Cross-sectorial cooperation

The Swedish government’s standpoint is that cooperation between education and working life must increase. Good cooperation is a prerequisite for upper secondary vocational education to prepare students for working life and help employers to get properly trained labour. Within several areas of the labour market, the parties have signed vocational education and training agreements in order to facilitate the transition of young people from school to working life. These agreements are usually based on the principle that persons who lack relevant experience in the profession receive guidance and training during a part of their working hours.

A national delegation for workplace based training (YA-delegationen) had the government task to promote long-term sustainable structures for structured learning at the workplace, and developing the conditions for such learning. The assignment was finalised in November 2018. In the final report, the YA delegation remains positive to workplace based training, seeing it as a flexible and efficient complement to formal education. Workplace based training complements upper secondary education for those young people who do not have relevant education for getting a job. It may also be the last piece of the puzzle for a newly arrived migrant who needs to be equipped for becoming fully employable, or an opportunity for a long-term unemployed person for returning to work.

Governance

Main actors

The Ministry of Education and Research (Utbildningsdepartementet) is in charge of education and training. The following agencies and organisations, amongst others, come under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) is responsible for preschool activities.
(förskoleverksamhet), school-age childcare (skolbaromsorg), compulsory school (grundskola), upper secondary school (gymnasieskola) and the municipal adult education (kommunernas vuxenutbildning). The agency puts forward proposals and monitors education. One of the main tasks of the Swedish National Agency for Education is to examine the quality and outcome of education in municipalities and grant-aided independent schools, as well as to supervise their activities.

The **Swedish Schools Inspectorate** [5] (Skolinspektionen) ensures that local authorities and independent schools follow existing laws and regulations. The Schools Inspectorate conducts regular supervision of all schools. The Schools Inspectorate is also responsible for granting licenses to new independent schools. Furthermore, it decides on applications for entitlement to subsidies and monitors national supervision of upper secondary schools (gymnasieskolor).

The **National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools** [6] (Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten), is the central authority responsible for allocating public funds for special pedagogical issues. The institute creates and provides support to school organisers on special pedagogical issues related to disabilities.

The **Swedish Institute for Educational Research** [7] (Skolforskningsinstitutet) is a government agency that helps to provide teachers and other professionals in preschools, primary/secondary schools and adult education with reliable conditions for the planning, execution and evaluation of the teaching process, with the support of working methods and practices with a firm scientific basis. The objective of the Swedish Institute for Educational Research is to promote and encourage students’ learning and development, and to improve their learning outcomes.

The **Swedish Higher Education Authority** [8] (Universitetskanslersämbetet) is responsible for reviewing the quality of higher education and ensuring that higher education institutions comply with relevant legislation and regulations. The Higher Education Authority is also responsible for official statistics on higher education in Sweden and monitors how efficiently the higher education institutions operate.

The **Swedish Council for Higher Education** [9] (Universitets- och högskolerådet) is responsible for providing information about higher education, administering admission to study programmes, recognising qualifications from abroad and promoting participation in international collaboration (e.g., national agency for Erasmus+).

The **Swedish Board for Study Support** [10] (Centrala studiestödsnämnden, CSN) is the central administrative authority for student’s social questions, and responsible for the allocation and repayment of financial support for studies, as well as following up and evaluating different systems for financing studies.

The **Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education** [11] (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) is responsible for all publicly funded courses in vocational higher education. The principal missions of the agency are to determine what courses are to be provided, make decisions on public funding to be allocated to education providers, assess and audit quality and outcomes of courses, and to analyse and assess needs for skilled competence and the development of the labour market. The agency coordinates a national framework for validation, and serves as the national coordinator for EQF – the European Qualifications Framework in Lifelong Learning.

**Statistics Sweden** [12] (Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB) is the official statistics provider. It is commissioned by the Swedish National Agency for Education and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education to collect data in the education area.

The **Swedish National Council of Adult Education** [13] (Folkbildningsrådet) is civil society organisation
with three members:

1. The Swedish National Federation of Study Associations (Folkbildningsförbundet).
2. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges kommuner och landsting, SALAR).
3. The Interest Organisation of Popular Movement Folk High Schools (Rörelsefolkhögskolornas intresseorganisation, RIO).

Commissioned by the Government and the Riksdag, the Council allocates state appropriations to adult education associations and folk high schools and follows up and evaluates liberal adult education activities. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education also works on behalf of its members by monitoring liberal adult education policy, providing information and coordinating international work.

**General distribution of responsibilities**

The municipalities have great autonomy to administer the education system within the legislative framework set up by the government. The municipalities are bound by law to provide a number of basic services for which they receive state subsidies. In addition, they have the right to levy income taxes and, in some cases, also to charge fees to finance their activities. State grants constitute around one sixth of the municipalities’ income. Municipalities are the principal organisers of:

- Early childhood education and care
- The compulsory school (grundskolan)
- Education for pupils with severe intellectual impairments (särskolan)
- Upper secondary school (gymnasieskolan).
- Municipal adult education (kommunal vuxenutbildning)
- Adult education for adults with intellectual impairments (särvux)
- Swedish tuition for immigrants (svenskundervisning för invandrare, sfi)

The municipality is also the employer of school personnel and hence responsible for their professional development.

Each municipal council appoints one or more committees responsible for ensuring that educational activities are provided in accordance with the law and state regulations and guidelines and that the best possible conditions for education are created. The committee or committees responsible for schools are obliged to ensure that:

- Goals of the curricula are achieved and general regulations are followed
- Municipal funds are allocated for school activities
- Qualified teaching and non-teaching staff is recruited and that staff members are offered competence development
- Appropriate facilities are provided for schools

In practice, it is a municipal responsibility to ensure that schools throughout the country maintain good standards. The municipalities should follow up and evaluate education on a regular basis, as well as take part in national evaluations. According to the Education Act, each school must monitor and evaluate its own activities. More details are available at the webpage of Eurydice [14] network.