



# Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–19

## SWEDEN



Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables  
of the Riga conclusions

**Country chapter**

**SWEDEN**

Developments in vocational education and training policy  
in 2015-19

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# Introduction

In June 2015, the ministers in charge of vocational education and training in the EU Member States, the candidate countries and the European Economic Area countries, convened in Riga, agreed on objectives for vocational education and training (VET) policies for 2015-20<sup>(1)</sup>.

Cedefop has been entrusted with monitoring the countries' policies implemented towards reaching these objectives.

This country chapter is part of the monitoring process. It was drafted based on input from the national ReferNet team. It presents an overview of the major policy developments that have taken place in the country in 2015-19, in the areas covered by the Riga medium-term deliverables (MTDs).

The country chapter is structured as follows:

- (a) the introductory section Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015 briefly sketches the VET context in the country in 2015, highlighting selected figures and some major policy initiatives that were just being adopted or started at that time. This introductory section is targeted at setting a baseline to put in perspective the policy choices and developments that have taken place since the beginning of the Riga cycle;
- (b) five thematic chapters then follow, devoted to the five respective MTDs outlined in the Riga conclusions. Each thematic chapter also begins with a 2015 baseline, more specifically addressing the MTD-related topics. The baseline is followed by the presentation of the major policy developments in the MTD since 2015;
- (c) the country chapter ends with a conclusion summarising the main lines of the 2015-19 policy developments and highlighting possible priorities for the future.

This country chapter is part of the information which the European Commission used to prepare the European Semester exercises<sup>(2)</sup> in 2017-19. The chapter also informs the work of Cedefop and the European Training Foundation (ETF) in preparing a joint monitoring report on the implementation of

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(1) *Riga conclusions 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-20, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 Bruges communiqué:*

[https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions\\_2015.pdf](https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf)

(2) European Semester: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en)

the Riga conclusions. Both the joint report and the country chapter are aimed at informing the work of EU Member States' Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTs) and Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) on taking stock of the outcomes of the Riga conclusions and preparing the next steps for the EU VET policy for the next few years.

## Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

In 2009-11, Sweden undertook reforms in vocational education which led to reduced access of upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) graduates to higher education while, at the same time, developing substantially higher vocational education programmes to meet labour market demand for qualified labour (European Commission, 2015, pp. 8-10). Strong partnerships with employers were established in higher VET; this sustained increasing labour market demand for graduates, high graduate employment rates, and growing enrolment in tertiary VET programmes. In upper secondary VET, participation has decreased since then. At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in VET programmes in Sweden was below the EU average: 43.7% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 133); 38% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU <sup>(3)</sup>. 2.5% of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) students were following work-based programmes in 2014, compared to 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 133). But the employment rate of recent upper secondary education graduates remained high at 79.7% in 2014 compared to 70.8% in the EU (European Commission, 2015, p. 8). When considering IVET graduates only, the rate was 88.7% in 2014, compared to the EU average of 77.2% (Table 1).

In 2015, Sweden was, on the one hand supporting further development of higher VET through allocating more budget and creating additional study places, while, on the other hand, reinforcing upper secondary VET through promoting practical training and encouraging closer participation of employers in programme design. The legislation to allow for employment while in education as an apprentice was introduced in 2014. Expanding access of upper secondary VET students to higher education again was also being considered.

On the adult side, participation in lifelong learning was high: 28.9% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 9) and 29.4% in 2015 compared to 10.7% on average in 2014 and 2015 in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 133).

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<sup>(3)</sup> Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Sweden and in the EU: 2010-15

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	SE <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	SE <sup>f</sup> EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	SE	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>							
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	43.7 <sup>b</sup> 48.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -3.1	▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	2.5 <sup>b</sup> 34.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E2</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	31.3 69.2 <sup>E3</sup>	'13-'14	▪ 10.5	▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	47.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	47.0 38.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	24.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	24.0 20.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	24.7		'15	29.4 10.7 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↗ 0.5	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	87.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	87.0 66.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	41.3 <sup>b</sup> 42.7 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -3.3	▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	40.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	40.0 25.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	35.7 <sup>b</sup> 33.0 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -1.6	▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	18.3	5.3	'15	22.7 6.9	'10-'15	↗ 0.9	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	16.0		'15	20.0 <sup>C</sup> 4.3 <sup>b</sup> <sub>C</sub>	'13-'15	→ 0.0	↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	40.8		'15	44.0 9.5 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -0.8	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	7.2 <sup>B</sup>	9.5 <sup>e</sup> <sub>B</sub>	'11	7.2 9.5 <sup>e</sup>			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	80.1 <sup>B</sup>	80.2 <sup>e</sup> <sub>B</sub>	'11	80.1 80.2 <sup>e</sup>			
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>							
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	0.83 <sup>b</sup> 0.56 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E4</sub>	'12-'13	▪ -0.02	▪ -0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	11.7 <sup>b</sup> 6.4 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E5</sub>	'12-'13	▪ 0.5	▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.9	0.8 <sup>e</sup>	'10	0.9 0.8 <sup>e</sup>			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.1 <sup>b</sup> 1.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E6</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	27.0 <sup>b</sup> 30.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E7</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -0.7	▪ -0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	11.2 9.3 <sup>E8</sup>	'13-'14	▪ -1.6	▪ 0.4
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	23.5	41.5 <sup>E9</sup>	'12	26.4 41.6 <sup>E9</sup>	'10-'12	▪ 1.4	▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	88.7 <sup>b</sup> 77.2 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 0.7	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	5.8 <sup>b</sup> 5.3 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 1.4	▪ -1.0
Employment premium for IVET graduates			'15	26.0 <sup>b</sup> 23.7 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -0.4	▪ -0.1

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	SE <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	SE <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	SE	EU
(over low-educated)								
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	71.6	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	53.1	55.2	'15	55.7	57.3	'10-'15	▪ 0.5	▪ 0.4
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	6.5	13.9	'15	7.0 <sup>c</sup>	11.0 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↗ 0.1	↘ -0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	45.3	33.8	'15	50.2 <sup>c</sup>	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↗ 1.0	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	10.6	16.6	'15	8.8	15.8	'10-'15	↘ -0.3	↘ -0.1
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)	11.7	13.1	'15	9.9	12.9	'10-'15	↘ -0.2	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	83.0	77.4	'15	85.9 <sup>c</sup>	76.9 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↗ 0.5	↘ -0.2
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	18.8	27.3	'15	15.7 <sup>c</sup>	23.5 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.6	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)	78.1	68.6	'15	80.5	70.0	'10-'15	↗ 0.4	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	62.8	53.4	'15	60.9 <sup>c</sup>	52.6 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.6	↘ -0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	89.0 <sup>d</sup>	82.8 <sup>d</sup>			

(\*) The data in this column are the data available in 2016. Where 2015 data were not available, data from previous years were used.

(<sup>A</sup>) UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

(<sup>B</sup>) AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

(<sup>C</sup>) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

(<sup>D</sup>) Forecast made in 2016.

(<sup>E1</sup>) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

(<sup>E2</sup>) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

(<sup>E3</sup>) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

(<sup>E4</sup>) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

(<sup>E5</sup>) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

(<sup>E6</sup>) Partial information for NL.

(<sup>E7</sup>) Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

(<sup>E8</sup>) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

(<sup>E9</sup>) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

(<sup>b</sup>) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

(<sup>u</sup>) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(<sup>z</sup>) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(<sup>e</sup>) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 133

## CHAPTER 1.

# MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

### 1.1. Baseline 2015

Regulations and guidelines on work-based learning in VET at all levels existed before 2011, when reform of upper secondary education, including IVET and apprenticeship, was adopted. In 2015 upper secondary VET programmes were either school-based (with compulsory work-based learning for at least 15% of the programme) or offered as apprenticeships (at least 50% of learning takes place at a workplace- *lärlingsutbildning*). A trainer at the workplace supervised and mentored students. In both pathways, the same syllabuses were applicable and successful completion led to a vocational diploma. At tertiary VET (higher vocational and advanced vocational), workplace training was integrated as part of the programmes, while in programmes preparing for an advanced vocational diploma, workplace training should cover at least 25% of the programme duration<sup>(4)</sup>. Labour market players were cooperating through vocational boards and competence councils to offer training for trade certificates (setting the duration of the apprenticeship period, carry out trade and journeyman examinations, issuing certificates).

At the beginning of the reporting period forecasts of skill needs up to 2030 identified the need to strengthen the work-based learning component of VET programmes at all levels and links between education and businesses<sup>(5)</sup>. To boost apprenticeships in upper secondary VET programmes (*lärlingsutbildning*) a financial incentive for students was introduced in 2014, covering extra living costs. In 2014, an apprenticeship centre<sup>(6)</sup> was created under the auspices of

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(4) *Lärande i arbetslivet* (LIA). See Cedefop ReferNet Sweden (2014). *VET in Europe: country report Sweden*, p. 24.

[https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2014/2014\\_CR\\_SE.pdf](https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2014/2014_CR_SE.pdf)

(5) See Cedefop ReferNet Sweden (2015). *Working life gains influence on vocational education and training*. National news on VET; 5.8.2015.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/sweden-working-life-gains-influence-vocational-education-and-training-vet>

(6) See Cedefop ReferNet Sweden (2014). *Apprenticeship centre established in 2014*. National news on VET; 29.8.2014. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/sweden-apprenticeship-centre-established-2014>

the Swedish National Agency for Education to promote apprenticeship, provide advice to VET institutions and employers, train supervisors at workplaces, and stimulate cooperation at regional level between schools and businesses. Statistics showed a 21% increase of enrolments in apprenticeships between 2013/14 and 2014/15 <sup>(7)</sup>.

## 1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The country's priorities in this area for 2016-20 <sup>(8)</sup>, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVVT), are two-fold:

- (a) develop apprenticeship through increasing the number of apprentices and quality in apprenticeship training;
- (b) increase the quality of work-based learning in school-based VET.

## 1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

### 1.3.1. Supporting the development of apprenticeship

The apprenticeship centre, acting under the auspices of the Swedish National Agency for Education, has been playing a key role in the development of apprenticeship. It cooperates with a wide range of stakeholders (VET providers, municipalities, social partners and enterprises). Since 2015, it has organised workshops and provided guidance and support to companies and social partners. National and regional coordinators have been set up to assist schools in their collaboration with local enterprises. In addition, the State grants that were used as incentives for education providers to offer VET as apprenticeship paths were expanded in 2018 to offer learners in introductory programmes the same economic benefits and conditions as learners in a national VET-programme.

In 2018/19 there were 12 400 apprentices representing 12% of all learners in a national VET-programme <sup>(9)</sup>. This is an increase of 207% of enrolled apprentices since 2013/14 (6 000 apprentices).

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<sup>(7)</sup> From 6 000 in autumn 2013 to 7 300 in autumn 2014. See also, Cedefop ReferNet Sweden (2015). *More apprentices in upper secondary school*. National news on VET; 9.2.2015.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/sweden-more-apprentices-upper-secondary-school>

<sup>(8)</sup> According to a survey by Cedefop among Directors General for VET in early 2016.

<sup>(9)</sup> Source: [https://sirir.skolverket.se/siris/sitevision\\_doc.getFile?p\\_id=548309](https://sirir.skolverket.se/siris/sitevision_doc.getFile?p_id=548309)

### **1.3.2. Strengthening VET through work-based learning**

A national commission of inquiry (*Yrkesprogramsutredningen*) suggested establishing trade schools/industry schools for the provision of the work-based component of upper secondary VET programmes when the trades and industries are too small and have too few applicants, and VET institutions do not have the required infrastructure to provide workplaces. Ten trade schools have been selected to pilot the measure between 2018 and 2023. A State grant of up to SEK 50 000 per learner is made available to the trade school on a yearly basis. In addition, in higher VET that falls under the remit of the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, amendments to the relevant ordinance <sup>(10)</sup> reaffirmed the responsibility of VET institutions for ensuring a sufficient number of relevant and high-quality workplaces.

### **1.3.3. Increasing the quality of work-based learning**

Since 2016, enterprises that participate in apprenticeship may receive State-funded grants if their workplace trainers have participated in training-the-trainer programmes. The aim is to encourage more training enterprises to have qualified trainers.

### **1.3.4. Discussing further involvement of social partners in work-based learning**

At the end of 2015, a national commission (*Yrkesprogramsutredningen*) made proposals <sup>(11)</sup> to the government to strengthen the involvement of social partners in providing VET. The options discussed include developing regional support structures. As a result, a State grant was put in place for the development of regional support structures for WBL placements for social partners and stakeholder organisations. The total sum awarded during 2018 and for 2019 is SEK 10 million.

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<sup>(10)</sup> *Förordning om yrkeshögskolan.*

[http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2009130-om-yrkeshogskolan\\_sfs-2009-130](http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2009130-om-yrkeshogskolan_sfs-2009-130)

<sup>(11)</sup> *Välja yrke.*

<http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/1ccc134ebc9645f199fce4c82984ce81/valja-yrke-sou-201597.pdf>

## CHAPTER 2.

# MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET

### 2.1. **Baseline 2015**

A quality assurance national reference point (QANRP) was established in 2010. A national quality assurance approach was devised and presented in the 2010 education Act. It applies to IVET and related work-based learning. Procedures for internal and external evaluation of VET providers are in place: external evaluation is carried out by the School Inspectorate. To assist VET providers in carrying out their internal evaluation, the National Agency for Education has developed regulations, guidelines and support for systematic quality work, including a web-based programme for VET principals and their staff to facilitate their work on continuous improvement. The quality reviews are based on learner achievements.

In higher VET, the Agency for higher vocational education monitors programmes which receive government grants. The Agency supervises a chosen number of providers each year. All higher VET providers must reapply to the Agency to have their programmes approved. The Agency has produced general guidelines for systematic quality control.

Since autumn 2011, upper secondary IVET has been guided by national programme councils composed of different stakeholders, including social partners. The councils serve as advisory bodies to the National Agency for Education. This is expected to ensure that upper secondary IVET meets industry skills needs more closely. The national approach to quality assurance includes a system that collects information on VET graduates. Statistics Sweden and the National Agency for Education collaborate on data collection. The system is based on national register and statistical data, as well as surveys every other year for young adults and once every three years for employer organisations and enterprises. In 2013, a systematic follow up of VET graduates had been prepared but this was still only partly in place in 2015.

At the beginning of the reporting period identification of skill supply and demand in the labour market was regularly produced by the Statistics Sweden,

the Public Employment Service, (PES) and the National Institute of Economic Research (NIER) (EEPO, 2015).

## 2.2. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET in 2015-19

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this matter, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to:

- (a) reinforce overall quality in VET;
- (b) strengthen the involvement of social partners in the feedback/development-loop.

During the reporting period Sweden has been using *Erasmus+* funding to:

- (a) explore how indicators can be used to provide feedback from various stakeholders at the system level;
- (b) participate in peer learning activities and learn from the quality assurance mechanisms used in other European countries. As part of this project, the Swedish NRP organised a PLA in September 2018 on the cooperation of the National Agency with the national programme councils to identify training needs and design national qualifications relevant to the labour market, and on the cooperation of providers in higher VET and employers at local level.

In December 2018 the National agency for higher VET published quality criteria <sup>(12)</sup> for higher VET at EQF levels 5 to 6. The criteria will be used in 2019 to assess the quality of HVET programmes.

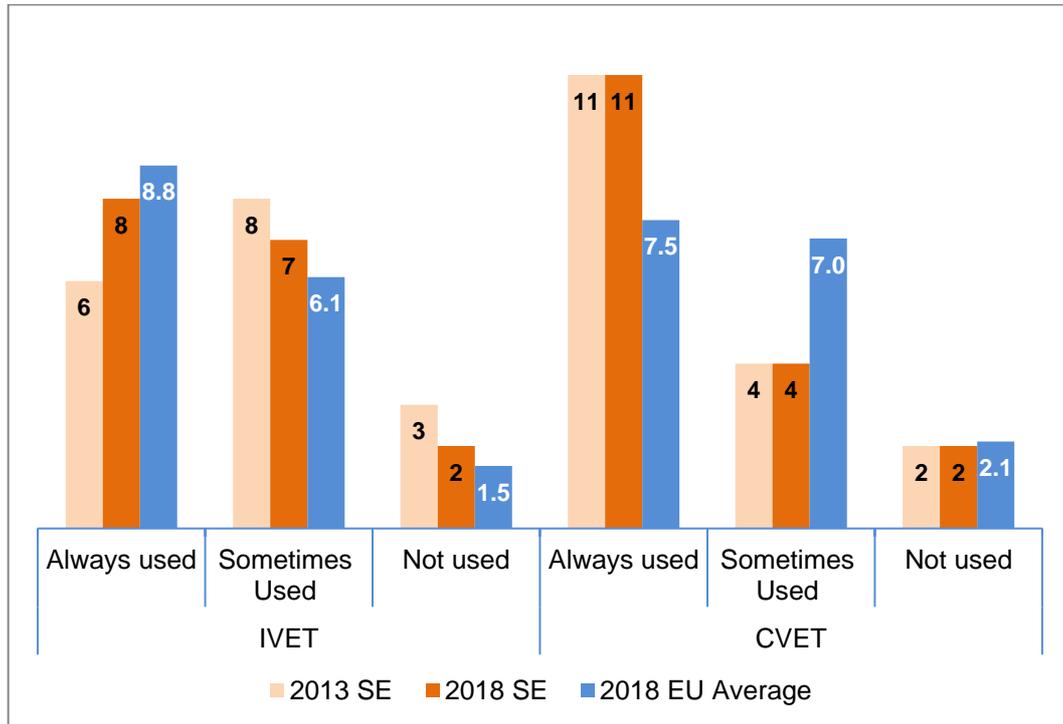
EQAVET indicators were used to monitor the VET system. All EQAVET indicators are reported to be used both in IVET and CVET <sup>(13)</sup> except those on the share of accredited VET providers and on the evidence of the effectiveness of schemes in promoting better access to VET. Since 2013, two additional indicators are being 'always used' in IVET. The number of indicators that are 'always used' is slightly below the 2018 EU average in IVET and above the 2018 EU average in CVET.

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<sup>(12)</sup> Available in Swedish at:  
[https://www.myh.se/Documents/Publikationer/Informationsmaterial/Kvalitetskriterier\\_2019.pdf](https://www.myh.se/Documents/Publikationer/Informationsmaterial/Kvalitetskriterier_2019.pdf)

<sup>(13)</sup> This may include IVET in adult municipal education and higher VET.

**Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators**



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, six were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and eight in 2018 in Sweden compared to 8.8 in the EU on average in 2018.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys for 2013 and 2018 data.

### 2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET in 2015-19

The country's priority in this matter for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to match VET and labour market needs better. The National Agency for Education developed an extensive system to follow up what VET students and apprentices do after completion of a VET programme, providing in-depth analyses of transition from school to working life. The knowledge gained feeds into planning at both national and local levels. Data were collected two years after graduation and were processed during the reporting period. In November 2017 the first statistical data and a report<sup>(14)</sup> were made available on the first student cohort that graduated from the reformed upper secondary VET programmes in 2014. The analysis looked at student transitions one year after graduation. In November 2018 a new report was

<sup>(14)</sup> <https://www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=3867>

published <sup>(15)</sup> based on data from graduates of 2016. The graduate tracking system is continuously being developed and by 2019 the first data on students three years after their graduation will be available.

## 2.4. Continuous information and feedback loops in continuing VET in 2015-19

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this matter, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to ensure a good match between CVET and labour market needs.

The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education publishes an annual report on students' employment after completing CVET, and how successful working life is with the skills acquired. In 2015, the Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy, IFAU <sup>(16)</sup> undertook a major study to follow up the transition from CVET by:

- (a) graduates;
- (b) students who completed their education but did not receive a diploma;
- (c) drop-outs.

IFAU surveyed the extent to which students were in employment and how their income developed, and made a comparison with higher education students. In 2016, the research institute Ratio <sup>(17)</sup> conducted a study on productivity development in technology companies that have recruited CVET students compared to those recruiting higher education students. Studies on student employment show essentially the same results and confirm the results of the follow-up performed by the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education.

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<sup>(15)</sup> [https://sirisskolverket.se/siris/sitevision\\_doc.getFile?p\\_id=548505](https://sirisskolverket.se/siris/sitevision_doc.getFile?p_id=548505)

<sup>(16)</sup> <http://www.ifau.se/en/>

<sup>(17)</sup> <http://ratio.se/english/>

## CHAPTER 3.

# MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

### 3.1. **Baseline 2015**

Sweden undertook a reform in 2011 during which vocational education has become more vocationally oriented with fewer general courses. Admission requirements for upper secondary programmes (both VET and general) were significantly increased leading to increasing numbers of learners attending an introductory programme (one fifth of students in 2014) that gives access to an upper secondary programme <sup>(18)</sup>. To access higher education there were general and in some cases specific entry requirements. In addition to obtaining a vocational diploma, students had to have passing grades in additional courses in Swedish or in Swedish as a second language and in English to obtain basic eligibility for higher education. Interest in VET programmes was significantly decreased leading to an increased focus on and investment in career guidance and availability of information on VET pathways.

A proposal for a national qualifications framework was presented in 2011 but not adopted. In October 2015, the legal basis supporting a Swedish national qualifications framework (SeQF) <sup>(19)</sup> came into force. The SeQF is based on an eight-level structure covering public education and training. It is open to private and non-formal qualifications (Cedefop, 2017b).

At the beginning of the reporting period there was no overall regulation of validation of prior learning. The opportunity for validation has been part of adult education since 2003, and was also referenced in the 2010 education Act. Recommendations for criteria and guidelines were set out in 2012, but application on the ground was decentralised. The Swedish National Agency for higher vocational education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*, MYH) coordinated

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<sup>(18)</sup> See Cedefop ReferNet Sweden (2014). *VET in Europe: country report Sweden*.  
[https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2014/2014\\_CR\\_SE.pdf](https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2014/2014_CR_SE.pdf)

<sup>(19)</sup> Law No 2015:478: regulating fees linked to the approval of qualifications for lifelong learning. Regulation No 2015:545: on a qualifications framework for lifelong learning.

and supported a national structure for validation, ensuring cooperation between authorities, education and training institutions, and labour market partners. However, at the beginning of the reporting period the validation system remained fragmented.

### 3.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The country's priorities in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are two-fold:

- (a) for young people, ensure:
  - (i) better access to VET for those who do not meet entry requirements for national VET programmes at upper secondary level;
  - (ii) that every young man and woman has upper secondary education;
- (b) for adults, ensure that:
  - (i) there is a standing and broad offer of IVET for adults;
  - (ii) recognition of prior learning through validation is a natural part of all adult learning, and access to validation is strengthened;
  - (iii) employer and industry demand for staff is met with a higher vocational education;  
adults have better access to higher vocational training.

### 3.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

#### 3.3.1. Boosting adult education

The action plan for adult education (*Kunskapslyftet, the knowledge boost*) was introduced in 2015. It is aimed at supporting the Swedish Government's goal of making Sweden the European country with the lowest unemployment rates by 2020. The plan addresses four strands:

- (a) higher vocational education;
- (b) liberal adult education through folk high schools;
- (c) adult IVET and adult apprenticeship in IVET;
- (d) adults' right to general education.

Relevant legislation/regulation and funding arrangements have been changed/adopted. The plan aims to, at the same time, help address a shortage of skilled labour and enable people to (re)train.

In January 2017, the Ordinance <sup>(20)</sup> on State grants for regional adult training came into force. Regional vocational adult education (*regionalt yrkesvux*) aims to strengthen regional cooperation to meet labour market skills needs better. The regulation contains provisions on government grants for such training at secondary level in municipal adult education, with the condition that the training is carried out as cooperation between municipalities and businesses.

In February 2017, the National Agency for Education was commissioned by the government to carry out a study on introducing vocational competence tests in municipal adult education at secondary level and upper secondary (school-based and apprenticeship) VET programmes. Test results are expected to help clarify the determinants for obtaining qualifications. The study has proposed an approach for developing the tests (design, implementation, evaluation and documentation) <sup>(21)</sup>. In December 2017 <sup>(22)</sup>, the mandate of the agency was amended to include a pilot phase to determine whether competence tests may ease validation of competences of adults and newly arrived migrants. If they are found to be useful for validating parts of the education, the learner will not have to redo that part. In addition, the agency was commissioned to develop exams for testing partial qualifications of the upper secondary VET diplomas. As of February, 2019 there are 18 competence tests under development, of which half have been tried out on students. The measure is a pilot that will continue to develop new competence tests until 2021.

### **3.3.2. Equal opportunity, permeability and flexibility: the right to progression to higher education**

A national commission was set up in 2015 to conduct an upper secondary education inquiry, targeted at exploring how to ease progression from upper secondary VET to higher VET or higher education more generally. The results were presented in October 2016 <sup>(23)</sup>. They included that the falling interest in upper secondary VET can be explained by the uncertainty about the extent to which vocational programmes grant eligibility to apply for tertiary education; in

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<sup>(20)</sup> [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2016937-om-statsbidrag-for-regional\\_sfs-2016-937](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2016937-om-statsbidrag-for-regional_sfs-2016-937) (see 2016:937).

<sup>(21)</sup> See the relevant decision of the Ministry of Education, dated 2.2.2017, Section 3, *Tillfälliga uppdrag*, No 8: <http://www.esv.se/statsliggaren/regleringsbrev/?RBID=18293>

<sup>(22)</sup> See the relevant decision, dated 18.12.2017, Section 3, *Pågående uppdrag*, No 2: <https://www.esv.se/statsliggaren/regleringsbrev/?RBID=18591>

<sup>(23)</sup> See the relevant document [here](#). See the English summary on pp. 47-63.

contrast, higher education preparatory programmes are seen as providing more opportunities for continued study. To expand access of upper secondary VET students to higher education, a draft bill to the Council of Legislation <sup>(24)</sup> was prepared by the government but it was turned down by the parliament in June 2018. The plan was to increase the scope and time allocated to all VET programmes to include the three courses in Swedish, or Swedish as a second language, and English that lead to eligibility for tertiary education, but with an option for the learner to receive a full vocational qualification without studying these courses.

Amendments to the 2010 Education Act <sup>(25)</sup> were introduced, coming into effect in January 2017. The amendments give the right to all learners to study courses needed for progression to higher general or vocational education. This includes not only the right to courses needed to comply with general eligibility for tertiary education, but also the right to courses needed for meeting specific entry requirements for any tertiary programme for which the learner has applied.

Moreover, in December 2017 the government commissioned the National Agency for Education to propose curriculum changes in order to counteract traditional gender patterns (including in VET programmes) <sup>(26)</sup>. The objective was to increase the number of students choosing VET and reduce drop-out rates. The proposal was presented to the government in December 2018 and explicitly stated that the curriculum requirements concerning gender equality are also pertinent in work-based learning.

### **3.3.3. Guidance**

A government inquiry <sup>(27)</sup> presented in January 2019 aims to support learners in making well-informed choices for their educational pathways and working life. It proposes the amendment of the Education Act to include individual career guidance for all learners. In addition, it proposes that compulsory education includes an activity called ‘future choices’, of a total 80 hours in grades 7 to 9 to

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<sup>(24)</sup> <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/lagratsremiss/2018/02/okade-mojligheter-till-grundlaggande-behorighet/>

<sup>(25)</sup> [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800\\_sfs-2010-800](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800)  
(Amendments in Chapter 20)

<sup>(26)</sup> Information about the government mission. See Section 3.6, page 3:  
<https://www.esv.se/statsliggaren/regleringsbrev/?RBID=18591>

<sup>(27)</sup> <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2019/01/sou-20194> [in Swedish]

teach learners about working life, career paths and vocational areas before they proceed to upper secondary education.

#### **3.3.4. Regional model of VET provision**

In 2018 an inquiry <sup>(28)</sup> was launched to propose a regionalised model of upper secondary provision (IVET and CVET) to ensure that a variety of programmes are made available to learners. The inquiry should present its proposals in February 2020 to improve regional cooperation in an effort to solve the mismatch between the need for competence provision and the choices learners make due to the limited offer of education and training providers.

#### **3.3.5. Vocational orientation in HE programmes**

In September 2018 the government asked the National Agency for Education to develop a vocational orientation for the Business management and economics programme, which is a higher education preparatory programme,

The agency will propose a vocational outcome that serves as a hybrid between higher education preparatory programmes and vocational upper secondary programmes. The new orientation will serve as a pilot for introducing a vocational profile in higher education preparatory education. It would include mandatory work-based learning and mechanisms for cooperation between stakeholders in the trade and commerce sector and education providers. It is expected that learners will be prepared for employment in a sector that is undergoing rapid development and also be prepared for education at higher vocational institutions.

The National Agency for Education will report its proposal to the government in March 2019. The proposal is that a pilot will be launched in 2020 and assessed in 2025.

#### **3.3.6. Transparency, recognition, validation**

##### *3.3.6.1. National qualifications framework <sup>(29)</sup>*

The SeQF was referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in June 2016 and can be considered to have reached (an early) operational status.

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<sup>(28)</sup> <https://www.regeringen.se/494272/contentassets/6a4e80bead4a46918949e660ea1fbfe6/planering-och-dimensionering-av-gymnasial-utbildning-dir-2018.17.pdf> [in Swedish]

<sup>(29)</sup> Source: Cedefop, 2017b.

It is operated by the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education <sup>(30)</sup> assisted by a council comprising representatives from the social partners, national education and employment agencies, and student organisations. A register of qualifications was put in place and made accessible via the SeQF web-portal <sup>(31)</sup>.

#### 3.3.6.2. *Validation* <sup>(32)</sup>

In 2015, a national delegation for validation was appointed by the Swedish Government to follow-up, support and promote coordinated validation development work and to propose a national strategy. The delegation proposed a strategy in March 2017 expressing its view of the significance and function of validation, and of the development areas that need to be prioritised. A formal consultation on validation was launched by the government, in preparation for a bill to be presented to Parliament in December 2019 <sup>(33)</sup>.

#### 3.3.6.3. *Developing partial qualifications*

In October 2016 the government commissioned the National Agency for Education to recommend vocational packages for adults. These packages are clusters of courses agreed with industry as entry points into the labour market. They will not only consist of partial qualifications, but also include building blocks that may be transferred and accumulated towards a full qualification. In April 2017 the mission was amended to include the introductory programmes, aimed at the young mostly recently arrived immigrants, who are not eligible for admission to an upper secondary VET programme. Sixty-two packages covering a wide range of vocational areas had been developed by February 2019. More packages are continuously being developed and added.

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<sup>(30)</sup> <https://www.myh.se/In-English/Swedish-National-Agency-for-Higher-Vocational-Education/>

<sup>(31)</sup> SeQF web portal: <https://www.myh.se/In-English/EQF/>

<sup>(32)</sup> Cedefop, 2017b; Sandberg, 2016.

<sup>(33)</sup> <http://www.valideringsdelegation.se/om-delegationen/in-english/>

### **3.3.7. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees <sup>(34)</sup>**

#### *3.3.7.1. Retraining the unemployed*

In June 2015, an ordinance <sup>(35)</sup> was adopted by the government to encourage the unemployed aged 20 to 24 without upper secondary qualification to start, or return to, education and training. Studies within the so-called education contracts may be combined with work or work-experience.

In May 2017, parliament decided to introduce new financial support to stimulate low-qualified unemployed adults (aged 25 to 56) to begin or resume their studies <sup>(36)</sup>. The target group is the unemployed registered with the employment service and having low education levels, in need of education at primary or secondary levels to establish themselves in the labour market. The financial support is EUR 950 per month and lasts up to 50 weeks. Local authorities are responsible for operationalising the programme as part of their municipal responsibility to care for the welfare of all individuals.

#### *3.3.7.2. 'Fast tracks' for migrants*

In 2015, the government started consultations with the social partners, the public employment service and other government agencies to create fast tracks for newly arrived immigrants, to reduce the time from arrival to entry in occupations that face skills shortages. An agreement involving employer and employee organisations assigned the public employment service responsibility for these fast tracks. Employment services at local and regional levels managed the programme, including training in vocationally-oriented Swedish, speedy validation of skills and competences, assessment/recognition of foreign qualifications, and supplementary training with a focus on occupations that face skills shortages. The public employment service also provided enterprises/organisations with support. By May 2016, 22 professions/occupations/sectors were involved. Regulations adopted in spring 2016 allowed for financial support to enterprises/organisations employing newly arrived migrants. By December 2018 a total of 8 022 individuals participated in the programme.

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<sup>(34)</sup> The measures presented under Section 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.2 refer to VET programmes offered by the public employment service as part of labour market policies.

<sup>(35)</sup> *Förordning (2015:502) om samverkan för att minska ungdomsarbetslösheten.* [Regulation (2015: 502) on cooperation to reduce youth unemployment].

<sup>(36)</sup> 2016/17:158.

#### 3.3.7.3. *Opening up municipal adult education*

A proposal was presented to the government in August 2018 to make adult municipal education more responsive to changes in the labour market and to the needs of individuals. The results of the inquiry *A second chance and another chance – an updated municipal adult education* (Unofficial translation of *En andra och en annan chans – ett komvux i tiden*, SOU 2018:71) <sup>(37)</sup> aim at opening up municipal adult education as a second chance education and as an opportunity for career changes. It also proposes to include adults with intellectual disabilities into municipal adult education offering them a variety of VET opportunities in the form of apprenticeship and school-based training.

#### 3.3.7.4. *Skills mapping for individuals*

The National Agency for Education launched in March 2018 a skills mapping web-based tool <sup>(38)</sup> for those who have experience in professional work, or equivalent experience, from other countries. The tool assists individuals to become aware of their skills; this can shorten their study time and contribute to improved integration through access to the labour market. It provides information on core content and knowledge requirements for courses in the upper secondary education system in several languages. At the time of the launch the tool was available in Arabic, English, Persian and Somali.

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<sup>(37)</sup> <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2018/09/sou-201871/> [in Swedish]

<sup>(38)</sup> <https://kartlaggningsverktyget.skolverket.se/start>

## CHAPTER 4.

# MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

### 4.1. Baseline 2015

In 2015 upper secondary VET programmes comprised one-fourth of general (core) subjects, including key competences. Key competences were included in curricula, diploma objectives or course syllabi. In some cases, they were cross-curricular objectives, mentioned in diploma objectives or imparted as one of the eight upper secondary foundation (general) subjects. Some key competences were emphasised as specific learning outcomes within vocational subjects. Apprenticeships – a new path to VET diploma since 2011 – comprise the same features as school-based VET, including key competences <sup>(39)</sup>.

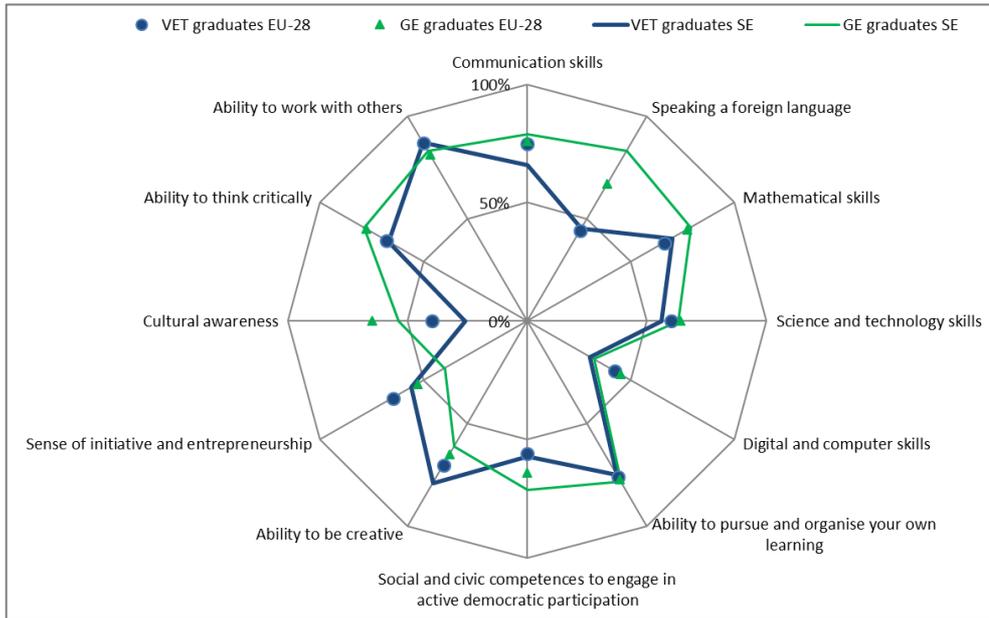
Compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes feel they have (Cedefop 2017c):

- (a) stronger (ranged by priority):
  - (i) ability to be creative;
  - (ii) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
  - (iii) ability to work with others;
- (b) weaker:
  - (i) foreign language speaking;
  - (ii) cultural awareness;
  - (iii) social and civic competences to engage in active democratic participation (Figure 2).

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<sup>(39)</sup> For more information on key competences in VET see Skolverket, 2016.

Figure 2. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET**



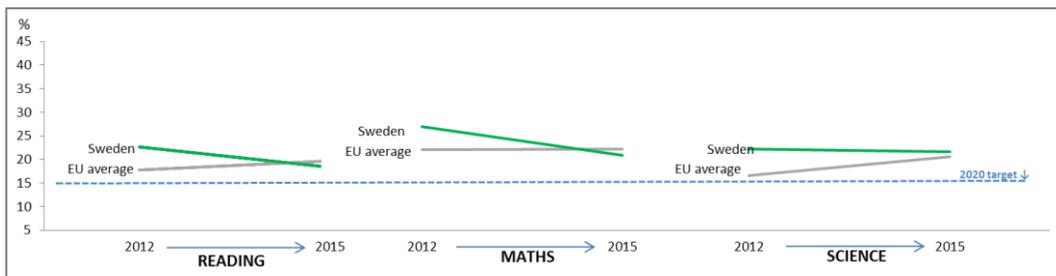
NB: GE stands for general education.

Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop, 2017c.

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by a decreasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 3). In reading and maths, the share of low achievers in Sweden was lower than in the EU on average, where the trend was reverse.

Figure 3. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (programme for international student assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolls 38% of all upper secondary learners in the country <sup>(40)</sup>, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes.

At the beginning of the reporting period, the interest in VET participation has been declining as learners have preferred postponing vocational training and were in favour of developing higher levels of key competences in general education that opened up for more options in higher education. Ensuring that key competences are valued by employers and thus developed through in-company training has also been a challenge for apprenticeship-type VET. In 2015, discussions among policy makers also suggested better monitoring and assessing key competences <sup>(41)</sup> but there has not been any developments in the reporting period to address this.

#### 4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

**Error! Reference source not found.** outlines/gives a summary of key competences in initial and continuing VET that were addressed in the reporting period. A description of policies is provided in the following sections.

Table 2. Key competences addressed in 2015-19

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy		YES
Foreign languages		
Digital competence	YES	
Maths		
Science		
Technology		
Social and civic competences		
Learning to learn		
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence		
Cultural awareness and expression	YES	
Key competences as a package		YES

NB: The list derives from the 2006 EU key competences framework for lifelong learning; it has been restructured and expanded with additional competences that can be considered key.

Source: Cedefop based on ReferNet input.

<sup>(40)</sup> Calculated from Eurostat, data for 2015.

<sup>(41)</sup> For more information on key competences in VET see Skolverket, 2016.

### 4.3. Key competences in initial VET in 2015-19

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship in education, and ensure basic eligibility for higher education for IVET learners.

#### 4.3.1. Integrating aesthetics and creativity

Cultural expression is included in the curricula for initial VET as a transversal competence. If relevant to the sector, it is also included in the programme objectives (called diploma goals) and as a specific learning outcome. A national commission has been set up (*Gymnasieutredningen*) to investigate, among other things, how a specific module or subject on aesthetics and creativity could be integrated into upper secondary education, including VET. As a result of this enquiry the government presented a draft bill to the parliament (Riksdag) <sup>(42)</sup> to include a subject of aesthetics/arts in all upper secondary education, including VET. The proposal was turned down by the Parliament in June 2018.

#### 4.3.2. ICT strategy for education

In 2016, the National Agency for Education presented to the government a national information and communication technology (ICT) strategy for education, including initial VET. A broad range of stakeholders was involved in developing the strategy and revising curricula: national programme councils, other national agencies, universities, ICT experts, teachers and students. Social partners have been consulted to identify industry-specific digital skills that VET learners will need to develop to stay competitive. In March 2017, the government approved new curricula to address the ICT strategy objectives. Programming skills are now embedded in primary and lower secondary education, especially through technology and mathematics. Amendments include qualification-tailored digital skills. For example, the *Child and recreation* programme stresses the responsible use of digital technology to support children. The new curricula were implemented as of 2017-18, also in all VET programmes.

#### 4.3.3. Cross-curricular approach to key competences in work-based learning

In the reporting period, the National Agency for Education has organised conferences for teaching staff in upper secondary initial VET (vocational teachers

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<sup>(42)</sup> See the draft bill [here](#).

and teachers in foundation subjects such as Swedish and mathematics) to develop a cross-curricular approach to key competence development and to encourage it during work-based learning.

#### 4.4. Key competences in continuing VET in 2015-19

Fast tracks for immigrant entry to the labour market were organised in 2015 (Section 3.3.7.2). Training includes key competences, depending on individual needs. Modules on teaching language to newly-arrived immigrants were developed within the framework of the online training programme for workplace trainers, implemented by the committee for work-based learning in the professional introductory period of employment (*Delegationen för arbetsplatslärande vid yrkesintroduktionsanställningar*).

Amendments to the Education Act were also adopted in 2015 to make tuition in Swedish for immigrants an integrated part of municipal adult education. The aim is to integrate Swedish language learning with other training, such as initial VET modules in adult education. Since 2016, municipalities may apply for grants for this type of combined programme as well.

## CHAPTER 5.

# MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers

### 5.1. Baseline 2015

In 2015, there were three categories of teachers and trainers in VET programmes:

- (a) vocational teachers;
- (b) general subject teachers;
- (c) in-company trainers.

The main challenges at the time were the low attractiveness of the teaching profession, the demanding conditions of the teaching profession, the ageing teacher population, and low teacher salary. Therefore, raising the attractiveness and reforming the teaching profession (European Commission, 2015) as well as the professional development of trainers (Cedefop, 2014) was the government's top priority.

#### **5.1.1. Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training**

The Education Act (Swedish Parliament, 2010) defined the educational requirements for being a teacher. In autumn 2011, four different programmes in teacher education were created, one of which was designed specifically for vocational education teachers. Vocational teacher education included a core of educational methodology, particularly general teaching knowledge and skills, as well as induction. Teachers of general subjects in VET programmes had to meet the same requirements as teachers in higher education preparatory programmes. According to the Education Act, teachers had to go through a certification process which was carried out by the National Agency for Education. Non-qualified, non-certified teachers could be employed on a yearly basis but, in such cases, they had to be supervised by a certified teacher in order to assess and grade students. However, due to the lack of qualified teachers, teachers in vocational subjects were by law exempted from the requirements.

### **5.1.2. In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training**

In 2015 there were no formal qualifications for in-company trainers in Sweden.

### **5.1.3. VET school teachers: main lines for CPD**

The Education Act stated that continuing professional development (CPD) was the responsibility of the head teacher and school organiser <sup>(43)</sup>. CPD was regulated by agreements among social partners and it was at the discretion of the head teacher how to distribute the CPD time and resources. The National Agency for Education had a supporting role offering a wide range of CPD for teachers and other staff. Programmes that specifically targeted VET teachers focused on increasing the number of VET teachers with a formal teacher qualification, on technical subject skills or on the improvement of WBL. A State grant was available for VET teacher CPD in the technical subject related to the field they were teaching. VET schools were supported by universities to train VET teachers in developing work-based learning. An opportunity for VET teachers to take part in workplace internships (in relevant sectors) was introduced in 2012 (Cedefop, 2015).

A certified teacher with at least four years of experience could be appointed as a particularly qualified teacher (*förstälärare*) following the approval of the school governing board. Particularly qualified teachers were, according to the ordinance (Swedish Ministry of Education, 2013), to receive a higher salary. Particularly qualified teachers with a research degree could also advise and help colleagues in CPD in the subject they were teaching. In the academic year 2014/15, from a total of 2 178 particularly qualified teachers, 343 (15.6%) were VET teachers and only five had research degrees <sup>(44)</sup>.

### **5.1.4. In-company trainers: main lines for CPD**

State grants were provided to schools for educating in-company trainers but often schools found it difficult to persuade them to visit the school instead of remaining in the workplace. In 2013, the National Agency for Education launched a project to increase the quality of work-placed training by educating in-company trainers through web-based training. The training consisted of the equivalent of two days of training covering four introductory general modules and a supplementary

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<sup>(43)</sup> The school organiser is the board of a private education provider or the political body responsible in a municipal public school.

<sup>(44)</sup> In the academic year 2014/15.

module that addressed apprenticeship <sup>(45)</sup>. Enterprises with trained in-company trainers could receive government grants. The National Agency for Education had also commissioned universities to offer training programmes for in-company trainers, equivalent to the web-based programme. In addition, there were State grants to companies and central committees of social partners of particular trades to upgrade quality of work-placed learning, by developing their own in-company trainer CPD programme.

## 5.2. Initial training and CPD for teaching/training staff in VET schools and trainers in 2015-19

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to:

- a) stimulate more professionals to become VET teachers and further promote their professional development;
- b) increase the quality of work-based learning through developing participation of workplace trainers in training for trainers.

The National Agency for Education has an ongoing mission to promote the attractiveness of the VET teaching profession but there is little evidence of causal effects. There are State grants and campaigns, as mentioned above, to attract professionals in the profession.

Action has been taken on initial training for trainers in enterprises. Since 2016, companies that offer apprenticeship places receive financial support if their trainers undergo training (Section 1.3.3).

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<sup>(45)</sup> The programme was launched in late 2014 and by September 2015 almost 10% of all VET teachers and more than 1 800 trainers nationwide had completed the training.  
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8131&furtherPubs=yes>

## Statistical overview: 2019 update

Table 3 updates the figures that were provided in Table 1. Although Table 1 may contain data for 2015, these are not systematically repeated here. In some cases, not repeating is due to breaks in time series, which prevent comparability. In other cases, values differ due to methodological changes.

Table 3. **Score on VET indicators in Sweden and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	SE	f	EU	f	Yr	SE	f	EU	f	Range	SE	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	38.2		47.3	ce	'17	34.1		47.8	ce	'15-'17	-4.2	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	3.6		28.3	ce	'17	5.2		27.9	ce	'15-'17	1.6	-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	38.2		68.1	ce	'17		z	68.6	ce	'15-'17		0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	52.2	b	40.8		'15	52.2		40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	48		34		'15	48		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	29.4		10.7		'18	29.2		11.1		'15-'18	-0.2	0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	93.1		72.6		'15	93.1		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	37.1		42	ce	'17	34.4		42.7	ce	'15-'17	-2.8	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	46.9	b	30		'15	46.9		30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)	35.7		33		'18	27		33		'15-'18	-8.7	0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	22.7		6.9		'18	22.9		7.3		'15-'18	0.2	0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	20		4.3		'18	20.7		4.3		'15-'18	0.7	0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	44		9.5		'18	45.5		10.7		'15-'18	1.5	1.2
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)					'16	10.2		11.4				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)					'16	81.6		79.4				

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	SE	f	EU	f	Yr	SE	f	EU	f	Range	SE	EU
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	0.7		0.5	ce	'16	0.5		0.5	ce	'15-'16	-0.2	0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)	14.2		7.1	ce	'16	10.6		7.4	ce	'15-'16	-3.6	0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.8		0.9		'15	0.8		0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	1.1		1	ce	'17	1.1		1	ce	'15-'17		0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	27.1		29.2	ce	'17	28.2		29.1	ce	'15-'17	1.2	0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates	12.6				'17	13.3		14.3	b ce	'15-'17	0.7	
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16	24.3		37.7				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)	88.7		77.2		'18	92.3		80.5		'15-'18	3.6	3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)	5.8		5.4		'18	8.7		6.6		'15-'18	2.9	1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)	26		23.7		'18	26.8		23.3		'15-'18	0.8	-0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	71.6		83.7		'15	71.6		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	55.4		57		'15	55.4		57				
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>												
Early leavers from education and training (%)	7		11		'18	9.3		10.6		'15-'18	2.3	-0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	50.2		38.7		'18	52		40.7		'15-'18	1.8	2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	8.8		15.8		'18	8.3		13.7		'15-'18	-0.5	-2.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	9.9		12.9		'18	8		9.4		'15-'18	-1.9	-3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	85.5		75.9		'18	88		80.6		'15-'18	2.5	4.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	15.7		23.5		'18	14.4		21.9		'15-'18	-1.3	-1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	80.5		70		'18	82.6		73.1		'15-'18	2.1	3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	60.9		52.6		'18	62		56.1		'15-'18	1.1	3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	89.5	D	85.8	D			

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified.  
(D) Forecast made in 2018.  
(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data  
(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.  
(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.  
(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.  
(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

Source: Cedefop, 2020.

In 2017, 34.1% of all upper secondary students in Sweden were enrolled in IVET. This percentage is 13.7 points below the EU average. It appears, however, that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is lower by 4.2 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2017, 5.2% of all upper secondary IVET students were enrolled in a work-based learning setting, which is higher (1.6 points more) than in 2015. In contrast, the EU average is 27.9%.

In 2018, 29.2% of the adults participated in lifelong learning activities which is slightly lower (0.2 point less) than in 2015. The EU average is 11.1%.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 92.3%. It appears that the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is higher by 3.6 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015. The EU average is 80.5 %.

# Conclusion

Since 2015, Sweden has taken measures on several fronts: to increase the quality of work-based learning and apprenticeship; reinforce the follow-up of student transitions to the labour market to inform VET development strategy better; further open access for all to VET and qualifications by boosting adult education, making access to higher education easier; implementing the first operational version of the Swedish national qualifications framework, and providing the unemployed and newly arrived migrants with opportunities for training. Work towards setting up legislation for validation of prior learning and work experience has also started. Initiatives were taken to foster key competences in initial and continuing VET.

Compared to the period 2015-16, developments since 2017 focused mainly on MTD3 and more specifically on guidance, easing access to higher VET, opening-up municipal adult education as a second chance education and as an opportunity for career changes and reskilling upskilling vulnerable groups. The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed but information currently available to Cedefop suggests issues which could benefit from further consideration:

- (a) promote a coordinated approach in the area of validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- (b) strengthen entrepreneurship as a key competence;
- (c) motivate professionals to become VET teachers and further support their continuing professional development.

# Acronyms

AES	adult education survey
CPD	continuing professional development
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for Vocational Education and Training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
GE	general education
ICT	information and communication technology
IFAU	Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
MYH	<i>Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan</i> Swedish National Agency for higher vocational training
NEET	not in education, employment, or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
QANRP	quality assurance national reference point
SeQF	Swedish national qualifications framework
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math programmes
UOE	UNESCO OECD Eurostat
VET	vocational education and training

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