



spotlight on VET

SWEDEN

VET in Sweden

Swedish vocational education and training (VET) includes programmes and study pathways within upper secondary education and non-academic and academic tertiary education. After compulsory school, students have the right to proceed to upper secondary school to either of the vocational programmes or one of the higher education preparatory programmes. Learners without enough pass grades can follow individualised introductory programmes which give access to upper secondary programmes or the labour market. All upper secondary VET programmes may be offered as school-based or as apprenticeship pathways. Independent of the specific combination of school-based and apprenticeship learning, successful completion of these VET programmes leads to a vocational diploma. Learners can also acquire an upper secondary vocational diploma in municipal adult education. Non-academic tertiary VET mainly consists of one- or two-year higher VET programmes leading to a diploma or advanced diploma in higher vocational education.

An upper secondary diploma is required to access higher vocational education and higher education. Students must also have pass grades in particular modules, such as Swedish/Swedish as a second language, English and mathematics, to meet general entry requirements for higher education. All students attending an upper secondary school vocational programme have the right within its scope, or through programme extensions, to study these required modules. Specific entry requirements may apply to some higher vocational education or higher education programmes.

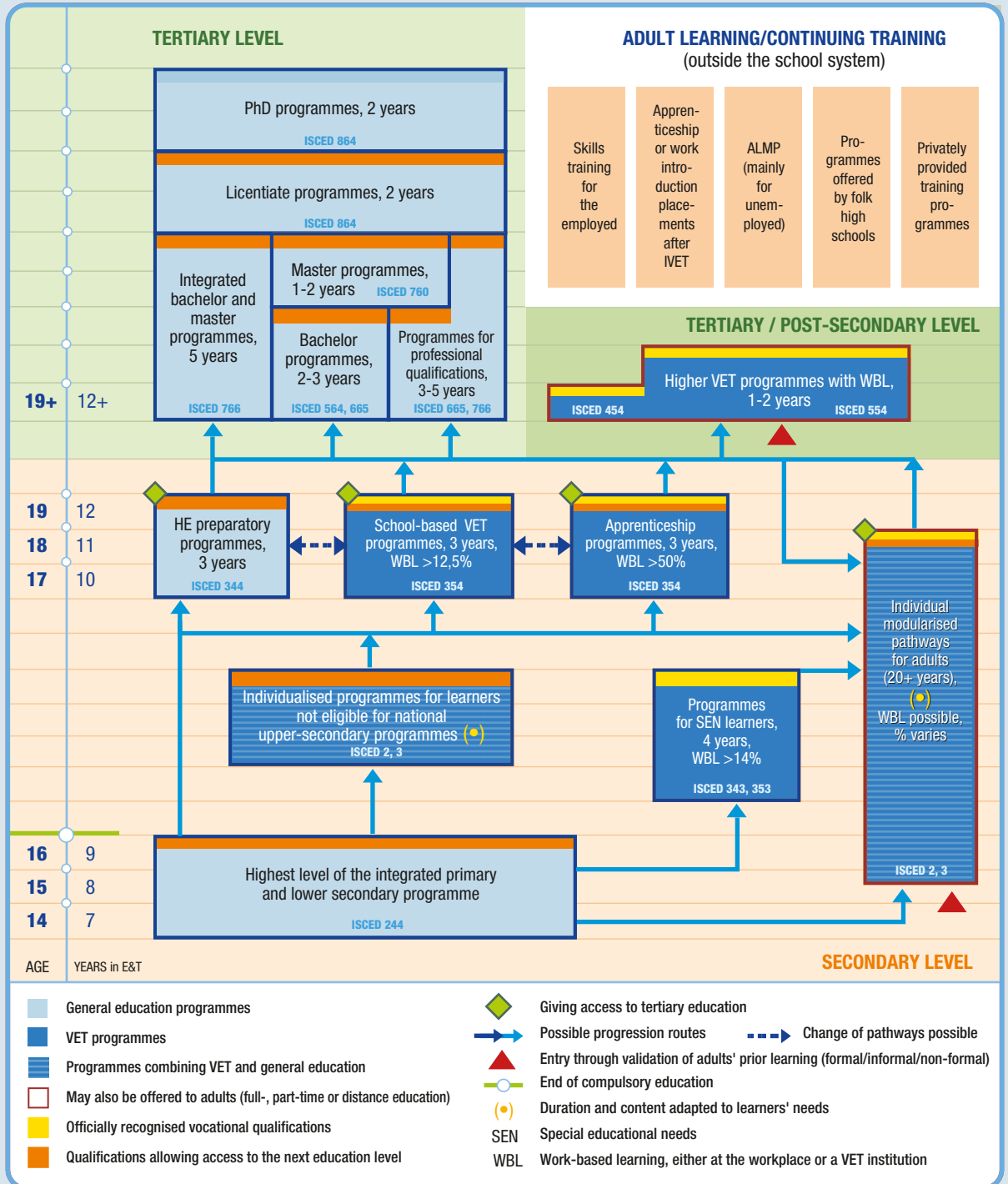
The starting point for adult education is always an individual's specific needs and situation. Individual pathways are the most common way to gain a qualification in a new field or study the courses required to access higher vocational education or higher education. Workplace-based training (APL) is compulsory in upper secondary school vocational programmes and accounts for at least 15% of the programme. In upper secondary apprenticeship pathways, more than

half the learning takes place at a workplace. Non-academic higher vocational programmes combine school-based learning with training at the workplace (LIA); to obtain an advanced diploma in higher vocational education, for example, at least a quarter of the programme must be carried out as LIA.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for most education; this includes upper secondary schools, adult education, and higher vocational education for VET. Steering documents regulating upper secondary school and municipal adult education are drawn up by the government and by the Swedish National Agency for Education. Upper secondary schools may be run by municipalities, county councils and the State. Private actors may also be approved as education providers and run independent upper secondary schools. There are no private providers in municipal adult education but municipalities can outsource tasks such as training. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education approves providers and government grants for higher vocational programmes. Providers draft an education plan and programmes should be developed and delivered in cooperation with the world of work.

Many other actors provide both initial and continuing VET. Courses and programmes are financed through fees or by companies and organisations, but public grants are also provided. This includes non-formal education arranged by private companies and labour market partners, supplementary education, and programmes offered by folk high schools. Several active labour market policy programmes geared to the unemployed are also vocationally oriented or feature different forms of work placement. From 2016 onwards, non-formal and private sector qualifications and certificates can be referenced to the Swedish national qualifications framework (SeQF).

VET in the Swedish education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011. EQF levels have not yet been defined.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Sweden.

Distinctive features of VET

Modularised structure of upper secondary education

Modularised programmes allow students in upper secondary school to transfer one or more courses to another programme, for example when changing study route.

Municipal adult education at upper secondary level provides the same courses as secondary school, with a few exceptions, allowing students to build on their earlier studies and, for example, gain higher education access.

Validation in adult education

Validation is possible in all municipal adult education courses at upper secondary level. A student who has validation for part of a course does not have to attend classes in that part of the course. Even within higher vocational education, knowledge, skills and competences acquired through training, job experience or otherwise may be validated and recognised for part of a programme. Education providers are responsible for the process.

National programme councils with strong social partner involvement

To strengthen cooperation between education and the world of work, national programme councils include social partners for each of the national vocational programmes in upper secondary schools. Representatives from the public employment service and social partners are members of the Labour Market Council, a body linked to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. The councils are a permanent platform for dialogue on quality, content and organisation of VET between national agencies and stakeholders.

Challenges and policy responses

Sweden must strengthen efforts to ease the transition from education to the labour market

It is particularly important to provide support for those furthest from the labour market. The government has focused on strengthening the link between education and the world of work, within both upper secondary and tertiary VET. An apprenticeship centre has been established to promote and increase provision of apprenticeships. The government has also adopted regulations on a professional introductory period of employment, including vocational training and the possibility of having an apprenticeship contract when in upper secondary school. Education contracts, agreements between young people, the employment services and the home municipality, were introduced in 2015; these encourage unemployed young people aged 20 to 24 to start or return to studies to acquire an upper secondary qualification. Studies within the contract can be combined with work or practical work experience.

Investments for quicker introduction of newly arrived immigrants

Many newly arrived immigrants have training and experience in occupations in which there is a shortage of trained and experienced labour in Sweden. To reduce the time from arrival to first job entry, the government has started consultations with the social partners, the Swedish public employment service and other relevant government agencies on measures for creating 'fast tracks' into the labour market. The initiatives may include, for example, Swedish language training specific to the vocational field, quicker validation of skills and competences, assessment of foreign qualifications, and supplementary training.

The Swedish year of VET (2016), increasing attractiveness and quality of VET

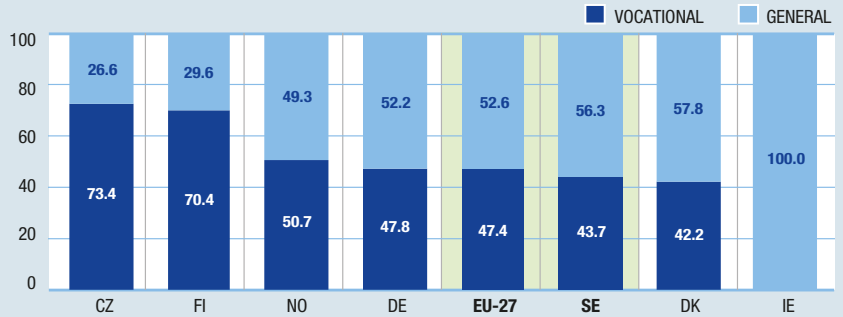
The proportion of entrants to VET programmes in upper secondary school has decreased from 35% in 2007 to 25% in 2015. The government has invested in an information campaign targeting pupils, parents, teachers and study and vocational counsellors in compulsory school. Aiming at increasing VET quality and attractiveness, the government together with employer and employee organisations has declared 2016 as the Swedish year of VET.



Education and training in figures

Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes

% of all students in upper secondary education, 2014

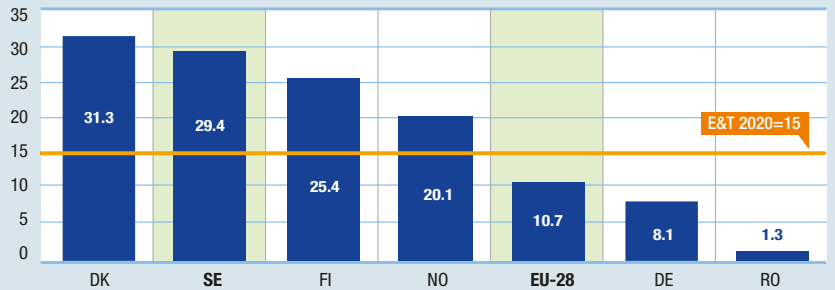


NB: 47.4% is the provisional weighted EU average for 2014 based on available country data (27 countries).

Source: Cedefop calculations, based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 22.4.2016.

Lifelong learning

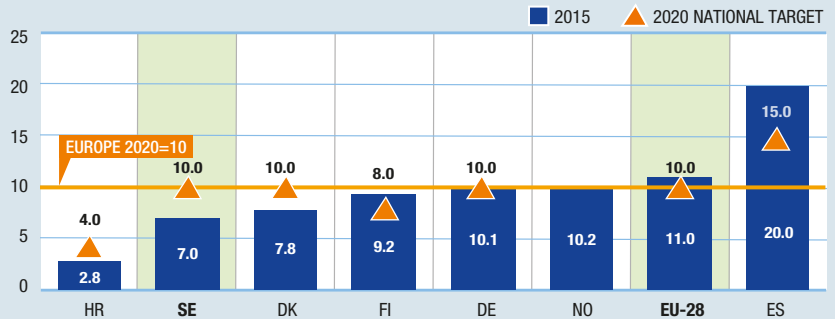
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2015



Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 16.5.2016.

Early leavers from education and training

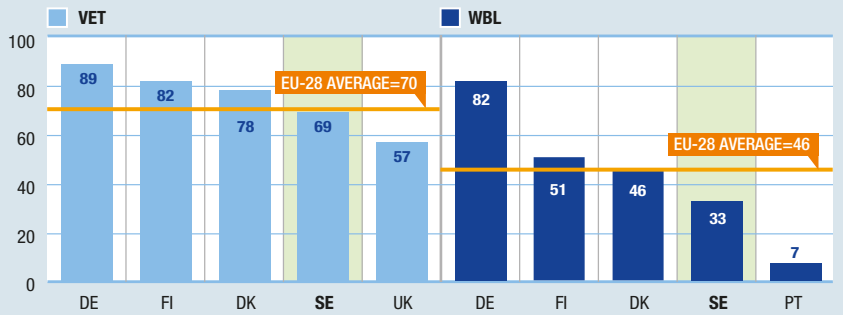
% of early leavers from education and training, 2015



NB: Low reliability in HR; definition for national target differs in DE, DK, SK and ES.

Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 16.5.2016.

Share of employees (aged 24 to 65) with medium-level education (ISCED 3-4) who obtained a vocational qualification, and whose highest level of education involved some learning in a workplace (% , 2014)



NB: VET: respondents of the survey described their highest qualification as vocational;

WBL: studies involved some learning at a workplace (such as apprenticeships, internships, other forms of work-based learning).

Results may differ from those reported in national statistics and international surveys, as the online data collection method used does not always lead to fully representative findings.

Source: Cedefop European skills and jobs survey, 2014.



Further information

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This Spotlight is based on input from National Agency for Education (ReferNet Sweden 2016).



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