CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

spotlight on VET
SWEDEN

2013/14

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 one of the vocational programmes or one of the higher education preparatory programmes. Learners not accumulating enough pass grades can follow individualised introductory programmes giving access to upper secondary level. All upper secondary vocational programmes may be offered as school-based or as apprenticeship. 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 gain 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 certain courses, 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 courses. Specific entry requirements apply to some higher vocational education or higher education programmes.
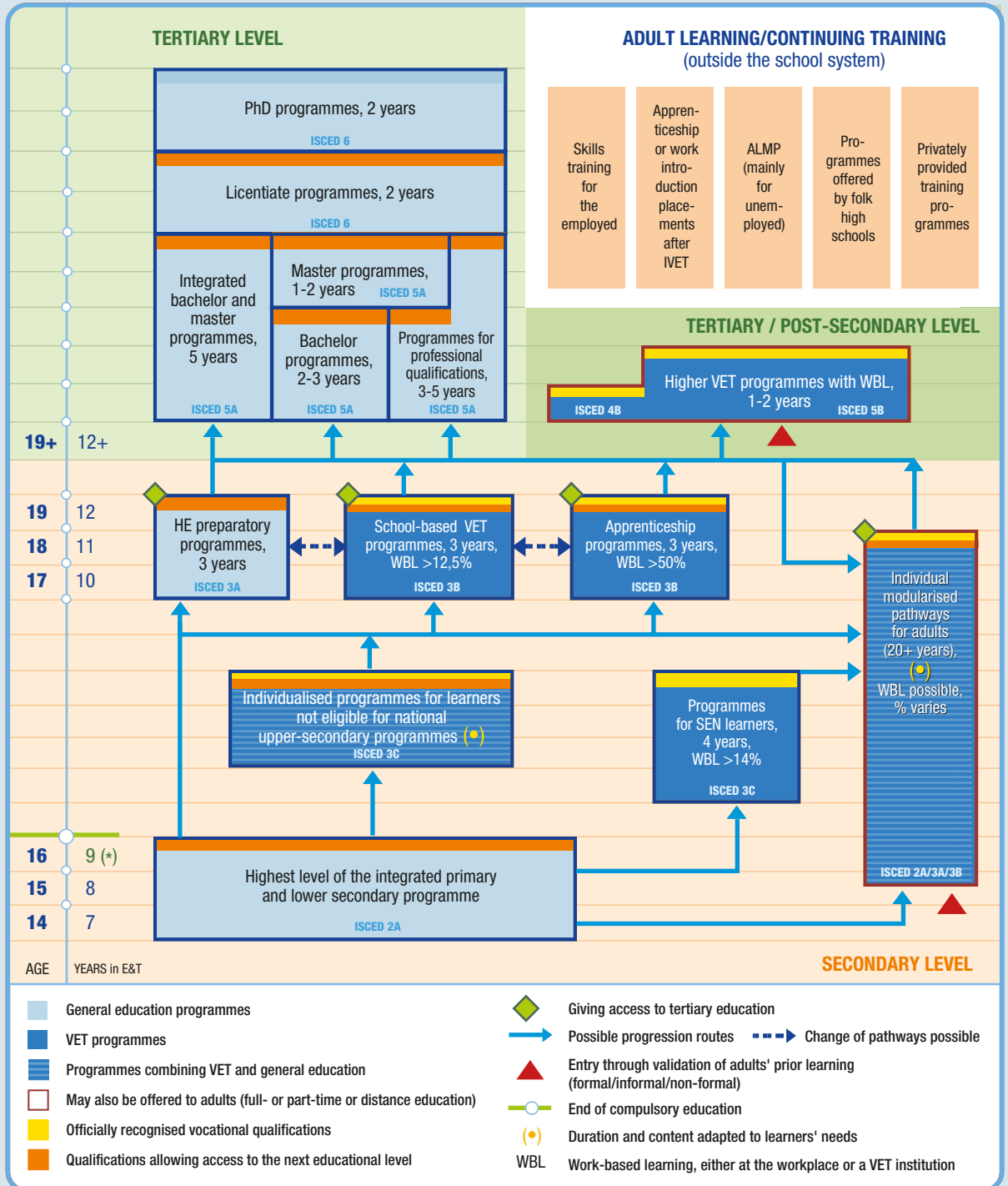
The starting point for adult education is always an individual's specific needs and situation. Individual pathways are the most common way to gain a qualification in a new field or study the courses required to access higher vocational education or higher education. In upper secondary school vocational programmes, workplace-based training (APL) is compulsory

and covers a minimum of 15% of the programme. In contrast, for upper secondary apprenticeship education, 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; for VET this covers upper secondary schools, adult education, and higher vocational education. 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. Private providers do not exist 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 close cooperation with the world of work.

There are many other actors providing 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 (ALMP) programmes geared towards the unemployed are also vocationally-oriented or feature different forms of work placement.

VET in the Swedish education and training system

TERTIARY LEVEL

PhD programmes, 2 years
ISCED 6

Licentiate programmes, 2 years
ISCED 6

Integrated bachelor and master programmes, 5 years
ISCED 5A

Master programmes, 1-2 years
ISCED 5A

Bachelor programmes, 2-3 years
ISCED 5A

Programmes for professional qualifications, 3-5 years
ISCED 5A

ADULT LEARNING/CONTINUING TRAINING
(outside the school system)

Skills training for the employed

Apprenticeship or work introduction placements after IVET

ALMP (mainly for unemployed)

Programmes offered by folk high schools

Privately provided training programmes

TERTIARY / POST-SECONDARY LEVEL

Higher VET programmes with WBL, 1-2 years
ISCED 4B   ISCED 5B

HE preparatory programmes, 3 years
ISCED 3A

School-based VET programmes, 3 years, WBL >12,5%
ISCED 3B

Apprenticeship programmes, 3 years, WBL >50%
ISCED 3B

Individual modularised pathways for adults (20+ years), (•) WBL possible, % varies

Individualised programmes for learners not eligible for national upper-secondary programmes (•)
ISCED 3C

Programmes for SEN learners, 4 years, WBL >14%
ISCED 3C

Highest level of the integrated primary and lower secondary programme
ISCED 2A

ISCED 2A/3A/3B

SECONDARY LEVEL

AGE	YEARS in E&T
19+	12+
19	12
18	11
17	10
16	9 (*)
15	8
14	7

Legend

- General education programmes
- VET programmes
- Programmes combining VET and general education
- May also be offered to adults (full- or part-time or distance education)
- Officially recognised vocational qualifications
- Qualifications allowing access to the next educational level

- ◆ Giving access to tertiary education
- → Possible progression routes
- ⇢ Change of pathways possible
- ▲ Entry through validation of adults' prior learning (formal/informal/non-formal)
- ⊸ End of compulsory education
- (•) Duration and content adapted to learners' needs
- WBL Work-based learning, either at the workplace or a VET institution

NB: EQF levels have not yet been defined. ISCED 1997 was used on the chart. Conversion to ISCED 2011 is ongoing.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Sweden.

Distinctive features
of VET

**Modularised structure
of upper secondary education.**
Thanks to modularised programmes, students in upper secondary school can transfer one or more courses to another programme, for example when changing study route. Municipal adult education at upper secondary level provides, with a few exceptions, the same courses as secondary school, allowing students to build on their earlier studies and, for example, gain higher education access as a result.

Validation in adult education.
Validation is possible in all courses of municipal adult education at upper secondary level. A student who has validated 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 validation process.

**National programme councils
with strong social partner involvement.**
To strengthen cooperation between education and the world of work, there are national programme councils, which include social partners, for each of the national vocational programmes in upper secondary schools. A special body linked to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is the Labour Market Council, whose members are representatives from the Public Employment Service and social partners. The councils are a permanent platform for dialogue between national agencies and stakeholders concerning quality, content and organisation of VET.

Challenges
and policy responses

**Sweden must strengthen work on matching
job-seekers with job vacancies.**
It is also 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, both within upper secondary and tertiary VET. An apprenticeship centre has recently been established to promote and increase provision of apprenticeships. The government has also adopted new regulations associated with a professional introductory period of employment, including vocational training. This introduction is based on work introduction agreements between employer and employee organisations which aim at supporting young people in transition from school to working life, and at safeguarding long-term skills supply for companies.

**Needs of the labour market can be difficult to meet
as individual needs are the starting point for initial
VET provision.**
According to the Education Act, municipalities are responsible for ensuring 'education and number of places provided should as far as possible be adapted to wishes of students'. In municipal adult education, 'the starting point for education should be the needs and existing conditions of the individual'. As the scope for VET provision is steered by individual choice and interests, information and different incentives can attract students to specific vocational education programmes. The Education Act emphasises the importance of students having access to guidance when choosing studies.

**Decreasing interest in upper secondary vocational
programmes prompted focus on information
activities and study and career guidance.**
During recent years the proportion of entrants to VET programmes in upper secondary school has decreased from 35% in 2007 to 27% in 2013. The government has invested in an information campaign targeting pupils, parents, teachers and study and vocational counsellors in compulsory school. In-service-training for teams of teachers, study and vocational counsellors, and school leaders aim at increasing knowledge of the labour market and introducing the subject into compulsory schooling.
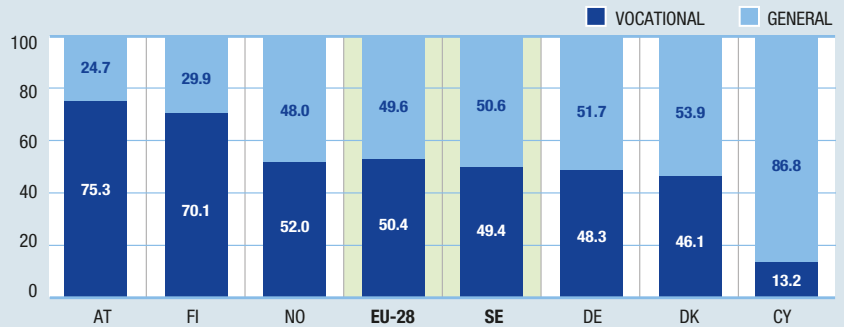
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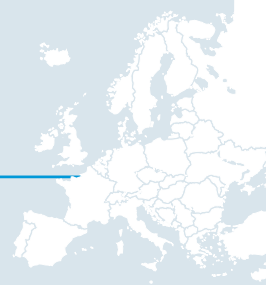
Education and training in figures

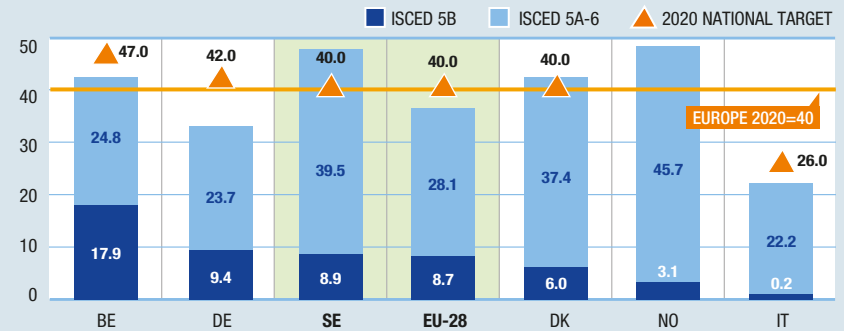**Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes**
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2012

Legend: ■ VOCATIONAL ■ GENERAL

	AT	FI	NO	EU-28	SE	DE	DK	CY
GENERAL	24.7	29.9	48.0	49.6	50.6	51.7	53.9	86.8
VOCATIONAL	75.3	70.1	52.0	50.4	49.4	48.3	46.1	13.2

Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 30.5.2014.

Tertiary education by type
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2013

Legend: ■ ISCED 5B ■ ISCED 5A-6 ▲ 2020 NATIONAL TARGET

EUROPE 2020=40

	BE	DE	SE	EU-28	DK	NO	IT
2020 NATIONAL TARGET	47.0	42.0	40.0	40.0	40.0		26.0
ISCED 5A-6	24.8	23.7	39.5	28.1	37.4	45.7	22.2
ISCED 5B	17.9	9.4	8.9	8.7	6.0	3.1	0.2

Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Lifelong learning
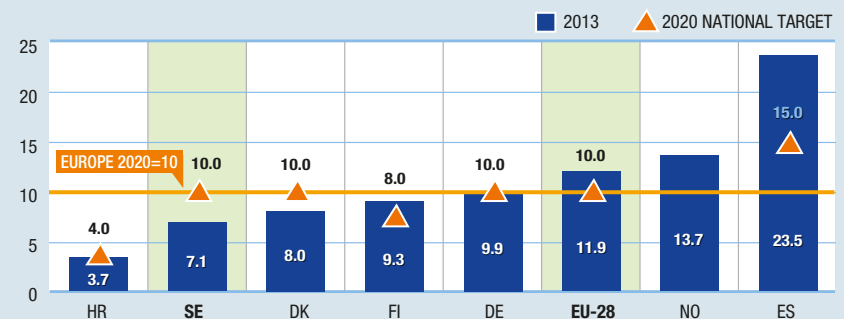% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2013

E&T 2020=15

	DK	SE	FI	NO	EU-28	DE	BG
value	31.4	28.1	24.9	20.4	10.4	7.8	1.7
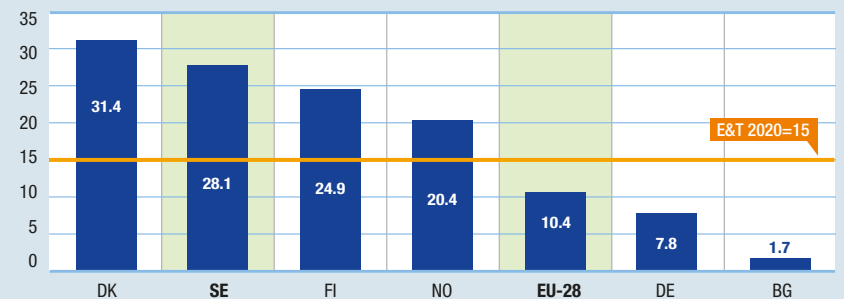
Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Early leavers from education and training
% of early leavers from education and training, 2013

Legend: ■ 2013 ▲ 2020 NATIONAL TARGET

EUROPE 2020=10

	HR	SE	DK	FI	DE	EU-28	NO	ES
2020 NATIONAL TARGET	4.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	10.0	10.0		15.0
2013	3.7	7.1	8.0	9.3	9.9	11.9	13.7	23.5

Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Further information

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