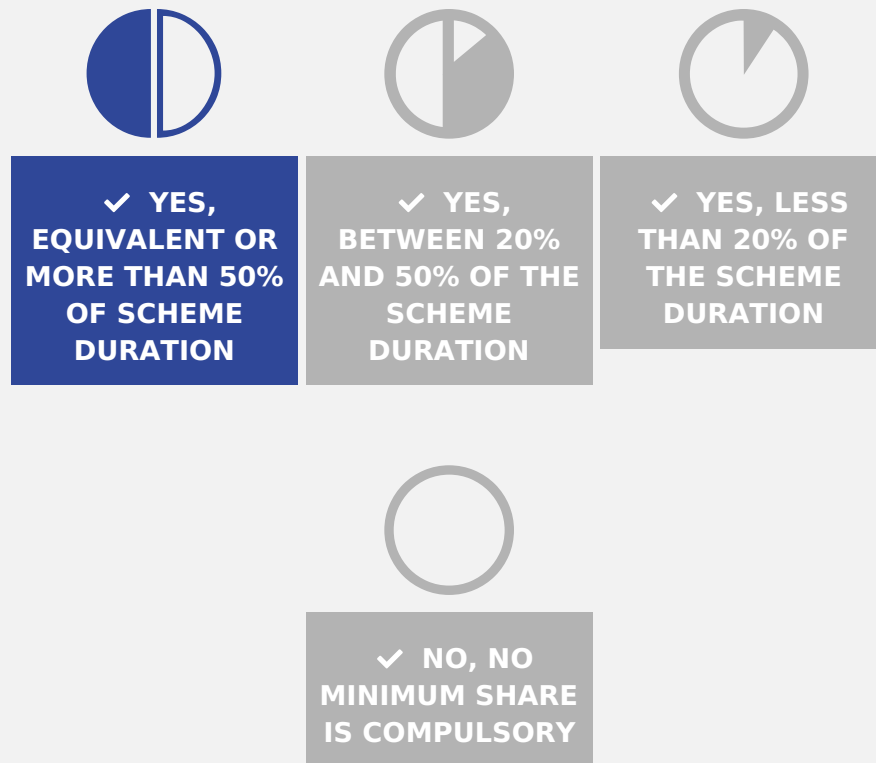
Q17. Is it compulsory to alternate training between two learning venues (school and company)?



Within Apprenticeship at upper secondary level, from the moment a learner chose the apprenticeship pathway, at least half of the learning must take place in the workplace.

In adult apprenticeships, at least 70% must be in the workplace.

Q18. Is the in-company training defined as minimum share of the apprenticeship scheme duration?



Within Apprenticeship at upper secondary level, from the moment a learner chose the apprenticeship pathway, at least half of the learning must take place in the workplace. VET learners can select to join the apprenticeship track in the first, second or the third school year. In case they select to the track in the third year, they will have to spend 20 weeks at the workplace (out of 40 of the third year, and out of the 120 of the total VET programme duration – in this case, the share of apprenticeship in the total duration is below 50%).

In adult apprenticeships, at least 70% must be in the workplace.

Q19. Is there a distinction between the training time and working time for the period spent at workplace, as per regulation?



✓ **YES, THE
LEGAL
FRAMEWORK
MAKES THIS
DISTINCTION**

✓ **NO, THE
LEGAL
FRAMEWORK
MAKES NO
DISTINCTION**

Q20. What is the form of alternation of training between workplace (company) and school?



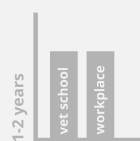
✓ **EVERY WEEK
INCLUDES BOTH
VENUES**



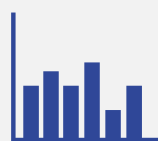
✓ **ONE OR
MORE WEEKS
(LESS THAN 1
MONTH) SPENT
AT SCHOOL
FOLLOWED BY
ONE OR MORE
WEEKS AT
WORKPLACE**



✓ **ONE OR
MORE MONTHS
(LESS THAN 1
YEAR) SPENT AT
SCHOOL
FOLLOWED BY
ONE OR MORE
MONTHS AT
WORKPLACE**



✓ **A LONGER
PERIOD (1-2
YEARS) SPENT AT
SCHOOL
FOLLOWED BY A
LONGER PERIOD
SPENT TRAINING
AT WORKPLACE**



✓ **VARIOUS -
DEPENDS ON
AGREEMENTS
BETWEEN THE
SCHOOL AND THE
COMPANY**



✓ **OTHER**

✓ NOT
SPECIFIED

Upper secondary schools are responsible for finding apprenticeship placements in companies and deciding on how to organise, plan and follow up on the implementation of the apprenticeship. That said, learning may be organised flexibly in a variety of ways according to the needs of the various parties.

One school may have so called 'apprenticeship classes' where learners are enrolled in different vocational programmes and meet at school for common lessons in the foundations of subjects.

Another school may have just a few learners within a vocational programme pursuing the apprenticeship pathway.

Whereas many will start their workplace-based learning during the first year at upper secondary school, others will start in their second or third year.

This is due to that Sweden has a very decentralized school system where the national agency of education determines (together with the social partners) what should be taught, and all how and where is up to the school to decide. The schools decide if a vocational programme should be provided as apprenticeship education and when the apprenticeship starts. The learner chooses between the pathways offered.

Q21. What is the basis for the training offered?



✓ THE SCHEME
IS IMPLEMENTED
VIA A SPECIFIC
APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAMME



✓ THE SCHEME
IS IMPLEMENTED
ON THE BASIS OF
THE SCHOOL-
BASED VET
PROGRAMME



✓ THE SCHEME
IS IMPLEMENTED
BASED ON THE
VET STANDARDS
(VALID
GENERALLY FOR
ALL VET
SCHEMES)



✓ OTHER

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 two pathways share the same subjects and result in the same qualifications. Governance and regulations are, with a few exceptions, the same irrespective of whether the vocational programme is school-based or an apprenticeship. Regulations steering apprenticeships were introduced in the Education Act and in the Upper Secondary School Ordinance following the reform in 2011 (Regulations and general guidelines on study and vocational guidance (SKOLFS 2013:180). Steering documents in the form of curricula, diploma goals and syllabuses are drawn up by the Swedish government and by the National Agency for Education.

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).

Q22. Is the company hosting apprentices required by regulation to follow a training plan at the workplace?



✓ YES, THE
TRAINING PLAN
IS BASED ON THE
NATIONAL/SECTOR
REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE IN-
COMPANY
TRAINING



✓ YES, THE
TRAINING PLAN
IS AGREED AT
THE LEVEL OF
SCHOOL AND
COMPANY



✓ NO, IS NOT
REQUIRED
FORMALLY

Q23. What are the requirements on companies to provide placements, as per regulation?



✓ HAVE TO
PROVIDE A
SUITABLE
LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT



✓ HAVE TO
PROVIDE A
MENTOR / TUTOR
/ TRAINER



✓ OTHER

Companies have to sign training contracts with each apprentice. The training contract should specify the content and scope of the workplace-based learning (See Q28).

The apprentice must also be appointed a supervisor/trainer, who must have 'the necessary skills and experience' for the task and who is considered 'generally suitable'.

Q24. What are the formal requirements regarding workplace trainers/mentors/tutors? What is their profile?

The apprentice must be appointed a supervisor/trainer, who must have 'the necessary skills and experience' for the task and who is considered 'generally suitable'.

There is an increased focus on the supervisor's important role in delivering high quality workplace-based learning.

The National Agency for Education for Education has therefore developed a web-based course for the supervisors of apprentices at workplace.

The course consists of four introductory general modules and a supplementary module. The introductory modules review e.g. receiving and introducing the apprentice, responsibilities of different parties, upper secondary VET in general, pedagogical methods, and monitoring and feedback practices.

The supplementary module delves deeper into supporting and stimulating the apprentice and planning the work.

The introductory modules are estimated to require two days and the supplementary module one day to complete.

The course is not compulsory, but in order for the employer to receive the extra state subsidy, the supervisor must have completed this course or an equivalent training.

Q25. Are there any sanctions on companies that do not provide training to apprentices at the workplace?



No sanctions, but, in practice, should the company fail to provide training in accordance with the education contract, the school would not continue co-operation with that company.

⑥ Contract and compensation

Q26. What is the status of the learner?



✓ ONLY
STUDENT



✓ ONLY
EMPLOYEE



✓ APPRENTICE
IS A SPECIFIC
STATUS
(STUDENT AND
EMPLOYEE
COMBINED)



✓ OTHER

In most cases, apprentices have the status of student.

As of July 2014, learners attending apprenticeship education in upper secondary school may be employed in what is called upper secondary apprentice employment. This means that the apprentice may be offered employment while still in education in accordance with adapted labour law provisions. However, it is not mandatory for employers to employ an apprentice in this form.

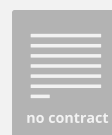
If the employer chooses to employ the apprentice, then an apprenticeship employment contract is signed, and then, learners have:

- the status of a student vis-à-vis the tripartite learning agreement (see Q27 below) and should not perform tasks without a guidance of a supervisor at the workplace.
- the status of an 'apprentice employee' vis-à-vis the employer, when it comes to endurance and other aspects if there is a regulation about that in the collective agreements of that trade.

Q27. Is there any written arrangement between the learner and company, required as per regulation?



✓ YES



✓ NO

A training contract is obligatory for every apprentice according to the national School Law (Skollagen 2010:800 Chapter 16 § 11a). This is a written agreement arranged for each learner and workplace, to be signed by the learner, school-head, and the legal entity or person responsible for the workplace training part of the apprenticeship. The

head of the school shall ensure that such contracts are signed, while the school will monitor whether the education contract has been implemented.

On top of that, if the company chooses to employ the apprentice during the apprenticeship track, an apprenticeship employment contract must be signed by the employer and the apprentice. This is a choice made by the company (see Q26, Q28).

Q28. What is the nature of the written arrangement?



The training contract is a formal agreement which is required as a minimum in all apprenticeship offers at upper secondary level. It should specify the content and scope of the workplace-based learning. The training contract shall include:

1. what parts of the education are to be carried out at the workplace and the extent of these parts; how many weeks of in-company training each semester and what times to apply for the training in the workplace;
2. how responsibility is shared between employer and school for possible damage caused by the apprentice during workplace learning;
3. the terms of the agreement and the grounds for termination of the agreement before the term of the agreement expires; and
4. which teacher at the school and what supervisor at the workplace should be contact persons for the workplace-based part of the education.

In addition, each apprentice has his/her individual learning plan.

If the employer chooses to employ and pay wages to the apprentice, an apprenticeship employment contract must be signed by the employer and the apprentice, as per the Act on Apprenticeship Employment (Lag 2014:421 om gymnasial lärlingsanställning), part of the Labour Code.

It is not required that the employer hires the apprentice either during or after the studies.

Q29. Where is the contract or the formal agreement registered?



✓ AT THE
SCHOOL



✓ AT THE
MINISTRY OF
EMPLOYMENT



✓ AT THE
CHAMBERS



✓ AT THE
MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION



✓ OTHER

Upper secondary schools are responsible for finding the in-company placements and deciding on how to organise, plan and follow up on the delivery of learning within the apprenticeship and registering the formal training agreement.

Q30. Do apprentices receive a wage or allowance?



✓ YES, ALL
APPRENTICES
RECEIVE A WAGE
(TAXABLE
INCOME)



✓ YES, ALL
APPRENTICES
RECEIVE AN
ALLOWANCE
(NOT A FORM OF
TAXABLE
INCOME)



✓ APPRENTICES
RECEIVE A
REIMBURSEMENT
OF EXPENSES



✓ NO FORM OF
COMPENSATION
IS FORESEEN BY
LAW

All students studying in upper secondary school receive a monthly study allowance. That includes apprentices who are not employed during the apprenticeship period.

As of July 2014, learners attending apprenticeship education in upper secondary school *may* be employed in what is called upper secondary apprentice employment. This means that the apprentice can be offered employment while still in education in accordance with adapted labour law provisions.

In those cases, apprentices receive a salary paid by the employer.

Q31. How is the apprentice wage (taxable income) set?



✓ BY LAW
(APPLYING FOR
ALL)



✓ BY CROSS-
SECTORAL
COLLECTIVE
AGREEMENTS AT
NATIONAL OR
LOCAL LEVEL



✓ BY SECTORAL
COLLECTIVE
AGREEMENTS AT
NATIONAL OR
LOCAL LEVEL



✓ OTHER

✓ BY FIRM-
LEVEL
COLLECTIVE
AGREEMENTS OR
INDIVIDUAL
AGREEMENTS
BETWEEN
APPRENTICE AND
COMPANY

By law, applicable to all, in the case apprentices receive the monthly study allowance that is available for all upper secondary students.

By collective agreements, in case apprentices are employed by the training company during the programme – and then a salary is paid to the apprentice by the company.

7 Financing and incentives

Q32. Who covers the cost of the wage or allowance of the apprentice?



✓ EMPLOYERS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

The state pays the study allowance and the supplement to cover extra living costs for apprentices at upper secondary schools.
In cases where the apprentice has an employment contract, the employer pays the salary.

Q33. What are the sources of financing of the direct costs for the in-company training part of the apprenticeship scheme?



✓ SINGLE
EMPLOYERS
HOSTING
APPRENTICES



✓ SECTORAL
FUNDS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

Companies pay salary if they chose so, and contribute with the time of their trainers, materials etc. They may benefit from state subsidy (see below and Q34).

The major part of school funding comes from municipal tax revenues, but parts of the funding also comes from a central general government grant to the municipalities. This is supplemented by targeted central government grants for special initiatives.

The VET provider can apply for an extra government grant per apprentice and year. Of the received sum, up to approx. EUR 1,000 may be used by the school to develop its apprenticeship programmes. The rest of the money must be disbursed to the employer(s) of the apprentice.

Q34. Are there any financial incentives for companies that offer apprenticeship places?



✓ YES,
SUBSIDIES



✓ YES, TAX
DEDUCTIONS



✓ YES, OTHER
INCENTIVES



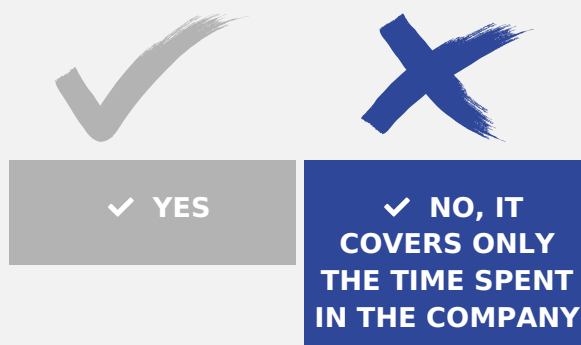
✓ NO
FINANCIAL
INCENTIVES

The vocational education provider (VET school) can apply to receive an extra government grant per apprentice and year, of which 83 % is earmarked for the employer receiving the student.

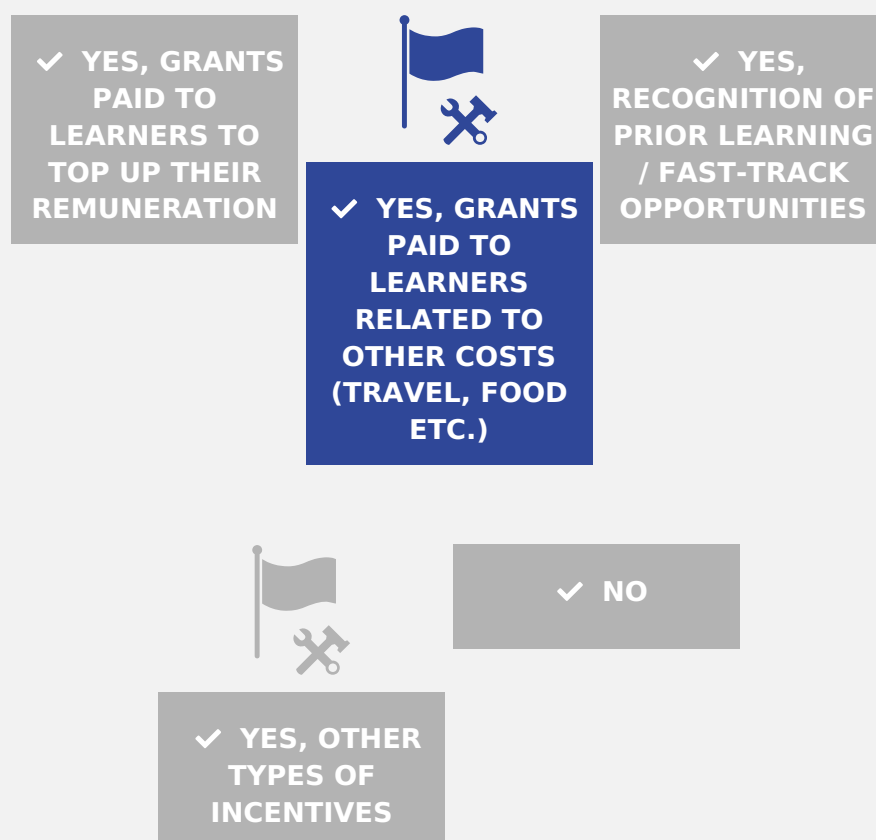
Moreover, the training company can receive an additional subsidy if the trainer/supervisor of the apprentice has participated in a training programme that has been approved by the National Agency for Education for Education.

See more in Cedefop's Database on financing apprenticeships in the EU:
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/financing-apprenticeships/financ...>

Q35. Does the wage or allowance of the apprentice cover both the time spent at school and in the company?



Q36. Are there any incentives for learners?



All students studying in upper secondary school receive a monthly study allowance, or a salary if the company chooses to employ an apprentice during the programme.

Since 2014, an apprentice can also apply for a supplement to cover extra living costs, for example transportation to the workplace and lunch. These subsidies are also funded by the Swedish government.

See more in Cedefop's Database on financing apprenticeships in the EU:
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/financing-apprenticeships/financ...>