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# How does conceptual shaping of learning outcomes influence use in policy and practice: issues and challenges in Sweden

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Swedish Council for  
Higher Education

# The Swedish Council for Higher Education

- Government agency with responsibilities across the education sector.
- 315 employees in Stockholm and Visby.
- Analysis and statistics.
- Entrance requirements and admission to higher education.
- International cooperation (e.g. Erasmus+, Nordic and Swedish programmes).
- Study information.
- Evaluation and recognition of foreign qualifications/ENIC-NARIC Sweden.



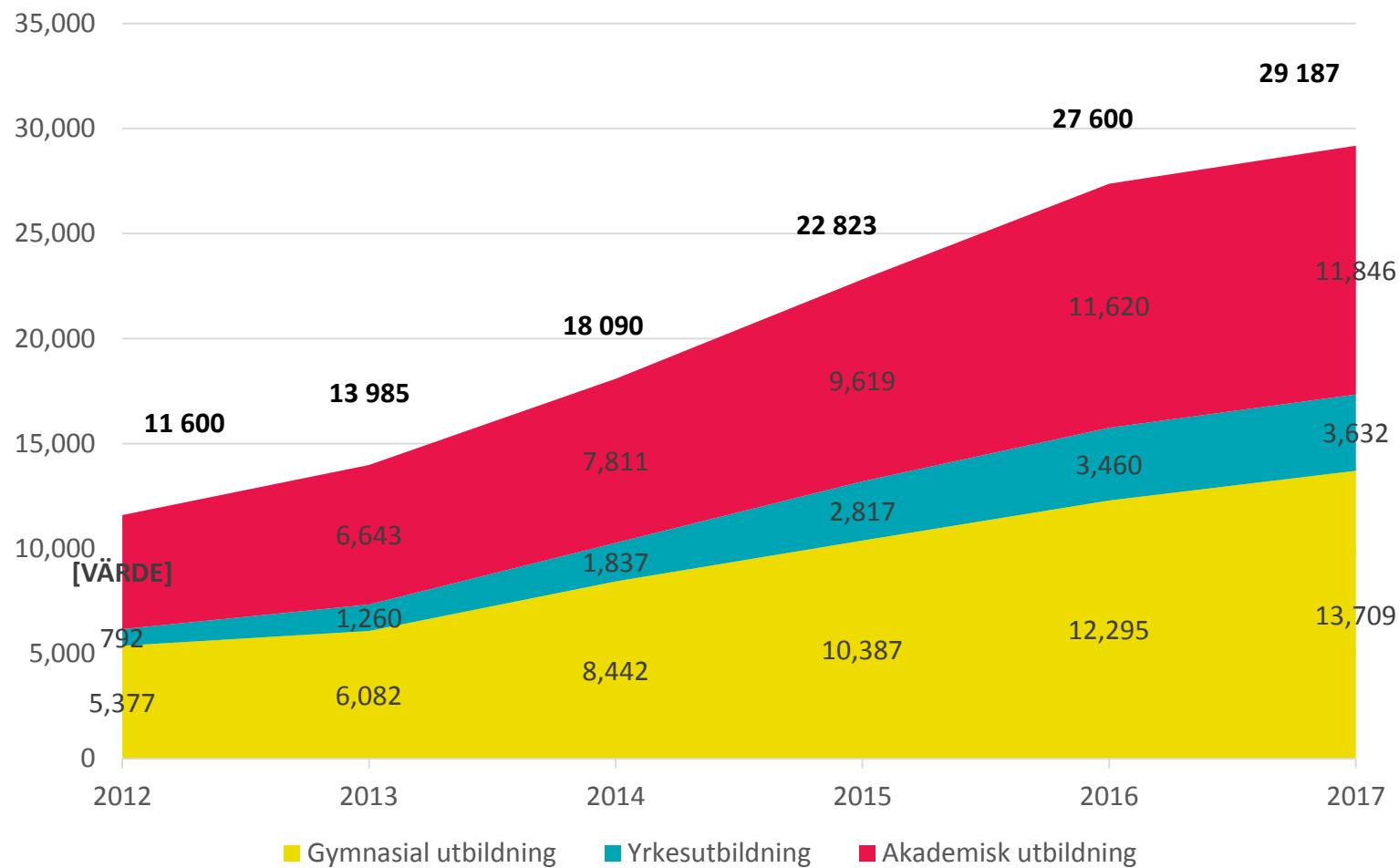
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# Department for Qualification Recognition

- Sweden's ENIC-NARIC, and possibly the largest with 95 staff who speak over 30 languages.
- Provide information about recognition and foreign qualifications.
- Cooperation with organisations regarding regulated professions, National Coordinator for Professional Qualifications Directive, and for Diploma Supplement.
- Cooperation with other government actors and social partners on issues regarding integration, validation & qualifications.
- Three main streams of recognition: upper-secondary education (1980); higher education (1987); and post-secondary and vocational education (2013) (2009-Myh).



# Applications 2012-2017



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# Higher Vocational Education in Sweden

**Yh** Yrkeshögskolan

- Agency for HVE administers post-secondary VET (non-university) in cooperation with industry, involved in both planning and programme delivery.
- Progs only offered in fields with demand for skills and WBL integrated in most programmes.
- Model developed in 2009. Now 50 000 students.
- Higher Vocational Diploma SeQF 5. Advanced HV Diploma SeQF 6 (min. 25% WBL). Challenge – HVE credits often not transferrable to HE (HEI decision).
- UHR constantly refine our method, and now evaluate qualifications outside school-based PS VET.
- We are detectives (accreditation, false documents, etc.).



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# About Our Statement . . . moving towards LOs

- Comparison sentence, when comparable.
- The country of qualification.
- The title of qualification.
- The education provider.
- The year of completion.
- The year of awarding.
- The length → level of the qualification.
- Additional information about the qualification (i.e., content) and soon linked to SeQF.



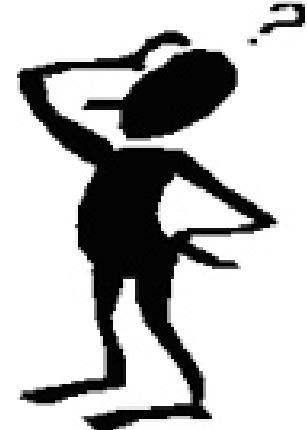
Universitets- och högskolerådet (UHR) är Sveriges  
ENIC-NARIC-kontor. För mer information, besök oss  
på [www.uhr.se](http://www.uhr.se).  
Kontakta gärna UHR för verifikation av utlättandets äkthet.



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# Challenges: How to

- Handle refugees with unverifiable, partial, or no documentation and issue backgrounds paper.
- Using the SeQF/EQF to increase the understanding of our assessments. This can also help us bridge between upper secondary, post-secondary and HE.
- UHR has three special Government assignments to recognise prior learning:
  - 1) Validation for admission and credit transfer in the HE sector, working with the HEI;
  - 2) Validation without documentation in the third cycle of education; and
  - 3) Validation as admission requirements for teachers.



# Big move to learning outcomes in the 1990s

- In 1994 primary and upper secondary education in Sweden were reformed to moved from a content-based system to a goal- and result-oriented system where knowledge criteria are the basis for grading.
- Further reforms in 2000 and 2011, both of which strengthened the goal- and result-orientation of the system. From 2011 learning outcomes are assessed with national tests. New curricula have clear links to learning outcomes and are referenced to the Swedish Qualification Framework (SeQF).
- In 2011 vocationally-*oriented* programms were reformed into vocational programmes – IVET students should be employable upon completion. IVET reforms in cooperation with social parters (Ntl Prog Councils) to ensure learing outcomes meet labour market needs. LOs are embedded in curricula.

# Learning outcome goals in upper secondary IVET

- Schools must provide students in vocational programmes the opportunity to achieve a level of professional expertise accepted by industry as providing good preparation for professional life.
- Students acquire knowledge in the courses they have studied, and can use this knowledge for further studies, and in societal life, working life and everyday life.
- And can use knowledge to formulate and analyse assumptions; critically examine statements; solve practical problems and tasks; critically assess what they hear and read; have a knowledge of international issues; and can use sources and modern technology in the search for knowledge, communication, creativity and learning.



# Newest reform – 2016 Commission "an attractive upper secondary education for all"

- The Commission analysed and suggested reforms to increase the quality of upper secondary school (including IVET).
- Measures to ensure all young people start and complete upper secondary and thereby gain the knowledge they need for working life and/or continued studies.
- Maintaining the *revocation* of IVET from the 2011 reform while at the same time giving IVET students eligibility for HE without making active choices. Courses leading to eligibility for HE would be included as a fundamental element of all vocational programmes (but with possible opt out).
- Better linking IVET to degrees in engineering, teaching and nursing.

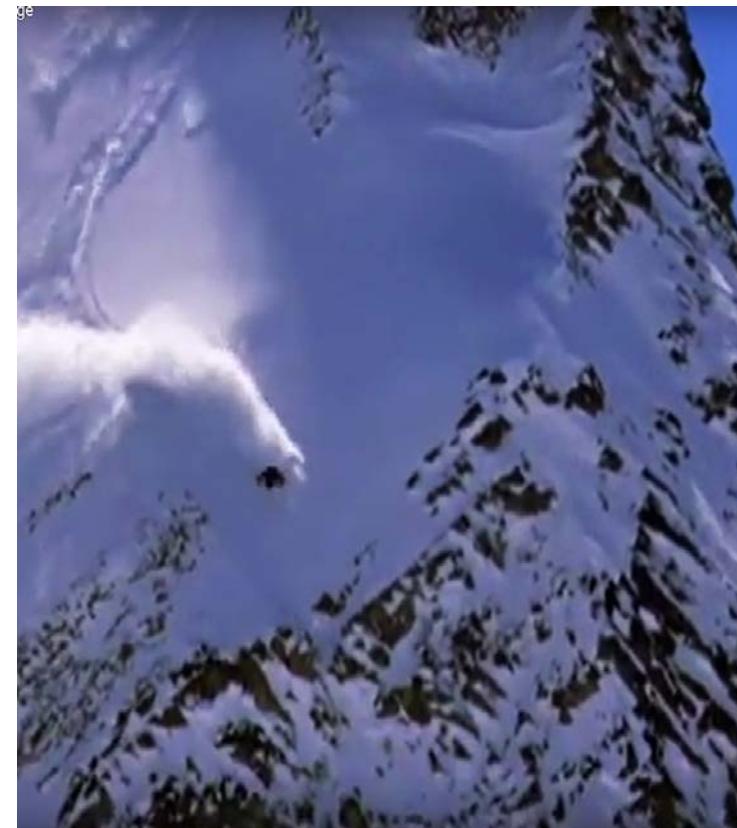
# Higher vocational education learning outcomes

- Providers must demonstrate a LM need for the knowledge, skills and competences. This is a concrete example of an entire education form built on a learning outcomes approach.
- Providers must describe the KSC to be acquired in the HVE and in order to gain a level placement (at level 5 or 6) in the SeQF.
- When applying providers indicate the occupational role(s) the HVE would lead to. The KSCs must meet LM needs and the learning outcomes outlined in the application for the HVE.
- In HVE, *knowledge* is built on facts, principals, theories. *Skills* means the ability to use knowledge and can be *cognitive* or *practical*. Competences are the ability to use knowledge and skills. Independence and the ability to cooperate are key terms.
- HVE must have an education plan indicating the LO in terms of KSC and are more related to LO than length of training.



# Why move to a LO approach (and NQF) in Sweden?

- Gains not seen as obvious at the national level if restricted to the formal education system.
- Substantial part of education and training takes part outside the formal education system (e.g. sectors, continuous training at work, liberal adult education, labour market training).
- To include qualifications awarded outside the formal education system and bring the qualifications together in a national framework increases transparency **and transferability** and give a useful overview of qualifications awarded in Sweden.



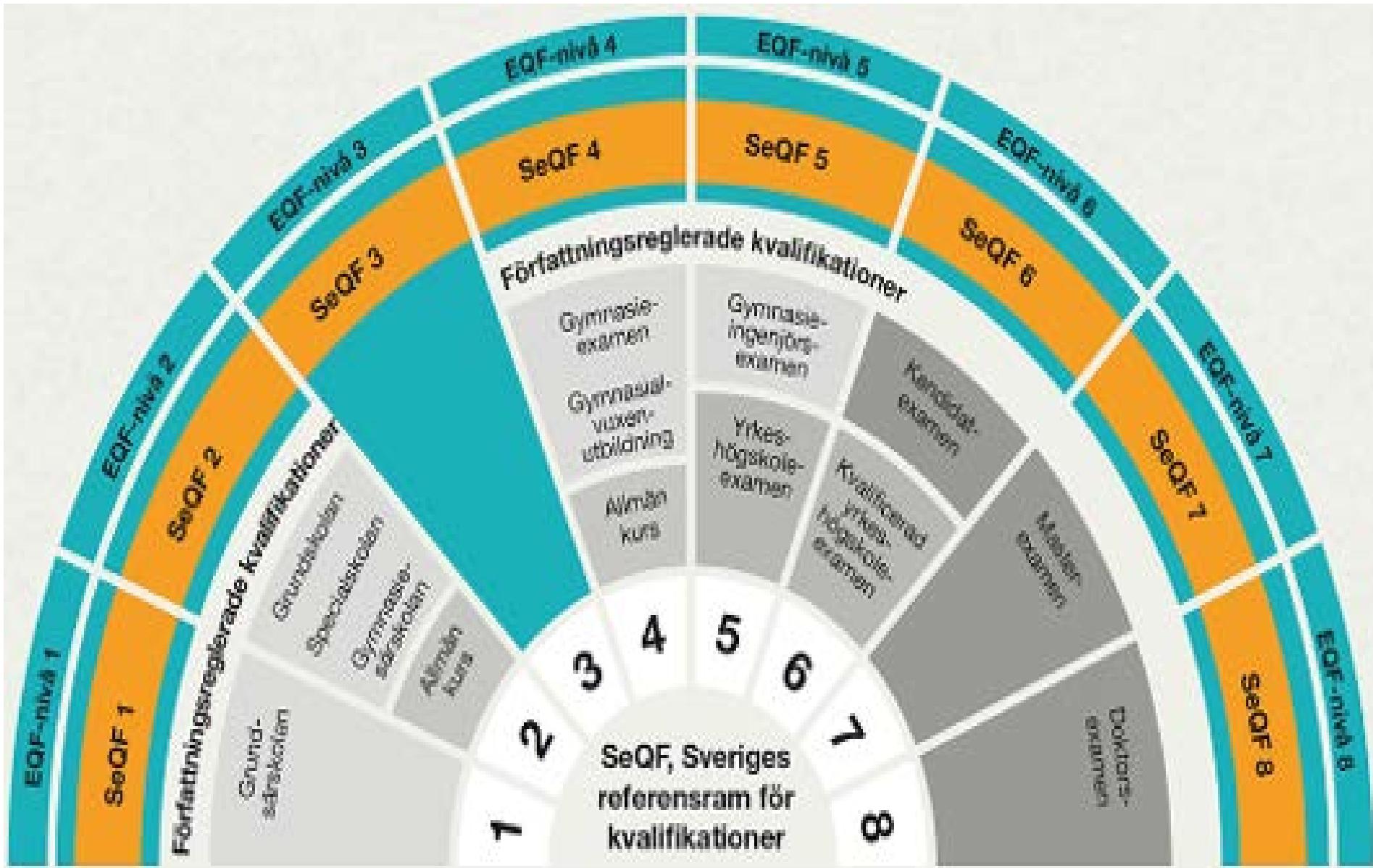
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# SeQF – scope and point of departure

- Comprehensive framework to include all types of qualifications – regardless of provider.
- The development to be characterised by openness, inclusiveness and dialogue with relevant national authorities and other stakeholders.
- The creation of a framework that inspire confidence – distinct demands on quality assurance and learning outcomes.
- The inclusive NQF to be developed gradually in pace with the interest from working life and sectors.



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EQF-nivå innebär den motsvarande nivån inom den europeiska referensramen för kvalifikationer.

Kvalifikationer som nyttas placeras av Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan.

# Hoped-for benefits with the SeQF reform in Sweden

- Create a broad picture of qualifications issued by a wide range of actors.
- Facilitate for individuals, employers and education providers to evaluate levels.
- Clarify what a person with given qualifications know, understand and can do.
  - Increase employability → Recruit students at the right level
- Increase LM mobility and facilitate matching.
- Facilitate validation and legitimise validation on the LM.
- Provide a common language for different actors.
- Increase interest among actors to work with LO and QA.
- Stimulate continued and lifelong learning.



# Challenges: How to use learning outcomes and the SeQF to facilitate and recognise lifelong learning

- <https://www.seqf.se/sv/Sa-funkar-det/Ansokan/>
- Organisations that issue qualifications outside the public education system can apply for level placement in the SeQF (e.g. social partners, folk high schools, associations, etc.). The application costs €1000 and the level is valid for ten years.
- A guide indicates the requirements and questions to be answered when applying. Level descriptors in the SeQF reflect the conditions for education and work in Sweden, and link to the EQF.
- Applications are assessed by MYH. Applicants have access to a guide and handbook (From learning outcomes to the SeQF).



# **. . . challenges in using learning outcomes and the SeQF to facilitate lifelong learning**

- Necessary info when applying for SeQF placement: how KSC are assessed (e.g. written or practical tests, validation, etc.) and how this assures learning outcomes. The applicant must also describe qualifications assessors must have.
- Systematic QA used to guarantee the quality of qualifications. It is necessary to: 1) describe the QA is planned and conducted; 2) how QA is evaluated; 3) conclusions drawn from evaluation of the QA; and 4) how the conclusions impact future QA of the qualifications (EQAVET ref. framework).
- A challenge is to further develop industry-sector qualification and validation models using LOs. 21 models. 57 occupations. 12000 individuals validated in 2015-17 in construction, maintenance, retail, technicians, hairdressers, hospitality, health care, electrical, metal cutting, ventilation, etc.



# BUT – Bologna with student eyes 2018: In my country allocation of ECTS is on the basis of learning outcomes



Fig. 9.04: In my country, the allocation of ECTS does happen on the basis of the formulation of Learning Outcomes

- EHEA country with no ESU mem
- Not applicable
- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Very Often
- Always

