

Sweden

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Sweden: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2005

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Sweden. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2005. Later editions can be viewed at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Sweden

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



Sweden

01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy. Since the constitutional reform of 1974, the monarchy has had purely ceremonial functions as Head of State while the formal power of decision rests with the Government.

Parliament (Riksdagen) is the country's highest decision-making body. Since 1971 it has had a single chamber with 349 members, who are chosen by direct election every four years. Seats are distributed proportionally between those parties that poll at least 4 per cent of the national vote or at least 12 per cent in any one constituency. The Social Democratic Party has been in power in Sweden for much of the post-war period. In 1976-82 and again in 1991-94 the country was ruled by a 'non-socialist' (centre-right) government. After the 1998 elections, the Social Democrats formed a minority government, which today collaborates in a number of areas with the Left Party and the Green Party.

Following a national referendum, Sweden formally took its place in the EU in January 1995. When European Monetary Union (EMU) entered into force on 1 January 1999, Sweden chose to remain outside but kept the door open for accession at a later date. A final decision on EMU is to be taken after a national referendum.

Sweden is highly dependent on international trade to maintain its high productivity and good living standards. In 2003, exports were equivalent of 44 % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Since the mid-1990s, the Swedish economy has undergone major changes. The restoration of order to State finances, the low-inflation policy, investments in education and entrepreneurship as well as the emergence of a globally leading telecommunications and IT industry are among the reasons why the Swedish economy is performing nicely. The prerequisites for continued good growth are favourable. Public sector surpluses are stable, and spending remains within the expenditure ceilings. Stronger confidence in Sweden and its economy is apparent, for example, from the decline in interest rates compared to those in other countries.

During 2002-2003, the labour market situation weakened, reflecting an international economic slowdown. In 2004, signals of a cyclical recovery have become increasingly clear. Economic activity has also accelerated. The strongest signs of recovery are noticeable in the export market.

Swedish schools show good results in international comparisons. Yet one out of ten students who complete the nine-year compulsory school does not qualify for admission to upper secondary school. For this reason, the government is providing extra funding for the schools. The purpose of the new funding is to create better prerequisites for improving student performance by adding more personnel.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Sweden is the third largest country in Western Europe with an area of 450.000 km² (174,000 sq. mi.). It extends 1,600 kilometres from north to south.

This wide-flung country has a population of about 9 million (8 952 605 Population May 2003). Some 85 % of its inhabitants live in the southern half of Sweden, in three major urban centres in particular; the capital city of Stockholm (1,7 million including suburbs), Göteborg on the west coast (800,000) and Malmö in the south (500,000).

Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities (kommuner), and 21 county councils (landsting), including the municipality of Gotland, which does not have its own county council.

[Sweden's population by age and sex on December 31, 2002](#)

Demographic change		
1991	1996	2004
8.644.119	8.844.499	9.008.883

Age specific demographic scenario by 2020	
0-24	2.621.636
25-59	4.287.106

60+	2.596.638
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Swedish fertility plummeted after 1990 and had fallen to 1,5 children per woman in 1998 and 1999. This is the lowest birth rate in Sweden ever - although above the European average. The figures for the years 2000 and 2001 show a slight increase. The growing proportion of pensioners in the Swedish population is creating economic problems - as it is in most other comparable industrialised countries. Life expectancy has risen to 77 years for men and 82 for women. It is estimated that the number of persons aged 65 or over in the year 2025 will have risen from today's 1,5 million to 2.2 million.

Migration rates		
IMMIGRATION		
(1991) 49.731	(1996) 39.895	(2003) 63.795
NET IMMIGRATION		
(1991) 24.986	(1996) 6.011	(2003) 28.772

For a long time, Sweden was ethnically homogenous. Before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the Sami (Lapps) were the only distinct minority of any size in the country. Today, some 20 per cent of Sweden's inhabitants are of foreign extraction in the sense that they were either born outside the country or have at least one parent who was born abroad. The largest group of foreign citizens are the Finns (100 000). The second largest group is from Iraq (36 000), followed by Norwegians (33,000), Danes (26,000), Yugoslavs (21,000), Bosnians (20,000), Germans (17,000) and Poles (15,000).

Millions of persons/age group 2004	
0-6	0.7
7-18	1.3
19-24	0.7
25-64	4.8
+65	1.6
TOTAL	9.0

At the turn of the year 2003/04 the total population in Sweden was 8,977,028 people.

In 2003 per capita population density was 22 persons per km². This figure varies greatly from region to region. The most densely populated area is the County of Stockholm, which has 281 inhabitants per km². In the County of Skåne there are 102 inhabitants per km² whilst in the counties furthest to the north, there are only 3 inhabitants per km² (Counties of Jämtland and Norrbotten).

There has been a noticeable decline in the birth rate in Sweden, after the rapid increase at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In 2001, there were 1.5 births per woman.

Average life expectancy increased from around 40 years in 1850, to 55 years in 1900, and in 2003 the figure had increased to 77 for men and 82 for women (www.eurydice.org).

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN 2002	IN THOUSANDS
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	91
MANUFACTURING, MINING, QUARRYING, ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLY	747
(OF WHICH ENGINEERING INDUSTRY)	360
CONSTRUCTION	235
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE AND COMMUNICATIONS	800
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIATION, BUSINESS ACTIVITIES	611
EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	391
HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK	792
PERSONAL SERVICES AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	330
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, SANITATION	241
UNKNOWN	6

Employment					
	1990	1995	1999	2000	2002
POPULATION 16-64 (THOUSANDS)	5,397	5,523	5,581	5,602	5,666
LABOUR FORCE, 16-64 (THOUSANDS)	4,560	4,319	4,309	4,362	4,421
EMPLOYED, % OF POPULATION	83.1	72.2	72.9	74.2	74.9

- WHERE OF MEN	85.2	73.5	74.8	76.1	76.3
- WHEREOF WOMEN	81.0	70.8	70.9	72.2	73.4
UNEMPLOYED, % OF LABOUR FORCE	1.6	7.7	5.6	4.7	4.0
- WHEREOF MEN	1.7	8.5	5.9	5.0	4.4
- WHEREOF WOMEN	1.6	6.9	5.2	4.3	3.6

The data are annual averages. The labour force is defined as the total number employed and the number unemployed. Those who are able to work but who are not actively looking for work on the labour market are thus not included. This means that students are excluded from the labour force and thus do not appear in the statistics on unemployment.

Unemployment rates (young people under 25)		
1991	1996	2002
45.000	73.000	41.000
13,8%	30,4%	17,9%

[Unemployment. Per cent of labour force. Age 16-64 years. Seasonally adjusted](#)

Percentage expenditure of GNP on education and training:	
1991	8 %
1995	7,46%
2000	7,52 %

Public spending on education and training as a percentage of total public expenditure.

The total cost of the schools system in 2003 was SEK 113 028 million. (<http://www.skolverket.se>)

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During 2002-2003, the labour market situation weakened, reflecting an international economic slowdown. In 2004, signals of a cyclical recovery have become increasingly clear. Economic activity has also accelerated. The strongest signs of recovery are noticeable in the export market.

In 1991, unemployment in the age group 16-64 was 3 %; by 1998 the figure had risen to 6,5 %, but has again fallen, being 3,97 % in 2001: (<http://www.sweden.se>).

TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE

Employment in manufacturing industries will continue to decline, mostly following its long-term downward trend, from 800 000 today to 650 000 in 2020. Sweden can however expect large variations among the different sectors. Employment in the construction industry is predicted to increase after the 30 per cent decrease during the 1990s, but will not reach the same high level as in 1990. The number of employed in agriculture and forestry is expected to fall by half through the year 2020. Within the private service sector, the number of employed is projected to increase from 1.5 million in 1999 to close to 1.7 million in the year 2020. The increase will mainly occur in consultancy services focusing on the business sector. In contrast, employment in retail trade, banking, and financial operations is expected to decrease.

In the public sector -child care, school, health and medical care, care of the elderly, etc.-it is assumed that employment growth will generally follow changes in the number of persons in the age groups that use the different services in these sub sectors. An increase in personnel ratios is also assumed after the large cutbacks during the 1990s. Elder care requires a large increase in personnel over the current level of staff. Altogether, employment in the public sector (or rather for the activities that are currently mainly run under public management) is projected to increase by 270 000 individuals through the year 2020, at which time it will amount to 1.54 million individuals.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Thirty years ago, six of ten working age individuals had completed at most elementary or compulsory school. The equivalent share today is two out of ten. Slightly more than one fourth had upper secondary education, compared with half today. The share of the population with post secondary education has increased from less than 10 per cent to 30 per cent today. The past 30 years have thus witnessed a radical increase in the education levels of the population. The development over the next 20 years is unlikely to be equally dramatic. The share with post secondary education will however increase to close to four of ten, and the share with only elementary or compulsory school education will decrease to one in ten.

The share with upper secondary education is expected to remain the same, that is, about 50 per cent. Forecasts of the future must naturally be based on a large number of assumptions. We have assumed a generally unchanged educational system. In practise this implies, among other things, that virtually all youth are assumed to begin upper secondary school. We also assume that the number of new students in higher education will remain at its current level. Other forms of education are also assumed to continue at their current size, with the exception of the Adult Education Initiative, which is assumed to be clearly smaller in the future (Trender och prognoser 2002, SCB).

Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level, % (2003)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-15	34%	42%	21%
SWEDEN	18%	54%	27%

ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education
ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with a low level of education (2000, 2002)

SWEDEN		
2000	2002	2003
7.7	10.4	9.0b

Low level of education: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2 (ISCED 1997)

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

b = break in series

Low level of education: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2 (ISCED 1997)

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

- 733,500 children attend Swedish pre-schools or childcare programmes for school children.
- Some 113,500 adults are employed within such establishments.
- 1,046,000 pupils attend compulsory school in Sweden. 83,800 teachers (full-time equivalents) work in Swedish compulsory schools.
- 333,900 young people attend upper secondary school in Sweden. 27,300 teachers (full-time equivalents) work in these schools.
- Sweden has 13 state universities, 23 state university colleges, 1 county university college and 13 privately run higher education institutions.
- Over 350,000 students (285,000 full-time equivalents) are enrolled in undergraduate programmes and some 20,000 in research programmes. The higher education system employs about 23,000 teachers and researchers.
- Approximately 1,000,000 people receive some form of study grant to finance their studies.
- Over 550,000 children and young people between the ages of 7 and 25 are members of one or more of the roughly 100 youth organisations that receive central government support for their individual activities. (www.utbildning.regeringen.se)

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

As part of a general trend in Swedish society towards decentralisation of responsibility and decision-making powers, the education system (including VET) has undergone fundamental changes in recent years. In accordance with decisions in Parliament, in 1991 full mandatorship for teaching staff was transferred from the central authorities to the municipalities and their local school authorities, which were also given undivided responsibility for organising and implementing school activities. Parliament also laid down the principles of school management by objectives and results with fewer regulations and clearer goals.

Another guiding principle of education policy has been to create scope for diversity within the education system, and freedom for individual students to choose between different types of schools as well as between study routes.

The main principle of division of responsibilities and functions within the Swedish education system today is that Parliament and the Government should control educational activities by defining national goals and guidelines for education. The central and local education authorities together with the different organisers are responsible for ensuring that the education system is organised in accordance with national goals. Within the framework and guidelines laid down by Parliament and the Government, the organisers enjoy considerable freedom to determine how activities are to be implemented and resources distributed and used.

The change over to goal and result-oriented steering of the education system requires the central and local authorities, as well as individual schools, to systematically follow up and evaluate educational activities in relation to goals and conditions applying to them (<http://www.sweden.se>).

General policy decisions on the objectives, activities and finances of the education system are a responsibility shared between Parliament and the Government.

Legislation is passed by Parliament, which also decides on the funding of appropriations to the educational system. The Government issues ordinances as well as general guidelines on the distributions of appropriations. The Government also lays down the curricula for the whole school system (<http://www.sweden.se>).

Description of the Swedish system for vocational training is a complicated task since there is no natural distinction between vocational training and general education. Hence, there are no separate schools for vocational training within the school system. A basic objective in the Swedish education system is to narrow the gap between vocational and general education as much as possible.

ADMINISTRATIVE TRENDS

The administrative trend has been the introduction of:

- framework legislation,
- decentralisation,
- market mechanisms and increased competition between training providers,
- delegation of authority to individual training providers,

- free choice of education in a coherent and open educational system.

The overall administrative trend is characterised by a shift towards increased delegation and decentralisation, primarily through delegation of authority to regional and local bodies, especially the municipalities. The objective is to arrive at a situation where resources are allocated efficiently and with a view to local demands and needs. The actual delegation of power in the economic realm has been significant. Firstly, municipalities and other regional/local bodies may now - within certain limits and in accordance with overall objectives - independently allocate their income (State grants and taxes).

Secondly, there is a trend towards letting the market regulate training supply via purchasing training from different training providers. The overall intention is to produce a more demand-oriented VET system, which ensures a more or less direct relation between allocated resources and the number of users. This trend has been accompanied by an increased focus on quality development and assurance.

Recently, there has been some tendency towards more government control in the education sector. For the moment, there is a great concern about equivalence and quality in Swedish education and training (Andersson, Ronnie, The financing of vocational education and training in Sweden Financing portrait. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 2000. (Cedefop Panorama series).

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Overall responsibility for education (including VET) in Sweden rests with Parliament and the Government. With the exception of the University of Agricultural Sciences, under the Ministry of Agriculture, and employment training, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, all public education-and as from 1997 also child services-comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Ministry of Education and Science (Utbildningsdepartementet) is responsible for matters regarding pre-school education and child care for school children, pre-school classes, compulsory school and equivalent schools, upper secondary school, independent schools, adult education, popular adult education, post-secondary education, universities and university colleges, research, study support and student social issues. (<http://www.utbildning.regeringen.se>)

Those responsible for the provision of education under the Ministry of Education and Science are:

- The National Agency for Education (Skolverket)
- The National Agency for School Improvement (Myndigheten för skolutveckling)
- The Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education (Specialpedagogiska institutet)
- The National Agency for Special Schools for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Specialskolmyndigheten)
- The International Programmes Office for Education (Internationella Programkontoret för utbildningsområdet)
- The National Board of Student Aid (Centrala studiestödsnämnden)
- The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet)
- Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning (Nationellt Centrum för flexibelt lärande)
- National Agency of Advanced Vocational Education (Myndigheten för kvalificerad yrkesutbildning)
- The municipalities (Kommunerna)
- The county councils (Landstingen)
- Private mandators (Fristående skolor)
- The National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket)
- The National Agency for Services to Universities and University Colleges (Verket för Högskoleservice)
- The Agency for Sweden's Internet University (Myndigheten för Sveriges Nätuniversitet)

The central administrative agencies work independently of the Ministry and decide on their own responsibility in accordance with guidelines drawn up by the Government, not only in general instructions, but also in the annual government budget appropriation document, and by giving the authority special tasks. The following agencies and organisations, amongst others, come under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Sciences.

The National Agency for Education has the responsibility of systematically following up and examining whether the national goals of the school have been achieved. One of the main tasks is to examine the quality and outcome of education in municipalities and independent schools, as well as supervise their activities. The National Agency for Education also has the task of developing the steering documents, e. g. syllabuses and grading criteria, as well as the responsibility for examining issues concerning independent schools. The authority also has the task of determining priorities for issues concerning quality, national equivalence and the right of the individual to legal security. Special school inspectors examine the quality of some aspects of the Swedish schools. The National Agency for Education allocates funds to the universities and university colleges for research into the school system, for the training programme for school heads, competence development of teachers and personnel within the school concerning reforms decided at central level, as well as awarding teaching scholarships for competence development of individual teachers.

The Swedish Agency for School Improvement provides support for the development of local activities in pre-school, school and adult education. The main task of the new authority is to support and stimulate municipalities and schools in their work of achieving the national goals. Through the authority, the state will support work on developing quality within nationally prioritised areas. In the next few years, the focus will be primarily on measures to achieve better results in basic skills, and to improve conditions for education in segregated areas.

The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement is also responsible for the national programme of training for school heads, as well as promoting the competence development of staff in the school and child care system. In addition, the Authority will stimulate the continuing use of information technology in the school, be responsible for development oriented information campaigns, as well as disseminating research findings. (<http://www.skolverket.se> and <http://www.skolutveckling.se>)

The Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education is responsible for allocating public funds for special pedagogical issues. The main task of the Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education is to provide support to the municipalities, other school organisers and independent schools on special pedagogical issues concerning disabilities. (<http://www.si.se>)

The school system is one of the biggest and most important remits of Swedish municipal governments. During the 2000/2001 school year, municipal school systems encompassed 1,787,600 pupils and students. The municipalities are responsible for:

- preschool classes for six-year-olds
- the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school for all children aged 7-16
- the upper secondary school, attended by 90 percent of older teenagers (VET included)
- adult schools plus Swedish language instruction programmes for immigrants (VET included)
- special education programmes for children and youth, as well as adult programmes for people with intellectual disabilities. (VET included)

This means that practically all education below the university level is provided by municipalities. Privately operated "independent schools" (friskolor) approved by the State may also provide education.

Child care (or as it is called in Swedish legislation, preschool activities) (förskola) is one municipal task that has grown very much in the past 40 years. Today municipalities are required to offer preschool activities to all children from the age of one year if their parents are gainfully employed or studying, or if the children themselves have a special need for support.

During the 1990s, municipalities have assumed a growing share of responsibility for counter-cyclical labor market policy programmes (training and temporary employment openings). They take care of nearly 60 percent of all participants in these programmes, which are partly State-financed. A total of some 100,000 people are enrolled in these municipal programmes.

The county councils (Landstingen) operate a number of folk high schools (small, often residential adult schools) (Folkhögskolor) and are in charge of certain upper secondary school-level training programmes in the health care professions as well as in agriculture and forestry.

The county councils can also cooperate with two or more municipalities to form a joint board to handle a given operation, such as upper secondary schools.

The local authorities (kommuner) bear overall responsibility for the implementation and development of educational activities within the school system. The 1991 Local Government Act gives the municipalities and county councils (Landsting) the option of designing their own organisational structures with different committees having different areas of responsibility. The upper secondary school and adult education (including VET) usually come under an education and culture committee. The committee or committees responsible for schools are obliged to ensure, among other things, that:

- schools and pre-schools are built and sufficient facilities are provided

- the activities of schools, pre-schools and childcare services in the municipality are coordinated
- qualified teachers and other school staff are recruited and receive in-service training
- municipal funds are allocated to school and pre-school activities
- good conditions exist for achieving the goals laid down in the curricula
- general guidelines are complied with.

In practice, it is the responsibility of the local committees to ensure that Swedish schools maintain equivalent standards all over the country.

Every municipality is required to set out general objectives for its schools in a school plan, adopted by the municipal council. The municipality is obliged to follow up and evaluate the school plan and to provide the central authorities with reports on facts and circumstances of relevance for assessment of educational activities. In addition, every school has to devise a work plan, based on the curriculum and local priorities. The work plan is also to be followed up and evaluated. Every municipality as well as every school has to make a quality account each year, assessing their results in relation to the national goals, and needs to improve results.

Teachers' and other employees organisations are entitled, under the Co-determination Act, to information and to opportunities for influencing impending decisions. Pupil determination rights are enshrined in the School Act, but their practical implementation is decided locally. Parental and student influence in the management of schools is enhanced by participation in the local school boards (<http://www.sweden.se>).

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Description of the Swedish system for vocational training is a complicated task since there is no natural distinction between vocational training and general education. Hence, there are no separate schools for vocational training within the school system. A basic objective in the Swedish education system is to narrow the gap between vocational and general education as much as possible. A result of this is a comprehensive school system, which does not separate pupils attending different programmes before upper secondary level. Even at upper secondary level pupils are obliged to study a common core of subjects.

Despite the fact that there are seldom clear-cut borders between various parts of the education system, the distinction between initial vocational (IVT) and continuing vocational training (CVT), used in Sweden is presented below:

- Vocationally oriented programmes, at upper secondary level (initial vocational training)
- labour market training (continuing vocational training)
- vocational training within the framework of municipal adult education (continuing vocational training)
- in-company training or staff training (continuing vocational training)
- professional degrees at university level (continuing vocational training) (*)

Recent decisions concerning vocational education

1991	The Riksdag decided on a new management system for schools. The principle of management by objectives was introduced and a decentralisation of the school system occurred by transferring responsibility for the school system to the municipalities.
1991	The Riksdag decided on reforms of the upper secondary school. Courses and special courses were replaced by 16 three-year national programmes. Programmes containing vocational subjects include at least 15 weeks as work-place training. All course alternatives give basic eligibility for higher education.
1999	The Riksdag decided to replace the timetable of the upper secondary school with a credit plan. All programmes are worth 2 500 credits. Project work was introduced. A new national programme was introduced, the technology programme.

2000	The Committee for Upper Secondary Schools 2000 was appointed. The committee was assigned the task, inter alia, of reviewing the number of national programmes in the upper secondary school.
2000	The Riksdag decided to raise the number of guaranteed teaching hours in the programmes that are preparatory for further studies and by 60 hours in programmes with vocational subjects.
2001	The Committee for Upper Secondary Schools was given an extended assignment in an additional directive concerning a transfer to subject grades in the upper secondary school and a review of core subjects. The Committee should also examine the need for an upper secondary school examination and propose forms for ways in which apprentice training could be introduced into upper secondary school.

The government has recently appointed a commission to look into how upper secondary schools might contract out entire programmes.

In October 2004 The Riksdag decided on modernisation of the Upper secondary education, which can be summarised by way of the following eleven points:

- Subject grades to replace current course grades
- An upper secondary diploma to be introduced
- Modern apprenticeship training will revitalise vocational training
- Better quality individual programmes
- Unrestricted application to give pupils greater freedom of choice and to stimulate regional cooperation
- History to be a new core subject
- The core subjects should be characterised by the focus of the programme
- Local programmes must be quality audited by the National Agency for Education
- Quality of upper secondary vocational programmes to be improved
- Upper secondary school projects to give better overall picture of a pupil's upper secondary education
- More extensive contextual and advanced programmes

(<http://www.skolverket.se>), The National Agency for Education

A delegation on VET has also recently been appointed.

(*) Abrahamsson, Kenneth, Vocational education and training in Sweden. 1st ed.. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999. (Cedefop)

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

NATIONAL LEVEL

When a national course belonging to a national programme or specialization is established the National Agency for Education is obliged to involve the social partners, if the course is included in the more vocationally oriented programmes (*).

Thirteen of the programmes contain at least 15 weeks at a workplace outside the school, so-called 'workplace training' (Arbetsplatsförlagd utbildning). In four of these - the Arts, Natural Science, Social Science and Technology - workplace training is not compulsory, though even these programmes offer the possibility of conducting parts of the programme at the workplace (<http://www.skolverket.se>).

LOCAL/REGIONAL LEVEL

School mandators are responsible for the procurement of training opportunities and for supervision of the students during their workplace training. The students remain in statu pupillari for this part of the programme (<http://www.sweden.se>). APU is syllabus-guided training. Only vocational courses may be transferred to a place of work. Local decisions determine which parts of these courses are to be located at a place of work. The board of the school is responsible for supplying workplaces and for seeing that APU meets the demands placed on the training. The advisory bodies for cooperation between schools and local trade and industry, vocational councils or programme councils, are very important in planning such items as the provision of training, the purchase of

equipment, APU and the training of supervisors (Abrahamsson, Kenneth, Vocational education and training in Sweden. 1st ed.. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999, Cedefop).

It is not mandatory to have special local bodies for cooperation between school and working life, but in a majority of municipalities there are what are known as vocational councils (yrkesråd) or programme councils (programråd). Here, cooperation between the school and local trade and industry is fostered by planning, for example, workplace training. Larger purchases of equipment are discussed and the school receives advice about courses from professionals working outside the school (**). Other issues to discuss could be student counselling, marketing of a certain programme or quality assessment of the contents of a programme (*).

Other kinds of voluntary joint action between school and working life include business councils, reference groups and informal networks, foster companies, business seminars and conferences - all a great help when it comes to establishing contacts between school and working life. Within these bodies, it is also possible to monitor the development of, and need for, competences in the local labour market. The local school board can decide to establish courses in adult education suited to the needs of the local labour market (**). Local courses suited to the needs of the local labour market can also be established for students in upper secondary education (*).

Within a pilot project in progress for a new, modern apprenticeship programme called "learning in working life" (Lärande i Arbete – LIA) the contents of the special syllabus for learning in working life is determined in agreement between the pupil, school and the work place. Social partners take part in a programme council, which in co-operation with the school participates in the planning and implementation of the education. (www.eurydice.org)

Several enterprise-based secondary schools have been started during recent years. This type of school often provides more company-based education and training, often with education adapted to the enterprise's own needs (Andersson, Ronnie, The financing of vocational education and training in Sweden Financing portrait. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 2000, Cedefop Panorama series).

Continuing vocational training (CVT) is viewed by the social partners as a prerequisite for maintaining a highly qualified labour force in the face of rapid technology and industrial change. Well-educated employees are a prerequisite for adaptation and renewal. Accordingly, the social partners agree that almost all IVT and most CVT (with the exception of in-company training) should be publicly funded, as is the case in Sweden today. This has to do in part with the extensive representation of the social partners in the various administrative bodies, especially at regional and local levels. Providers of CVT can be subdivided into public institutions, trade unions and employer associations, private enterprises, and training companies.

While formal education has been developed as a result of decisions of the government, vocational education has also been influenced by the social partners. Thus a major part of CVT is not regulated by the government or parliament, but is subject to the negotiations and local solutions of the social partners. This is particularly true of in-company training and various forms of workplace training (***).

As of 1 January 2002 there is, a new form of post-secondary education, advanced vocational education, AVE, (Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning) in which one third of the time is spent in the advanced application of theoretical knowledge at a workplace. What this entails is not the traditional traineeship period. But active workplace learning and problem-solving in an overall educational context.

The courses are based on close cooperation between enterprises and various course providers (higher education, upper secondary schools, municipal adult education and companies). They are intended to correspond to real needs in the employment market. However, there are no restrictions in terms of sector on the enterprises in which AVE is to be provided. The courses are open to both individuals coming directly from upper secondary school and to people who are already gainfully employed and wish to develop their skills within a defined area.

The County Labour Market Board (Länsarbetsnämnden) makes surveys of the regional needs for different skills. Decisions over which kind of education or training the County Labour Market Board will purchase are based on these surveys. The planning of CVT in the education system is different from that in the employment training system. This reflects the different roles of the two systems (**).

(*) Comment by the editor
(**) Abrahamsson, Kenneth, Vocational education and training in Sweden. 1st ed.. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999. (Cedefop)
(***) Vocational Education and training in Sweden, a document based on the description of the Swedish vocational education and training system published by Cedefop in English in 1998 by Mats Lindell in 2000

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM [Education and training system](#)

[The Swedish school system](#)

The Swedish public school system is made up of compulsory and non-compulsory schooling. Compulsory Schooling includes regular compulsory school, Sami School, special school, and programmes for pupils with learning disabilities. Non-compulsory school includes the preschool class, upper secondary school, upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, municipal adult education, and adult education for adults with learning disabilities. All education throughout the public school system is free. There is usually no charge to student or their parents for teaching materials, school meals, health services or transport.

According to the Swedish Education Act (Skollagen), all children and youths shall have equal access to education. All children shall enjoy this right, regarding of gender, where they live, or social or economic factors. The Education Act states that education shall "provide the pupils with knowledge and, in co-operation with the homes, promote their harmonious development into responsible human beings and members of the community." Consideration shall also be given to students with special needs.

The Education Act also extends the right of education to adults. This can be provided through municipality run adult education (Komvux), or in adult education for adults with learning disabilities (Särvux).

Compulsory schools can be national, municipal or private (independent). More than 97 % of all pupils attend municipal compulsory school.

About 98 % of compulsory school leavers go on to the three-year upper secondary school, which offers both vocational and academic programmes. A basic objective in the Swedish education system is to narrow the gap between vocational and general education as much as possible.

Upper secondary schooling for young persons and adults has a common curriculum with specific goals for each type of school. The goals stated in the curriculum are of two kinds; goals that the education should strive towards and those that everybody shall be given the opportunity of achieving. The set of fundamental values which are to influence the activities of the school, and the demands imposed on students and school staff have been set out in six different sections: Knowledge and skills; Norms and values; Student responsibility and influence; Headteacher's responsibility; Choice and education - Working life; Grades and assessment.

The educational aims of the national programmes in upper secondary school are set out in programme goals. Programmes that are primarily vocationally oriented must give broad basic education within the vocational field, as well as providing the foundation for further studies at post-secondary level.

The syllabi, which are drawn up as to ensure continuity with those of the compulsory school, state the aims and goals of the course as well as the knowledge and skills that all students shall achieve on completion of the course. The Government has issued syllabi for all core subjects. The syllabi for other subjects are determined by the National Agency for Education (<http://www.sweden.se>).

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

There are no IVET elements at lower secondary level in Sweden.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

Municipalities are obliged under the School Act, to provide upper secondary schooling for all residents who start studying before becoming 20 years of age. Persons beginning their studies after 20 can pursue upper secondary studies within the public school system for adults. About 98 % of compulsory school leavers go on to upper secondary school.

The great majority of upper secondary studies take place in schools, which come under municipal mandatorship. The four-year upper secondary school for young people with intellectual disabilities is also the responsibility of the municipalities. There are also a number of upper secondary schools run by private mandators, mostly in major urban areas.

Studies in agriculture, forestry, horticulture and certain caring occupations, however take place in schools run by the county councils. The larger upper secondary schools usually include a variety of study programmes and courses. Certain adaptations of programmes, e.g. for sports, have nationwide recruitment. There is no distinction between academic and vocational within the provider structure.

All education is organised in study programmes of three-years' duration. The vocational programmes are designed to confer wider and deeper knowledge compared with the former system. The students are also given increased choice with respect to the content of their own education, as well as better opportunities to influence the learning situation (<http://www.sweden.se>).

There are 17 national programs, all of which are 3-year programmes. The programmes provide a broad general education and eligibility to study at the university or post-secondary level. Every programme comprises 2 500 upper secondary credits. All of the national programmes include eight core subjects of: English, the Arts, Physical Education and Health, mathematics, General Science, Social Studies, Swedish (or Swedish as a Second Language) and Religion. Together, the core subjects add up to 750 credits.

The programme-specific subjects, determined by the Government, comprise a total of 1 450 credits. Thirteen of the programmes contain at least 15 weeks at a workplace outside the school, so-called 'workplace training' (Arbetsplatsförlagd utbildning). In four of these - the Arts, Natural Science, Social Science and Technology - workplace training is not compulsory, though even these programmes offer the possibility of conducting parts of the programme at the workplace (<http://www.skolverket.se>).

School mandators are responsible for the procurement of training opportunities and for supervision of the students during their workplace training. The students remain in statu pupillari for this part of the programme (<http://www.sweden.se>). Many schools regard apu as a difficult area requiring major efforts in terms of both planning and implementation. The opportunities for arranging APU vary, however, between programmes. Schools are dependent on the links they have established with individual organisations, and the local industrial structure, in addition to how well established cooperation generally is between schools and companies/institutions. These difficulties reside mainly in being unable to arrange a sufficient number of places to secure high quality in workplace training connected to the goals of education. This is an area where workplace supervisors regard themselves as having insufficient knowledge (Abrahamsson, Kenneth, Vocational education and training in Sweden. 1st ed.. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999, Cedefop).

Most programmes are divided into different specializations offered in year 2 and 3. The National Agency for Education determines which courses are compulsory for at national specialization. Most municipalities do not offer all the national programmes and specializations. If a programme is not offered in their own municipality, student may attend the programme in another municipality. In order to meet local needs, a municipality may approve local specializations.

NATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY PROGRAMMES ARE:	NUMBER OF PUPILS IN PROGRAMMES 15 OCTOBER 2002
The Arts Programme/Art and Design, Dance, Music and Theatre (Estetiska programmet)	16 100
The Business and Administration Programme/Commerce and service, Tourism and Travel (Handels- och Administrationsprogrammet)	13 100
The Child and Recreation Programme/ Recreational, Pedagogical and Social Activities (Barn- och Fritidsprogrammet)	12 800
The Construction Programme/Building, House construction, Painting, Platework (Byggprogrammet)	9 800
The Electrical Engineering Programme/Automation, Electronics, Electrical engineering and Computer Technology (Elprogrammet)	12 900
The Energy Programme/Operations and Maintenance, Marine Technology, Heating, Ventilation and Sanitation and refrigeration (Energiprogrammet)	2 000
The Food Programme/Local specializations, countrywide recruiting (Livsmedelsprogrammet)	1 500
The Handicraft Programme/Various trades and crafts (Hantverksprogrammet)	5 400
The Health and Nursing Programme/No national specializations (Omvårdnadsprogrammet)	9 000
The Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Programme/Hotels, Restaurant and Meal Services (Hotell- och Restaurangprogrammet)	14 100
The Industry Programme/Local specializations, countrywide recruiting (Industriprogrammet)	4 600
The Media/Media Production, Printing Technology (Medieprogrammet)	11 300
The Natural Resource Use Programme/Local specializations (Naturbruksprogrammet)	7 100
The Natural Science Programme/ Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Environmental Sciences, (Naturvetenskapsprogrammet)	35 700

The Social Science Programme/Economics, Culture, Social Sciences, Languages (Samhällvetenskapsprogrammet)	64 200
The Technology Programme/Local specializations (Teknikprogrammet)	18 100
The Vehicle Engineering Programme/Aircraft, Coach work, Machine and lorry, Cars, Transport (Fordonsprogrammet)	11 200

By combining specific subjects from different programmes, a municipality can put together specially designed upper secondary programmes (specialutformade program) to meet local and regional needs. A specially designed programme also includes the eight core subjects and project work, and corresponds to a national programme in terms of the level of difficulty and number of hours. Special programmes can also be designed to meet an individual student's specific learning needs.

SPECIALLY DESIGNED PROGRAMMES (PUPILS 15 OCTOBER 2002)	24 700
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An individual programme (individuellt program) can vary in length and content and is determined by the needs of the individual student. The aim is for the student to later transfer into a national- or specially designed programme. Otherwise, the student receives a final grade (learning certificate) from the individual programme, when he/she has completed the set programme syllabus. PRIV is an individual programme especially for students who are not eligible for national programmes due to their not meeting the requirements for passing grades in Swedish, English and Mathematics.

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMMES (PUPILS 15 OCTOBER 2002)	23 900
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In International Baccalaureate (IB) 2 400 pupils took part and 700 pupils were in so called Other courses, which makes the total sum 333 928 pupils within Upper Secondary Education. (www.skolverket.se)

Subjects are divided into courses comprising 50, 100, 150 or 200 credits. There are also longer independent courses. Grades are given for every course completed. A grade of Pass always gives the number of approved upper secondary credits for the course, regardless of whether the student requires fewer or additional hours to achieve course objectives. Every course has a syllabus stating the objectives to be achieved. At the end of the upper secondary school programme, students receive a final grade (leaving certificate), which is a compilation of the grades for all of the courses included in the study programme

A student in upper secondary school can sit for examination in a course included in the programme before grades have been set or if he/she has received the grade Fail for the course. People who do not attend upper secondary school may sit for examinations in all of the courses offered as part of the national programmes.

The new curriculum gives students considerable influence over the content and planning of education, as well as influence over his/her schooling in general. A student has the right to choose his/her programme and specialization. Every national programme also leaves room for course options. The number of options varies from programme to programme.

Programmes also allow students an individual option totalling 300 credits. Within these limits, the students may choose from the courses offered in the municipality.

Independent upper secondary schools correspond to municipal upper secondaries in that they offer upper secondary programmes and receive grant from the municipality. It is the National Agency for Education that decides whether an independent school qualifies for this grant or not. This decision can also be rescinded. Independent upper secondary schools are open to everyone. In some classes, students may be charged a fee for attending.

Another type of independent school that offers education above the compulsory level is the supplementary school. Supplementary schools include those that offer fine arts or handicraft programmes. In addition to the types of schools mentioned, there are also a number of international schools in Sweden that receive partial government funding. These schools are intended primarily for the children of foreign nationals whose stay in Sweden is temporary.

Municipalities have an obligation to offer youths who do not meet the requirements of regular upper secondary, such as those with learning disabilities, a place in an upper secondary programme for pupils with learning disabilities. Like regular upper secondaries, upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities has national-, specially designed- and individual programmes. The number of national programmes offered is fewer than in regular upper secondary school and programmes specialize in preparatory vocational training. All upper secondary programmes for pupils with learning disabilities are 4-year programmes and offer a guaranteed number of course hours, 3 600 hours, divided between core- and programme-specific subjects (<http://www.skolverket.se>).

A student who has gone through vocational education is more of a generalist than a specialist. Specialisation will be a matter for the future employer. Vocational education should not be a dead-end but the first step in a process of lifelong learning (Abrahamsson, Kenneth, Vocational education and training in Sweden. 1st ed.. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999, Cedefop).

Initial vocational training (IVT) provides basic skills and general qualifications, qualifying the newly trained to carry out certain functions in an occupation. In principle, all vocational training (IVT) in Sweden is provided within the

upper secondary schools. IVT is more than 99 % financed by public money. IVT empowers about 150 000 pupils. In relation to all pupils in upper secondary schools, this represents about 50 %. The transition rate from upper secondary education to tertiary education has increased significantly during the past decade. Today, almost 45 % of upper secondary students continue to higher education within three years.

Distribution between the sexes is very different within the vocational programmes. In 1998 the proportion of women compared to men was 86 % in the programme for Health. On the other hand, the proportion of women was only 1,8 % in the Electrical engineering programme. Vocational programmes where gender distribution is fairly equal were the programmes for Business and administration, hotel restaurant and catering, Food, Media and Natural resource use (Vocational Education and training in Sweden, a document based on the description of the Swedish vocational education and training system published by Cedefop in English in 1998 by Mats Lindell in 2000).

Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general / vocational), 2002

SWEDEN	
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION TOTAL ENROLMENT	333 928
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	48%
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	52%

Upper secondary education: ISCED 97 level 3

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Education statistics based on ISCED 97

Several enterprise-based secondary schools have been started during recent years. This type of school often provides more company-based education and training, often with education adapted to the enterprise's own needs (Andersson, Ronnie, The financing of vocational education and training in Sweden Financing portrait. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 2000, Cedefop Panorama series).

A pilot scheme with a new modern type of apprenticeship training is currently being tried out in the Swedish system. The scheme, which is called Learning in Working Life, LIA, (Lärande I Arbete), differs from traditional apprentice training since no employment relationship is involved and wages are not paid. The municipality is responsible for the pupil throughout the training.

Learning in working life is an alternative method of taking a national programme, which gives basic eligibility to apply for higher education.

The purpose of this pilot scheme is to meet the changed requirement for qualifications in working life, to give employers the chance to take part and influence the contents and course of the training and to give pupils who so wish, the opportunity to carry out the major part of their training, at least 30 weeks, at a workplace. The contents of the special syllabus for learning in working life are decided after an agreement between the pupil, the school and the workplace.

All programmes with vocational subjects should include a period of training located at the workplace outside the school. This training located at the workplace may also take place in other programmes, if authorised in a local decision (<http://www.utbildning.regeringen.se> Fact sheet).

The government has recently appointed a commission to look into how upper secondary schools might contract out entire programmes.

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Since the 1970s, there has not been any general apprenticeship system in Sweden although the social partners have established their own systems for employees after upper secondary schooling within certain branches, e.g. the building trade. In 1992, a possibility was created to integrated apprenticeship into the individual programme in upper secondary school. This has been used only on a very small scale (Andersson, Ronnie, The financing of vocational education and training in Sweden).

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

The individual programme (within Upper Secondary Education and Training) aims mainly at helping pupils who are not eligible to apply to a national or specially designed programme. The individual programme is based on pupils needs and can vary greatly both in terms of length and contents. Each pupil has an individual study plan.

A municipality also has the right to establish an individual programme to which pupils may apply (PRIV). The aim of this alternative is that a pupil should be able to start education in national courses in a national programme at the same time as having the opportunity to study one or more of the subjects from the compulsory school where necessary. Having done this a pupil can then be admitted to a national or a specially designed programme. The pupil is then credited with the courses completed in the individual programme.

The individual programme can also be customised to incorporate different contents for young persons who have recently arrived in Sweden e.g. special introductory courses in Swedish as a second language and social studies. A pupil in the individual programme can also combine employment, which aims at vocational education with studies of certain subjects in the upper secondary school. Other courses of study that may be accommodated within the framework of the individual programme are those that cater for pupils with special needs, such as those with learning disabilities. (www.eurydice.org)

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

Post secondary advanced vocational training for adults is available in the scheme for advanced vocational education (KY) and in municipal adult education, as well as in labour market training programmes. In addition, some of the courses in folk high schools and some of the education programmes within the supplementary schools are in terms of content comparable to post secondary vocational training.

On 1 January 2002 Advanced vocational Education (Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning, KY) was established as a regular form of post-secondary education. KY was run as a pilot scheme since autumn 1996. The aim of KY is to satisfy the needs of the labour market for skilled labour with appropriate competence for the production of goods and services using modern technologies. A third of the education is located at the workplaces. There are around 270 educational programmes covering most sectors.

The number of places in the scheme has been continuously expanded. In 2003 the program provided 1300 study places on an annual basis. The programme focuses on vocational areas where there is a clear shortage of skilled labour in areas such as, manufacturing, health care, ICT.

For admission to the training, three-year upper secondary or corresponding qualifications are required. The course usually covers two years of studies (corresponding to full-time studies of 80 weeks) and leads to a diploma in advanced vocational education.

The National Agency of Advanced Vocational Education is situated in Hässleholm and its task is to administer the advanced vocational education scheme KY. (<http://www.eurydice.org>)

The courses are based on close cooperation between enterprises and various course providers (higher education, upper secondary schools, municipal adult education and companies). They are intended to correspond to real needs in the employment market. However, there are no restrictions in terms of sector on the enterprises in which AVE is to be provided. The courses are open to both individuals coming directly from upper secondary school and to people who are already gainfully employed and wish to develop their skills within a defined area.

Since the workplace-training element of AVE is so important, active participation by employers in designing the courses is a requirement. Working life representatives are therefore also required to be in the majority in the management group of a course. The employment market is to defray the expenses of the work-place training component of the education.

The increasing requirement for skills in working life has highlighted the need for shorter vocational programmes after upper secondary school. It is important to develop such programmes and they are also needed to safeguard the re-growth of certain handicraft trades. A new funding system is also proposed for continuing education and training courses. Many municipalities have incurred high costs for post-secondary education in other municipalities, costs over which they have no control themselves. It is therefore proposed that the system of regulated inter-municipal reimbursement for continuing education and training be abolished. Under the proposal, there would be a different division of responsibilities between the government and the municipality. Some continuing education and training should be re-categorized as state-assisted post-secondary programmes. In addition, there is a need for post-secondary continuing education and training that is decided on and funded by the municipality. (www.eurydice.org)

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

All higher education is pursued in courses. The courses can be taken independently or chosen in such a way as to form one of three general degrees in undergraduate education – (högskoleexamen), higher education diploma, involving at least two years of study, (kandidatexamen), the equivalent of bachelor degree, with at least 3 years of study and (magisterexamen), the equivalent of a master degree, of which there are two types: (magisterexamen med ämnesdjup) academic, requiring at least 160 credits/4 years of study, and (magisterexamen med ämnesbredd), professional, requiring a continuation course of at least 40 credits/ 1 year, for students who have a degree comprising at least 120 credits/3 years of study. The courses can also be combined through programmes leading to a professional degree (yrkesexamen).

There are 57 professional degrees, of which 14 may be taken at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. A description of the different degrees, their scope and the goals of the education can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance and in the ordinance for The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. A number of the professional diplomas are intended for those professions requiring official authorisation or registration, e.g. doctors and teachers. The different diplomas cover studies ranging from two to five and a half years.

A project group within the ministry has been working on a review of certain degree issues in Swedish higher education since 2002. An interim report was submitted in March 2003, and the final report was submitted in February 2004.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND AND MAIN TYPES OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

Adult education in Sweden is extensive and based on a long tradition. It is provided in many different forms and under many different auspices, ranging from national or municipal adult education to labour market and staff training and competence development at work.

The public school system for adults is regulated under the School Act. Adult education consists of municipal adult education, municipal adult education for adults with learning disabilities (sär vux), Swedish tuition for immigrants (sfi) for those aged 16 and over and the Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning as well as post-secondary vocational education. The liberal adult education sector, through folk high schools and adult education associations, as well as

some of the supplementary schools also provide adult education. As is the case with youth education, responsibility for this part of the education system rests with the municipalities.

The state education system for adults must (according to the general objectives) give adults the opportunity to supplement their education with their individual requirements. This is to enable those with limited education to strengthen their position on the labour market and in cultural and political life through adult education. The education must be equivalent whatever the type of school, irrespective of where it is located.

Activities in the state education system for adults must be in line with fundamental democratic values. Each and everyone working within the adult education system should promote respect for each person's value as an individual as well as for the environment we all share. In particular, steps should be taken to promote gender equality and prevent any attempt by pupils to subject others to abusive treatment i.e. bullying and racism.

The same curriculum (Lpf 94) applies to both upper secondary school and municipal adult education. The curriculum sets out the overall goals and general principles of adult education. The curriculum is laid down by the Government. According to the curriculum, adult education should:

- bridge education gaps and thus work for increased equality and social justice,
- enhance students' ability to comprehend, critically examine and take part in cultural, social and political life,
- educate adults for a range of work tasks,
- contribute to change in working life and the achievement of full employment as well as satisfy the individual desires of adults for broader study and education opportunities and give them the opportunity to supplement their upper secondary education.

Basic municipal adult education aims to provide adults with knowledge and skills they need to take part in society and working life. It should aim to facilitate further study.

Municipal upper secondary adult education aims to provide adults with knowledge and skills equivalent to the level acquired at upper secondary school.

Supplementary courses of study aim to provide adults with training that will lead to job advancement or a new occupation.

In addition, the Labour Market Board is responsible for labour market training intended in the first instance for unemployed adults in need of retraining or further training and education.

0502 - PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

MUNICIPAL ADULT EDUCATION

Municipal adult education has existed since 1968. Since the school year 1992/93 it has included

- basic adult education,
- upper secondary adult education and
- post secondary education for adults.

Studies within municipal adult education lead to formal qualifications in individual subjects or to the equivalent of a complete leaving certificate from the compulsory school and/or the upper secondary school. Education is organised in the form of separate courses, which should be arranged in such a way that students can combine their studies with employment. The students are free to choose their own study programme and they can also combine studies at basic and upper secondary level.

Basic adult education confers knowledge and skills equivalent to that conferred by the whole of compulsory school. Basic adult education is a right for the individual and is mandatory for the municipalities.

Upper secondary adult education confers knowledge and skills equivalent to that conferred by youth education at upper secondary level. It can offer the same courses and subjects as the upper secondary school. Although persons above 20 years of age are not entitled to upper secondary education, the municipalities are obliged to make an effort to provide educational opportunities corresponding to demand and individual needs.

The purpose of post-secondary adult education is to provide vocational courses, which are not available in youth education. These courses lead to higher professional qualifications or to a qualification in a new profession.

ADULT EDUCATION FOR INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED PEOPLE

Adult education for people with intellectual disabilities corresponds to the instruction provided for intellectually disabled children in compulsory school and to vocational education in upper secondary school for young people with intellectual disabilities. Education is organised in the form of separate courses. The municipalities are obliged to provide educational opportunities corresponding to demand and individual needs.

SWEDISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR IMMIGRANTS

The municipalities are obliged to provide basic Swedish language instruction as well as an understanding of Swedish society for immigrants from the age of 16, for an average of 525 hours. Most municipalities run such courses themselves, but they can also be awarded to private organisations. (<http://www.skolverket.se>).

The Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning (Centrum för Flexibelt Lärande - CFL) promotes the utilisation of distance learning methods in adult education and liberal adult education, and complement the municipalities' own provision of adult education, primarily at upper secondary school level, by offering equivalent courses by means of distance education. The agency has two major operational units: one in Härnösand and one in Norrköping. The head office is in Håssleholm. (www.eurydice.org)

ADVANCED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Post secondary advanced vocational training for adults is also available in the scheme for advanced vocational education (KY- Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning) and in municipal adult education in terms of further adult education as well as in labour market training programmes. Advanced vocational education may be organised by universities and university colleges, municipalities, county councils and independent enterprises. Advanced Vocational Education, AVE was introduced in 1996, its purpose being to compile experience relating to new courses, new educational forms and new course providers. AVE started as a pilot project monitored by the National Commission on Advanced Vocational Education, but is now part of the educational system.

The Swedish Agency for Advanced Vocational Education has been directed by the Parliament to administrate and supervise this educational form on the national level. It is the Agency that approves applications and makes grants.

THE ADULT EDUCATION INITIATIVE

A special programme for adult education, known as the Adult Education Initiative (Kunskapslyftet) was run between 1997-2002, as part of the Government's strategy to provide better education opportunities for people in order to raise their competences on the labour market. When the Adult Education Initiative ended, the municipalities were offered a new state grant to expand adult education provision. The amount covers 46 500 places in municipal adult education and 7 000 places in liberal adult education. As of 2006 this grant will be included in the regular state grant awarded to municipalities and liberal adult education providers.

FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS AND VOLUNTARY EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Swedish adult education has its origins in national popular movements. Both the adult education associations and folk high schools have a strong base in trade union organisations, religious communities, political parties and some other popular movements. A major part of the study activities of these organisations, as well as education of its leaders and functionaries is carried out in co-operation with adult education associations and folk high schools.

Municipalities and folk high schools arranging publicly financed adult education often provide education for adults on a commercial basis to both agencies and companies. (www.eurydice.org).

0503 - DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

Municipal adult education, education for adults with learning disabilities and Swedish tuition for immigrants is available in all municipalities. Municipal adult education may be offered by different education providers.

The Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning has two major operational units: one in Härnösand and one in Norrköping. The head office is in Håssleholm. (CFL) promotes the utilisation of distance learning methods in adult education and liberal adult education, and complement the municipalities' own provision of adult education, primarily at upper secondary school level, by offering equivalent courses by means of distance education.

There are 10 adult educational associations with activities all over the country and 147 folk high schools receiving state grants.

Labour market training is arranged in all municipalities, not only within the regular education system, but also as specially procured education. (www.eurydice.org)

Many workplaces also have extensive training programmes for employees at all levels. In-house training of this kind may involve anything from practical vocational training to extensive theoretical studies. It may be carried out, for example, in association with universities and colleges, municipal commissioned training, labour market training or with various commercial training companies (<http://www.skolverket.se>).

In-company training provided by companies and public authorities has expanded faster than any other form of CVT during the 1980s and is currently the dominant part of CVT. Over the last decade the participation rate in in-company training has almost doubled. Statistics for the first six months of the year 2000 show that 40 % (roughly 1.5 million) of Swedish employees participated. In-company training is by definition, financed by employers. The costs of in-company training in year 1997 were about 95 % of the total cost of CVT.

To a great extent, in-company training takes place during working hours, but there are also cases where training is supported by employers outside working hours. The training is organised partly by companies and administrative authorities. Its growth has also generated a competitive market for education in which municipalities and universities, as well as private educational consultants are active. The employer makes decisions on in-company training, but the trade unions are able to exert varying degrees of influence. Today there are very few collective agreements concerning in-company training. One exception is the teaching sector where training is regulated by law and in collective agreements (Vocational Education and training in Sweden, a document based on the description of the Swedish vocational education and training system published by Cedefop in English in 1998 by Mats Lindell in 2000).

0504 - ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES

ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES

The state determines the goals and certain development guidelines for adult education and training. The state defines the framework that safeguard equivalence and statutory rights. The state also provides limited funding for certain purposes. The individual organises his or her own learning with the assistance of the municipal authorities, folk high schools, study organisations, other education providers, employers, trade unions and many others, not least those participating in lifelong learning (Utbildningsdepartementet Fact sheet U01.004 March 2001).

Municipal adult education, education for adults with learning disabilities (sär vux) and Swedish tuition for immigrants (sfi) is available in all municipalities. Municipal adult education may be offered by different providers, but is sometimes organised jointly with the regular upper secondary education for youth.

Every municipal inhabitant is entitled to take part in basic adult education programmes from the second half of the calendar year when reaching the age of 20, if they have not attained the proficiency normally gained in the compulsory school.

As regards upper secondary adult education and supplementary education, municipalities must endeavour to offer courses that meet demand and needs. If the number of places is fewer than the number of eligible applicants for a course, priority must be given to those whose need is greatest.

Particular criteria to be taken into account are that applicants:

- have a limited education
- need the course for a planned or current occupation or are about to choose an occupation,
- need the course to supplement an incomplete programme from the upper secondary school or to supplement their qualifications or
- are able to complete the studies in accordance with an agreed study plan.

Government provisions on adult education are laid down, inter alia, in the Education Act and in a number of ordinances.

State and municipal adult education is free of charge. The principal organiser decides what study material students are to pay. At upper secondary level, books and study material are often paid by the participants.

To create better opportunities for adults to study, there are different forms of study financing: study assistance (grants and loan) and special educational grants. The reformed system for study assistance, in force from 1 July 2001, covers all students in compulsory and secondary education, including adult education, as well as higher education and other post-secondary education.

A government authority, (Valideringsdelegationen), has been appointed for the period 2004-2007. The authority's main tasks are to promote and advance the development of methods and systems for validation and to work towards a national equivalence, high quality and security for the individual.

Since 1975 all employees have been entitled by law to unpaid leave of absence for studying, providing they had the same employer the last six months or for a total of 12 months during the two previous years. The employee is also entitled to attend studies arranged by the trade unions irrespective of employment status. Each person has the right to choose the orientation of his or her studies. Neither the employer nor the trade union can give priority to persons opting for study programmes which they consider important from the viewpoint of the company or union. Nor are there any restrictions on the duration of studies. Self-tuition, however, is not covered by law. The employer may postpone giving leave of absence for six months. (www.eurydice.org).

0505 - BRIDGING INITIAL AND POST INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A student in upper secondary school can sit for examination in a course included in the programme before grades have been set or if he/she has received the grade Fail for the course. People who do not attend upper secondary school may sit for examinations in all of the courses offered as part of the national programmes.

About 42 per cent of pupils who completed upper secondary education (including IVET) in the spring 1999 started higher education studies within the following four years, which can be compared to a figure of approximately 20 per cent ten years earlier. (<http://www.eurydice.org>). The aim is to bring this share up to 50 per cent.

Learning in working life is an alternative method of taking a national programme at Upper secondary level, which gives basic eligibility to apply for higher education.

0506 - RE-EDUCATION AND RE-TRAINING NEEDS DUE TO LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY

The long-term goal of the Swedish government's labour market policy is to achieve full employment. Meeting the government's declared target for 2004 of 80 percent regular employment in the population aged 20-64 will require a more efficient labour market. Above all, it is a matter of avoiding bottlenecks and improving skills of the unemployed. Labour market policy has three principal tasks:

- To channel work to the unemployed and labor to employers
- To take steps to combat bottlenecks
- To take initiatives to help those who have difficulty obtaining work in regular labour market.

The basis for this task is the activation and skills enhancement principle (arbets- och kompetenslinjen). This means that an unemployed person who cannot find work should primarily be offered training and, secondarily, a workplace trainee position or temporary job. Only when these alternatives have been exhausted should various forms of cash assistance be made available.

Sweden's government (Cabinet) and Parliament decide on the objectives, rule systems and financial framework of labour market policy. The Labor Market Administration (Arbetsmarknadsverket, AMV) is the public agency with overall responsibility for implementing this policy. The Administration includes the National Labour Market Board (Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen, AMS) as well as a County Labour Board (länsarbetsnämnd) in each of 21 counties, the offices of the public Employment Services (arbetsförmedling) and The Work Life Services (Arbetslivstjänster).

The Labour Market Administration is responsible for the following activities:

- Facilitate and improve the match between supply and demand in various sectors of the labour market.
- Skills enhancement programmes as well as support for those who are having the greatest difficulties in the labour market.
- Operational development, monitoring, oversight and financial control of the Employment Service, labour market policy programmes and the unemployment insurance system
- Working Life Services.

AMS works on behalf of Parliament and the government and reports to the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications (Näringsdepartementet).

Sweden's municipalities have signed agreements with the Country Labour Boards to provide municipal youth programme. The purpose of these agreements is to ensure that municipalities assume responsibility for their unemployed youth under age 20. These programme are aimed at preventing long-term youth unemployment from emerging and continuing. The municipalities provide individually tailored programmes in the form of work experience or training to prepare or facilitate these teenagers' entries into the regular labour market.

The purpose of the Computer Workshops/Activity Centres is to teach unemployed people how to use information technology in various occupations and activities.

Programmes to influence labour supply are aimed at creating a better match between available labour and the existing demand for labor. Over the past few years, these programmes have grown in importance. This is largely because accelerating changes in the labour market have underscored the need for individual training, skills and adaptability. The programme can target both individuals and companies. Employment training is training provided for labor market policy reasons. Its aim is to counteract unemployment by influencing the labour supply. The idea is to offer job seekers training in occupations in which there is a shortage of labour, in order to foster economic growth. In the event of an economic downturn, job seekers can take advantage of their period of unemployment to train themselves for occupations in which the greatest increase in demand is expected once the economy recovers. The programs should also broaden the choice of training and occupations open to men and women.

Grants for in-house training at companies are a form of financial subsidy to employers who train their own personnel. This subsidiary may be available in connection with new hires, to adapt employee skills to changing technology or work systems, or as an alternative to layoffs. (<http://www.sweden.se>).

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

The same applies as in box 0602.

On 1 July 2001 a new, integrated teaching degree was established, replacing eight of the former 11 teaching degrees. The new structure means that all future teachers will have a common basic competence, combined with a chosen specialisation in particular subjects/subject areas and/or age groups. The new teaching degree comprises a program consisting of a minimum of 140 credits (equals three and a half years of full time studies) and a maximum of 220 credits, depending on the chosen area and level. To teach vocationally oriented subjects at upper secondary level, 120 credits are required. (www.eurydice.org) Instead of a specialisation in certain subjects, this degree requires extensive professional experience, combined with 60 credits in relevant, vocationally oriented, higher education courses. The degree for Upper Secondary School was replaced by a degree for teaching in the higher levels of the compulsory school and upper secondary school.

The older degrees will be phased out during a period ending in 2008.

Teaching diplomas may be awarded in the following areas:

- University Diploma in Aviation Education
- University Diploma in Folk High School Education
- University Diploma in Education
- University Diploma in Special Education

ALTERNATIVE TRAINING PATHWAYS

Some Swedish universities offer distance study courses. The Agency for Sweden's Internet University consists of IT-based distance education courses and programmes, which universities and university colleges have registered with the agency. (Myndigheten för Sveriges Nätuniversitet)

Since 1991, teachers have been municipality employees. The municipalities are responsible for staffing the schools with competent teachers who have been adequately trained for their duties. Teachers at independent schools are, however, employed by these schools.

To be permanently appointed as a teacher in the national schools system, according to the Education Act, an applicant has to have a university diploma in teaching, knowledge of the Swedish language as well as an appreciation of the regulations applicable to the school system, in particular the regulations concerning the goals of education. The applicant should also have undergone a teacher-training programme in Sweden, the main contents of which focus on the type of teaching the position involves, or equivalent training from another Nordic country or a country that is a member of EFTA or the EU. If the applicant has undergone a course in higher education other than

those referred to earlier, the National Agency for Higher Education shall determine whether it fulfils the necessary conditions for competence. Upper secondary schools should try to appoint teachers with post-graduate education.

An applicant not fulfilling the above conditions may be employed for a maximum of 12 months at a time, unless there are special reasons to the contrary.

According to central agreement, teachers are employed on a 12-month basis before they receive a permanent position. The purpose of the probationary period is to give newly qualified teachers a year of introduction under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

The major task for the in-service training of teachers in upper secondary school and municipal adult education is to supplement subject qualifications in order to bring them more in line with the qualifications needed in the new programmes within upper secondary education (<http://www.sweden.se>).

0601 - GENERAL BACKGROUND

The new university and college system was reformed in 1993. The law and ordinance governing higher education, which entered into force on that date, aimed at reducing Government influence over the detailed operations of university and university colleges.

The Higher Education Act states the general goals of higher education. The Degree ordinance, established by the Government, is annexed to the Higher Education Act. There the goals for teacher education and the qualitative demands required of future teachers are formulated. (Higher Education Act, SFS 1992:1434) (Högskolelagen)

In 1990 the Riksdag decided on a new division of responsibility between the state and the municipality. Today the guiding principle for the division of responsibility is that the running of competence development is a local responsibility, whilst setting the goals for this training in both the compulsory and upper secondary schools is a state responsibility. It is also a state responsibility to follow-up and evaluate local activities. The Riksdag (Riksdagen)

The municipalities have full responsibility as employers for teachers and are under the Education Act obliged to ensure that competence development is arranged for the teaching staff. The municipalities shall make every effort to provide competence development for school staff.

There are no overall plans or methods specifying how competence development is to be carried out. Courses, training programmes, and methods vary widely depending on who is the organiser and the purchaser.

Teachers who undergo further training often take leave of absence and are replaced by stand-ins. Otherwise further training mainly takes place during study days, evenings or holidays when pupils are not in school.

The state shall by means of the funds made available to the National Agency for Education steer activities towards nationally important areas, taking into account that it is the principal organiser of the school that has the responsibility for implementing competence development.

The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement shall also contribute to ensuring that competence development becomes a part of the long-term development work of the school. The starting points for this are:

- the changed steering system for the school
- the nationally determined goal documents for the school
- the national evaluation of the school

0602 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

On 1 July 2001 a new, integrated teaching degree was established, replacing eight of the former 11 teaching degrees. The new structure means that all future teachers will have a common basic competence, combined with a chosen specialisation in particular subjects/subject areas and/or age groups. The new teaching degree comprises a program consisting of a minimum of 140 credits (equals three and a half years of full time studies) and a maximum of 220 credits, depending on the chosen area and level. To teach vocationally oriented subjects at upper secondary level, 120 credits are required. (www.eurydice.org) Instead of a specialisation in certain subjects, this degree requires extensive professional experience, combined with 60 credits in relevant, vocationally oriented, higher education courses. The degree for Upper Secondary School was replaced by a degree for teaching in the higher levels of the compulsory school and upper secondary school.

The older degrees will be phased out during a period ending in 2008.

Teaching diplomas may be awarded in the following areas:

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An applicant not fulfilling the above conditions may be employed for a maximum of 12 months at a time, unless there are special reasons to the contrary.

According to central agreement, teachers are employed on a 12-month basis before they receive a permanent position. The purpose of the probationary period is to give newly qualified teachers a year of introduction under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

The major task for the in-service training of teachers in upper secondary school and municipal adult education is to supplement subject qualifications in order to bring them more in line with the qualifications needed in the new programmes within upper secondary education (<http://www.sweden.se>).

0603 - TRAINING OF TRAINERS/TEACHERS AT THE WORKPLACE (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND CVET IN ENTERPRISES)

Thirteen of the programmes contain at least 15 weeks at a workplace outside the school, so-called 'workplace training' (Arbetsplatsförlagd utbildning). In four of these - the Arts, Natural Science, Social Science and Technology - workplace training is not compulsory, though even these programmes offer the possibility of conducting parts of the programme at the workplace (<http://www.skolverket.se>).

School mandators are responsible for the procurement of training opportunities and for supervision of the students during their workplace training. The students remain in statu pupillari for this part of the programme (<http://www.sweden.se>).

The training of trainers/teachers at the workplace is the responsibility of the work place and comes under ordinary in-service training or learning on the job. Upper secondary schools co-operating with a certain work-place often offer a short course in how to function as a mentor for a student in workplace training.

There is not any general apprenticeship system in Sweden although the social partners have established their own systems for employees after upper secondary schooling within certain branches, e.g. the building trade. In 1992, a possibility was created to integrated apprenticeship into the individual programme in upper secondary school. This has been used only on a very small scale.

0604 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OUTSIDE ENTERPRISES)

On 1 July 2001 a new, integrated teaching degree was established, replacing eight of the former 11 teaching degrees. The new structure means that all future teachers will have a common basic competence, combined with a chosen specialisation in particular subjects/subject areas and/or age groups. The new teaching degree comprises a program consisting of a minimum of 140 credits (equals three and an half years of full time studies) and a maximum of 220 credits, depending on the chosen area and level. To teach vocationally oriented subjects at upper secondary level, 120 credits are required. (www.eurydice.org) Instead of a specialisation in certain subjects, this degree requires extensive professional experience, combined with 60 credits in relevant, vocationally oriented, higher education courses. The degree for Upper Secondary School was replaced by a degree for teaching in the higher levels of the compulsory school and upper secondary school.

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- [University Diploma in Education](#)
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ALTERNATIVE TRAINING PATHWAYS

Some Swedish universities offer distance study courses. The Agency for Sweden's Internet University consists of IT-based distance education courses and programmes, which universities and university colleges have registered with the agency. (Myndigheten för Sveriges Nätuniversitet)

Since 1991, teachers have been municipality employees. The municipalities are responsible for staffing the schools with competent teachers who have been adequately trained for their duties. Teachers at independent schools are, however, employed by these schools.

To be permanently appointed as a teacher in the national schools system, according to the Education Act, an applicant has to have a university diploma in teaching, knowledge of the Swedish language as well as an appreciation of the regulations applicable to the school system, in particular the regulations concerning the goals of education. The applicant should also have undergone a teacher-training programme in Sweden, the main contents of which focus on the type of teaching the position involves, or equivalent training from another Nordic country or a country that is a member of EFTA or the EU. If the applicant has undergone a course in higher education other than those referred to earlier, the National Agency for Higher Education shall determine whether it fulfils the necessary conditions for competence. Upper secondary schools should try to appoint teachers with post-graduate education.

An applicant not fulfilling the above conditions may be employed for a maximum of 12 months at a time, unless there are special reasons to the contrary.

According to central agreement, teachers are employed on a 12-month basis before they receive a permanent position. The purpose of the probationary period is to give newly qualified teachers a year of introduction under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

The major task for the in-service training of teachers in upper secondary school and municipal adult education is to supplement subject qualifications in order to bring them more in line with the qualifications needed in the new programmes within upper secondary education (<http://www.sweden.se>).

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

A NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR ICT

The Government has drawn up the National Program for ICT (IT i Skolan, ITiS), in order to give teachers support in acquiring and exploiting the opportunities provided by ICT. This also means creating greater variety in the work of teachers and transforming the school into a more exciting working place for pupils and teachers. Sweden can achieve this by overcoming obstacles and using ICT to develop the work of the school. Not by focusing on technology for its own sake, but rather by using it wisely to promote the learning of our children and youth. Development begins with the teachers. It is only when teachers feel they have a firm grasp of the new technology as a pedagogical tool that it can become a tool for change. Such confidence comes from teachers themselves taking responsibility for finding and acquiring knowledge of ICT and learning which is both professionally and personally relevant. As a result of adding new knowledge to their own experience and benefiting from the experiences of others, the individual grows in interaction with other teachers and pupils.

The national programme for in-service training in ITiS is based on teachers taking responsibility for their own learning at work where they should feel they receive powerful support from school management and facilitators. Parallel with this, ITiS supports development in the municipalities by providing some of the funding for the expansion of the school's ICT infrastructure. The overall effect of these measures should help to ensure that the school is able to take advantage of the opportunities for learning by the new technology. (Ms Wärnersson, former Minister for Schools and Adult education)

The Delegation for ICT in Schools is responsible for planning and implementing the programme which consists of the following seven components;

- in-service training for 75,000 teachers in teams
- a computer for participating teachers
- state grants to improve the school's accessibility to the Internet
- e-mail addresses for all teachers and pupils
- support for developing the Swedish Schoolnet and the European Schoolnet
- measures for pupils with special needs
- awards for excellent pedagogical contributions

ITiS is to be implemented over a four-year period starting 1999.

Four guiding principles have underpinned the planning of the action programme and shall be applied to its implementation in the municipalities:

- Equal standards between schools and quality for pupils
- School development
- Supplementing and reinforcing programmes planned and already completed by the municipalities.
- Increasing the school's accessibility to the Internet and e-mail (<http://www.utbildning.regeringen.se>)

Since 1994 Swedish schools have a natural place on the Internet. The Swedish Schoolnet (Skoldatanätet) has been provided by the National Agency for Education, under a government commission of April 1994, which was renewed in June 1996. It is a website for teachers, educators and students. The goal in 1994 was, as is today, to stimulate the use of information technology in schools. Since 2003 it is provided by the National Agency for School Improvement (The Swedish School Net).

In order for the grounds for assessment to be as unified as possible across the country, teachers are recommended to use the national course tests for upper secondary education set by the Agency for Education. These are course tests in Swedish, English and Mathematics. At the moment there is also a pilot project going on where the aim is to develop course tests in vocational subjects through the use of multimedia. The new national assessments for upper secondary school have been developed with the purpose to contribute to the quality of VET. They are competence based, and are built on authentic situations or problems, which teachers and representatives from working life have identified as key problems in their specific domain. The problems are presented in multimedia, and the students are expected to deal with them authentically. The student's ability to handle the problem, i.e. dealing with various aspects of planning, practical action and evaluation, is thus assessed. The new assessments are regarded as a service material for schools, and they are available through the Internet. Responsible for the development work are

Stockholm Institute of Education and Växjö University (Skolverket, Dnr 2000:1734, paper presented at international conference in Lisbon in 2001).

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

All national programmes at upper secondary level provide a basis for further studies and basic eligibility for higher education. A course-based upper secondary school provides great opportunities to ensure education is relevant, for example, by enabling switching and changing courses, and also by creating flexible education routes with good opportunities for pupils to choose.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

INTERNAL CONSULTATION

For pupils to receive an education of high quality in the school, the compulsory school must co-operate with the upper secondary school level. In each individual school, the school head is specifically responsible for ensuring that such co-operation comes about. The curriculum states that all work in the school shall act to develop contacts not only with working, cultural and organisational life, but also with other activities outside school, all of which can enrich the school as a learning environment. Teachers also have a responsibility for contributing to the development of contacts with receiving schools as well as with organisations, companies and other bodies, which can help enrich the school's activities and give it an identity and roots in the surrounding society.

The compulsory and upper secondary schools should also co-operate closely with working life, universities and university colleges and society in general. This is necessary for pupils to receive education of high quality as well as provide a basis for choosing courses and going on to further studies or vocational activity. It is especially important that the school co-operates with working life over vocationally oriented education.

Universities and university colleges shall co-operate with the surrounding community and give information about their activities. This involves inter alia contacts with the upper secondary school and with other parts of the school system.

In order to increase co-operation in different parts of the education system, the Government has proposed that pupils should be able to study courses at the upper secondary level within the framework of the ordinary compulsory school, and that pupils in the upper secondary school should have the opportunity of studying in higher education subjects where they have already attained the knowledge goals, at the same time as they complete their upper secondary education.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND CHOICE OF SCHOOLS

All municipalities are obliged under the Education Act to offer young people who have completed Compulsory School (grundskolan), or the equivalent, education in Upper secondary school (VET included). It can be said that all young people who have completed compulsory school are entitled to enter upper secondary school. This right is, however, restricted in the sense that the course of study must start no later than the first half of the calendar year in which the pupil reaches the age of 20. To be admitted to a national programme or a specially designed programme, pupils must have at least a pass in Swedish, English and Mathematics from the compulsory school or have acquired equivalent knowledge in some other way.

The municipality will provide a broad range of education and as far as possible try to match the number of places in different programmes with pupils' choice and study routes. If their own municipality does not provide the programme, pupils have the right to apply to another municipality. If accepted, their own municipality must pay the cost of the education. If the number of applicants is higher than the number of places available, selection is on the basis of the pupils' final school reports from the compulsory school.

A limited number of places at upper secondary school are set aside for pupils, who owing to special circumstances should be given preferential access or who come from schools where grades usually cannot be compared with those obtained from the compulsory school.

COURSE-BASED SYSTEM

The course-based system together with the absence of a nationally decided timetable gives the upper secondary schools great freedom to organise the education. The courses may be studied intensively by taking several subjects at once or instead spreading them out over the whole of their upper secondary education. Whole courses or parts of them may be integrated with other subjects and studied by themes. The groups of students studying a course may be put together from different classes and programmes.

Each subject is divided into one or more courses. Courses can cover 50, 100, 150 or 200 upper secondary credits. Pupils may choose to specialise within the block of options and have greater freedom of choice within their individual options.

Pupils may take part in one or more courses outside the complete programme, which is referred to as an expanded programme. Pupils experiencing significant study-related difficulties may be allowed to opt out of one or more courses in what is called a reduced programme. Pupils can also have the opportunity to retake one or more courses where they have not received a passing grade. It is also possible to retake a whole year. In all cases, the school head decides on these issues. The normal period of study is three years, but under the system of courses and credits, pupils can complete upper secondary schooling over a shorter or longer period than three years. (www.eurydice.org)

PUPILS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Municipalities have an obligation to offer youths who do not meet the requirements of regular upper secondary, such as those with learning disabilities, a place in an upper secondary programme for pupils with learning disabilities. Like regular upper secondaries, upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities has national, specially designed- and individual programmes. The number of national programmes offered is fewer than in regular upper secondary school and programmes specialize in preparatory vocational training. All upper secondary programmes for pupils with learning disabilities are 4-year programmes and offer a guaranteed number of course hours, 3 600 hours, divided between core- and programme-specific subjects (<http://www.skolverket.se>).

ADVANCED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Through AVE Sweden has acquired a new post-secondary school form, as a complement to institutions of higher education. The AVE pilot scheme has been successful and has attracted a great deal of attention, both from

students and from workplaces, not only from the business but also from the public sectors. Eighty per cent of the students obtain employment or have their own companies six months after the end of the course.

Qualified vocational training is characterised primarily by its close contacts with the workplace, which takes part directly in designing the training and financing the part of the training that is located at the work place.

These courses normally last two years and lead to vocational qualification. They are directed at students from upper secondary school and also to those with a vocational background. In 2001 qualified vocational training consisted of 12 000 programme places (<http://www.utbildning.regeringen.se> Fact sheets).

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

MODERNISATION OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

A number of committees have currently been undertaking a review of different parts of the upper secondary school. As a result of this, several changes are to be expected during the first decade of the 21st Century. A parliamentary committee, the Committee for Upper Secondary Schools 2000, (Gymnasiekommittén 2000) was assigned the task of reviewing activities and presenting proposals for the future organisation of study paths to be offered by upper secondary schools. The committee should base its considerations on an analysis of the changes in society and the labour market and the need for broader recruitment to higher education. In addition, The Committee should consider ways in which all these alternative courses could be made available to pupils throughout the country and the economic consequences of this. It should also analyse the effects of schools size, as regards quality and the choice of courses. (<http://www.utbildning.regeringen.se> Fact sheets).

In October 2004 The Riksdag decided on modernisation of the Upper secondary education, which can be summarised by way of the following eleven points:

- Subject grades to replace current course grades
- An upper secondary diploma to be introduced
- Modern apprenticeship training will revitalise vocational training
- Better quality individual programmes
- Unrestricted application to give pupils greater freedom of choice and to stimulate regional cooperation
- History to be a new core subject
- The core subjects should be characterised by the focus of the programme
- Local programmes must be quality audited by the National Agency for Education
- Quality of upper secondary vocational programmes to be improved
- Upper secondary school projects to give better overall picture of a pupil's upper secondary education
- More extensive contextual and advanced programmes

(www.skolverket.se), (The National Agency for Education)

In this renewal of curricula as well as quality improvement of upper secondary school stakeholders such as researchers, teachers/trainers, education authorities, social partners and learners will be involved both at national, regional, local and sectoral level.

The government has also recently appointed a commission to look into how upper secondary schools might contract out entire programmes.

In order to strengthen interest in mathematics and the natural sciences, a Mathematics Delegation has been appointed with the task of developing and implementing a national plan for mathematics from pre-school up to higher education. (including VET) (Matematikdelegationen)

The Government has started a pilot project on distance learning in the upper secondary school. By means of distance learning, pupils can combine studies in the upper secondary school in their home municipality with other courses, not provided in their home municipality, at an upper secondary school in a different municipality. The Agency for school development is responsible for the pilot project, which also aims at developing new forms of learning where ICT is an important means of support and also provides better opportunities for co-operation between municipalities. (www.skolverket.se) The National Agency for Education and (www.skolutveckling.se) The Agency for school development

ADVANCED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

On 1 January 2002 Advanced Vocational Education (KY) was established as a regular form of post-secondary education. The aim is to satisfy the needs of the labour market for skilled labour with appropriate competence for the production of goods and services using modern technologies. A third of the education is located at a workplace. There are around 270 educational programmes covering most sectors. The programme focuses on vocational areas where there is a clear shortage of skilled labour in areas such as, manufacturing, health care, ICT.

The Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning (Nationellt centrum för flexibelt lärande, CFL) promotes the utilisation of distance learning methods in adult education, liberal adult education and complement the municipalities' own provision of adult education, primarily at upper secondary level, by offering equivalent courses by means of distance education.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

The grading system of the upper secondary school (including VET) is related to goals and knowledge. School results are assessed in relation to attainment of the goals of the courses as laid down in the syllabus. There are special grading criteria to be used when awarding grades and these stipulate the knowledge required for each grade. There are four grade levels in the upper secondary school:

- Pass with Special Distinction (MVG)
- Pass with Distinction (VG)
- Pass (G)
- Not Passed (IG)

Pupils are awarded grades for the various courses they have completed. Theoretically, there is thus no unique point in time when all pupils receive their grades. However, pupils where necessary can obtain a transcript of their grades for completed courses. Grades are given in a separate document. The teacher should not award a grade if the pupil has not been present for sufficient time to be graded.

Before giving grades in Swedish/Swedish as a second language, English and Mathematics the teacher should use compulsory national tests.

Pupils and their parents through the compulsory personal development dialogue have the right to be informed of the progress pupils are making in their studies. The School is obliged to arrange meetings to this end at the minimum once a semester.

All pupils after completing their upper secondary education are entitled to resit examinations to improve their grades. Pupils are only entitled to resit examinations during their upper secondary education if they have failed a course. The municipalities are entitled to charge a maximum fee of SEK 500 for resitting an examination.

In October 2004 The Riksdag decided on the modernisation of the Upper Secondary School and one of the decisions is that subject grades should replace current course grades. Upon completion of each course, the student will receive a subject grade replacing any previous grade obtained in the subject and providing a holistic picture of how far the student has progressed in the subject. This renewal will enter into the system on 1 July 2007.

The upper secondary school does not have an examination. Each pupil instead receives a final certificate consisting of the courses in the pupils' study plan and the grades received in these courses. To receive a school-leaving certificate (Slutbetyg från gymnasieskolan), the pupil must have completed a national or specially designed programme and have received grades for all courses as well as the project work included in the pupil's studies.

Pupils who have taken more courses than their programmes require, in an expanded programme, may up to a certain point decide themselves whether these courses should be included in their final certificate.

All programmes fulfil the basic eligibility requirements for access to higher education studies. However, nearly all higher education requires special qualifications in one or more subjects. The Riksdag decided in October 2004 that an upper secondary certification (studentexamen) will be introduced in 2007.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

As have been demonstrated in other countries, introduction of methodologies and systems for validation of non-formal learning can have an important motivational effect. Many individuals will conceive credit for prior learning as an incentive to further learning. First of all by avoiding unnecessary repetitions, secondly by demonstrating that learning can take place along different pathways, and not only through traditional, formal schooling.

Swedish approaches to assessment and recognition of non-formal learning are not limited to centrally initiated projects and experiments. Identification of prior and non-formal learning is indirectly demonstrated by many of the local and regional initiatives, which were supported by the government in the Adult Education Initiative. Sweden has started work on the development of general systems for assessment of competencies that have been acquired outside formal learning settings. The initiatives from the government together with the involvement of social partners, has led to increased attention on this issue. While the social partners are more concerned about the utilisation of competencies developed in working life (how can it be used, developed, accumulated and disseminated etc.), the interest of the government is more focused on the need to make public educational institutions more flexible (to open the system up for immigrants, for adults with long working experience, to reduce costs etc.) and that broader involvement in the setting of competence standards is secured (The Commission on validation of adults' knowledge and competence (U1999:06), Published series of memoranda and reports drawn up in the Government offices).

During The Adult Education Initiative a number of pilot projects were launched, where new forms of accreditation of prior learning and validation were the focus. These pilot projects took place in several municipalities and varied a great deal.

In the Bill Adult Learning and the Future Development of Adult Education, 2000/2001:72, the government recommended that Parliament adopt both goals for adult learning and a strategy for formal adult learning - side by side with higher education - in a society characterised by lifelong learning. The proposals contained in the

Government Bill take as their starting-point the need for change and development in adult education in order to meet the requirements of a consistent regard for the principle of lifelong learning.

The Bill on validation (Ds 2003:23) recommended that there should be increased opportunities for the individual to have informal learning recognized in the way of validation. There is also a need for regional cooperation in this matter, a need to look into the legal rights of the individual as well as quality assessment of validation throughout the country (The Ministry for Education and Science newsletter no 1, 2003).

In this context the Government considers validation to mean a structural assessment involving assessing and recognising knowledge and competence irrespective of where these have been gained. For the individual this involves validating knowledge and competence obtained in different ways through certification providing eligibility for further studies, as well as occupational or industrial competence related to working life. Validation can also be used as an instrument in adult education to customise the education to the individual's preconditions and initial knowledge.

A government authority, the Validation Delegation, has been appointed for the period 2004-2007. The authority's main tasks are to promote and advance the development of methods and systems for validation and to work towards a national equivalence, high quality and security for the individual. The government has also given the National Agency for School Improvement the task of extending adult skills validation pilot schemes. The report that led to the establishment of the Delegation also presents other measures to promote validation work. One such measure is the development of a national on-line portal containing information on all education in Sweden.

(www.valideringsdelegationen.se), (www.skolutveckling.se).

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

There are no formal special institutions for guidance. All education and vocational guidance is given within the schools.

In all types of schools, it is the responsibility of the school head to ensure that all pupils receive educational and vocational guidance before choosing from the range of options that the school has to offer and before deciding how best to continue an educational route. Most schools have specially trained guidance officers to deal with such questions.

Schools arrange some form of practical work life orientation, where pupils over a week or two are able to get practical experience at a workplace. In other areas study visits and information about the labour market and different professions and career options are included in many subjects in the compulsory school.

At the local level, the schools co-operate with industry, the social partners and industrial organisations, as well as with universities and university colleges to provide students with educational guidance for their further education. This is, however, not regulated at the central level. The national employment agency also provides educational guidance.

www.studera.nu is a website with collected information about higher education. It includes a searchable database containing descriptions of courses and education programmes available in higher education.

The government has appointed a commissioner who has submitted a report on guidance and counselling in schools, where a number of measures are proposed for strengthening access to neutral and independent guidance and counselling. The proposal is currently being prepared within the Ministry of Education and Science. The National Agency for Education has been commissioned by the government to continue its work to develop a web based portal for information and guidance.

AMS is in charge of the Internet services of the Swedish Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen Internet). These services currently include the Job Bank, Job Seeker Bank, Temporary Worker Bank, Image and Artist Bank, information on occupations and training programmes as well as general information on the labour market, forecasts and in-depth analyses of the job market situation.

The activity guarantee programme was introduced on August 1, 2000 for unemployed individuals who are, or risk becoming, long-term job seekers registered with the Employment Service. Participants receive intensive guidance in groups of 10-15 people, while having access to all the standard labour market policy programmes. Each job seeker and job counsellor are expected to jointly work out an action plan. The job seeker participates in the activity guarantee programme until he/she finds a job for more than six months, begins a regular course of studies or chooses to leave the programme (<http://www.sweden.se>).

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

A great deal of study guidance is provided in upper secondary schools with a view to supporting the student's subsequent studies. Vocational guidance is concerned both with the labour market as a whole and with individual sectors. In primarily vocationally oriented programmes, contact with working life is an integral part of teaching.

All programmes may include workplace training, i.e. part of the course of studies is at place of work outside the school (APU). APU can, on the basis of local decisions, be provided within the Arts Programme and also in the Natural Science, Social Science and Technology programmes. In all other programmes, i.e. the ones with a vocational orientation, APU forms a compulsory part. At least 15 weeks of the total period must be spent on workplace training in the relevant programmes.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

The municipalities are responsible for this staff and for the in-service training and competence development.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

The funding of the school (including VET and adult education) is shared between the state and the municipalities. State funds are paid out to the municipalities, through the general state grant to municipalities, which then allocate resources to individual schools. The municipalities may also receive revenues from municipal taxes which will be used to finance municipal activities. Higher education and university colleges are financed directly from the state budget. KLAR

THE COST OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOLS IN 2003	SEK MILLION
PRE-SCHOOL CLASS	3 947
COMPULSORY SCHOOL	70 499
EDUCATION FOR PUPILS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES	5 102
SPECIAL SCHOOLS	476
UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL	26 937
SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL	310
MUNICIPAL ADULT EDUCATION	4 795
MUNICIPAL EDUCATION FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES	147
SWEDISH TUITION FOR IMMIGRANTS	774
NATIONAL SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS	43

The total cost of the schools system in 2003 was SEK 113 028 million.

TOTAL COST OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOLS PER ORGANISER IN 2003	SEK MILLION
MUNICIPALITIES	104 345
COUNTY COUNCILS	665
STATE	552
INDEPENDENT ORGANISERS	7 466

(<http://www.skolverket.se> Beskrivande data om förskoleverksamhet, skolbarnomsorg, skola och vuxenutbildning 2003).

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Municipal tax revenues are the municipality's main source of income. Apart from income taxes, which finance the majority of municipal education, the municipalities also receive a state grant, but this is not earmarked for a specific activity. The structural element of the grant is determined by several underlying factors such as the size of the population in the municipality, its age structure, population density, social structure and number of immigrants. Tax revenues and state grants thus provide most of the resources for compulsory and non-compulsory education in the municipalities.

In the Swedish decentralised system, each municipality determines how it will allocate resources and organise its activities. The municipalities are, however, obliged to provide their inhabitants with certain services.

In the area of education, the municipality must fulfil its obligations in accordance with the Education Act. This means that the municipalities themselves are free to decide on their own organisation and allocation of resources so long as the provisions of the Education Act regarding activities and quality are followed.

The municipality usually has its own local board of education or a similar body, which decides on the allocation of funds between different schools in the municipality. This local body also decides on the funds to be allocated to independent schools in the municipality. There are no national regulations on how resources should be allocated between schools.

The responsibility for determining teachers' salaries and other expenditures is usually decentralised to the individual school, but the municipality may choose to make such decisions at a higher level.

When it comes to capital expenditures such as school buildings, the municipalities show a less uniform platform. Some municipalities prefer to decentralise responsibility for these expenditures to each individual school, while others keep responsibility for local costs at the municipal level.

The Government has decided to set aside specific funds for research in the area for pupils with disabilities and for the competence development of teachers.

Municipalities can provide education on a contract basis for companies and organisations.

In addition to the general state grant to municipalities, the Swedish Government has decided that over a five-year period (autumn 2001-autumn 2006) additional resources are given to municipalities used specifically for the employment of teaching and other staff. The reason for introducing this grant is the difficult economic situation in most municipalities in the 1990s, with a decrease in the municipal education budgets resulting in less staff in schools.

www.skolverket.se, www.eurydice.org.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

State and municipal education in Sweden is free of charge.

To create better opportunities for adults to study, there are different forms of study financing: study assistance (grants and loan) and special educational grants. The reformed system for study assistance, in force from 1 July 2001, covers all students in compulsory and secondary education, including adult education, as well as higher education and other post-secondary education.

Adults in municipal adult education can apply for study assistance or special education grants.

The system for study assistance consists of two components – a grant and a loan. There are two grant levels; 34.5 per cent and 82 per cent. The lower grant can be received by all, irrespective of educational level (compulsory school, upper secondary or post upper secondary levels.) The higher grant level will be directed towards priority groups. The total amount (grant and loan) is approximately SEK 1 700 per study week.

In 2003 a new study system of adult study support – Adult Education Recruitment Grants – was brought in to replace the special education allowance (abolished in 2002). People from the age of 25 who have relatively little previous education, who either are unemployed or at risk of becoming unemployed or who have functional disabilities and are in need of additional time for their studies may be awarded support. The recruitment grant is a grant and contains no loan element. The grant is SEK 2 114 per week (2004).

In-company training provided by companies and public authorities has expanded faster than any other form of CVT during the 1980s and is currently the dominant part of CVT. Over the last decade the participation rate in in-company training has almost doubled. Statistics for the first six months of the year 2000 show that 40 % (roughly 1.5 million) of Swedish employees participated. In-company training is by definition, financed by employers. The costs of in-company training in year 1997 were about 95 % of the total cost of CVT.

To a great extent, in-company training takes place during working hours, but there are also cases where training is supported by employers outside working hours. The training is organised partly by companies and administrative authorities. Its growth has also generated a competitive market for education in which municipalities and universities, as well as private educational consultants are active. The employer makes decisions on in-company training, but the trade unions are able to exert varying degrees of influence. Today there are very few collective agreements concerning in-company training. One exception is the teaching sector where training is regulated by law and in collective agreements (Vocational Education and training in Sweden, a document based on the description of the Swedish vocational education and training system published by Cedefop in English in 1998 by Mats Lindell in 2000).

Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (all enterprises), by type of cost (1999)

	TOTAL COSTS	DIRECT COSTS	LABOUR COSTS OF PARTICIPANTS
EU-15	2.3	1.4	0.8
SWEDEN	2.8	1.6	1.3

Total costs: sum of direct costs, staff time costs and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements

Direct costs: costs of CVT courses

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, 2nd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS)

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Labour market training courses are organised primarily for the unemployed in need of retraining or further training and education. In the first instance, the Labour Market Board is responsible for labour market training. The Labour Market Board is an agency accountable to the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications.

The Labour Market Administration is responsible for the following activities:

- Facilitate and improve the match between supply and demand in various sectors of the labour market.
- Skills enhancement programmes as well as support for those who are having the greatest difficulties in the labour market.
- Operational development, monitoring, oversight and financial control of the Employment Service, labour market policy programmes and the unemployment insurance system
- Working Life Services.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

There are no known changes in policy priorities for funding vocational education and training at the moment.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

A number of national initiatives have been taken with the aim of promoting internationalisation at all education levels. Besides Western European and Nordic integration, another political priority since the early days of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s has been co-operation in the Baltic region, especially with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The Government is particularly stressing the existing commitment to regional co-operation around the Baltic and the need to refocus on co-operation with developing countries.

A number of agencies play a central role in the implementation of the national policy through the administration of co-operation and mobility programmes, information activities and other initiatives.

The International Programme Office for Education and Training (Internationella programkontoret) is a national agency supporting schools, universities, companies, organisations and private individuals who wish to take part in international co-operation. This covers activities ranging from international co-operation projects in education and competence development to placements and studies abroad. The International Programme Office is responsible for the two of the largest education programmes within the EU, Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, as well as for Linnaeus-Palme. (<http://www.programkontoret.se>)

The Linnaeus-Palme programme, which was established by the Government in 2000, aims at strengthening co-operation between universities in Sweden and developing countries. The programme is modelled on the Erasmus programme but promotes exchange with countries outside the OECD area.

The Swedish Institute (Svenska Institutet) promotes the internationalisation of Swedish education by awarding individual scholarships for long-term or brief study visits, both for foreign students in Sweden and for Swedish students abroad. Another function of the Institute is to disseminate information outside Sweden, about Sweden in general and about Swedish education and opportunities to study in Sweden. Recently a special website was launched for this purpose: <http://www.studyinsweden.se>. The Institute also has the responsibility to promote the teaching of Swedish as a foreign language at universities abroad.

The Institute administers the Visby programme, supporting co-operation and exchange between Sweden and one or more of the Baltic countries, Poland, north-west Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine at all educational levels above compulsory school.

STINT - The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education was established in 1994 with the aim to support the internationalisation of Swedish research and higher education. STINT provides financial support for co-operation and exchange to academic institutions, post-graduate students and researchers as well as university faculty.

To promote internationalisation of vocational training the Government has commissioned the National Agency for Education to establish a National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications (Nationellt centrum för yrkesutbildning) for information on vocational education, and further to allocate support for pupils in upper secondary vocational programmes who do their work-place training abroad. The NRP is an international information networks, which promote the recognition of foreign qualifications. The Swedish NRP serves as a contact point for vocational qualifications. (<http://www.senrp.se>).

Sida, the Swedish International Cooperation Agency, has bilateral agreements for development support with around 40 partner countries in the developing world. The promotion of basic education is a central objective in many of these programmes.

In addition, a majority of schools, universities, university colleges and other education institutions also have their own bilateral co-operation agreements with institutions in other countries.

Sweden uses the Europass, which is a certificate of recognition of work-linked training carried out within the EU. The document certifies that one or more parts of a work-linked training programme have been completed/taken place abroad. (<http://www.eurydice.org>).

ONGOING DEBATES

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Several actors on different levels contribute to the follow-up of the Bologna Process in Sweden. By signing the Bologna Declaration and other important international agreements, such as the Lisbon Convention, the government and its representatives have helped to improve the conditions for better mobility and employability. Students, teachers and other staff at universities/university colleges are helping to implement all the goals in the Bologna Declaration.

FUTURE OBJECTIVES OF EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS

The European Union has reached an agreement on shared goals and objectives for their education and training systems. As an initial follow-up exercise, the Ministry of Education and Science has drawn up a status report primarily intended to emphasize that Sweden takes the goals and objectives seriously, among other things by presenting a clear picture of Sweden's education and training systems and Swedish education policy in relation to the shared goals and objectives. (<http://utbildning.regeringen.se>).

PLACEMENTS ABROAD AS PART OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

The National Agency for School improvement was commissioned by the government in May 2003 to develop forms for cooperation between Swedish upper secondary schools offering programmes incorporating vocational subjects and educational programmes in a number of developing countries. This is a three-year commission and the aim is for development efforts to lead to proposals for a regular programme to be introduced in connection with the forthcoming upper secondary school reform. The government also has the intention to encourage the use of the EUROPASS by introducing provisions regulating the document in the Ordinance on Upper Secondary Education.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Sweden collaborates with other countries through various international organisations: the central ones being the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, OECD and the Nordic Council of Ministers. This co-operation takes different forms, depending on the aim and activities of the organisation.

EUROPEAN UNION

The greatest part of multilateral co-operation in education takes place within the framework of the EU education programmes, primarily Socrates (education) and Leonardo da Vinci (vocational education and training). The Swedish interest in participating in the EU education programmes is considerable. In the course of a year, an estimated 5 000 Swedes are engaged in studies, traineeships, etc. in EU-funded programmes. In addition, a large number of schools and tertiary education institutions take part in trans-national co-operation projects, for instance, projects to develop new teaching and learning methods, curricula development etc.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND UNESCO

The Council of Europe is an important European co-operation forum for Sweden.

Together with UNESCO, the Council of Europe has drawn up the so-called Lisbon convention on recognition of diplomas in higher education in Europe. The Convention, which aims to facilitate the international mobility of students, was adopted in 1997 and ratified by Sweden in 2001.

A large number of Swedish schools are active in the Baltic Sea Project – an international network among schools for a better environment in the Baltic area.

OECD

Of particular interest has been the development of statistical indicators within the field of education (INES programme) and thematic reviews of various policy issues. (<http://www.oecd.org>)

NORDIC CO-OPERATION

Ministers of education and research meet in the Nordic Council of Ministers three times a year. Education and research is considered to be one of the main areas within Nordic Co-operation. With a view to strengthen Nordic educational co-operation, a number of co-operation and mobility programmes have been created for different target groups, such as teachers, students and pupils at all levels, also within the area of research and development.

IEA-INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT.

Sweden, via the National Agency for Education, is also engaged in the work of the IEA. The primary purpose of this international co-operative of research institutions and governmental agencies is to conduct large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement. (<http://www.skolverket.se>)

Linneaus-Palme is an exchange programme for teachers and students at undergraduate and master's level and aims at strengthening co-operation between universities in Sweden and developing countries. Foreign visits for

teachers may cover periods of 3-8 weeks and for students the exchange covers full-time studies for 1 to 2 terms, and is intended to provide eligibility for credit on return. The programme is financed by Sida and administered by the International Programme Office.

One year in: Germany, Austria, France or Spain are mobility programmes open to students in the first or second year of upper secondary school.

The International Programme Office's Scholarships for schools aim to stimulate cooperation between schools and child care institutions in Sweden and abroad. The scholarships are intended for visits or exchanges for pupils or school staff. There are also individual scholarships available to fund participation in international conferences.

The International Programme Office is also responsible for the implementation of International Association for the Exchange of Student for Technical Experience (**IAESTE**) for students in technical higher education and the Interpraktik scholarships for unemployed young people.

The Visby Programme supports network building and projects, involving class exchanges and pupils/student and teacher exchange.

Since 2002 the National Agency for Education is responsible for the distribution of scholarships to upper secondary pupils for workplace training abroad. This activity is complementary to mobility for people in initial vocational training in the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, but is not limited to Europe.

In 2003 the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement was commissioned by the Government to work with the development of cooperation between Swedish upper secondary schools and its counterparts in developing countries. This pilot project runs during a period of three years and focuses on vocational training and education.

The Erasmus programme also covers teachers exchange. In 2003 a total of 428 Swedish teachers took part in this exchange. Within the framework of the Comenius programme, 19 future language teachers spent a period abroad as a "language assistant" during 2003. The same year 43 Swedish schools hosted language assistants from other countries.

For some of the programmes that were financed nationally, the participation was as follows:

In 2002:

- 62 upper secondary students spent a school year in France (47), Spain (19) or Germany (6).
- The Linneaus-Palme Programme financed the mobility of 192 outgoing and 2004 incoming students and 231 outgoing and 226 incoming teachers.
- 534 students received grants to finance a Minor Field Study in a development country
- The Sida travel grants financed interships for 135 Swedish participants.

In 2003:

- Within the framework of the Nordic cooperation, 88 teachers and pupils took part in the NORDPLUS Junior programme.
- 5 000 NORDPLUS scholarships were awarded to students (around 4 700) and teachers (around 300) for studies in Nordic countries.

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