Sweden has a single structure compulsory school (grundskola [1]), equivalent to primary and lower secondary education. The parts of this chapter relating to upper secondary education will therefore contain information solely about upper secondary education for pupils between the ages 16 to 19. For more information on lower secondary education see 5 - Single Structure Education (Integrated Primary and Lower Secondary Education). [2]

Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education in Sweden provides learning which builds on secondary education and prepares students for the labour market. The education form is called higher vocational education (yrkeshögskola [3]) and is developed and run in close cooperation with employers and industries.

Upper Secondary Education

The current structure for the upper secondary school (gymnasieskolan [1]) was introduced 1 July 2011. There are 18 national programmes (nationellt program [4]): 6 higher education preparatory programmes (högskoleförberedande program [5]) and 12 vocational programmes (yrkesprogram [3]). In addition there are five introductory programmes, which are individually adapted to the pupils.

All upper secondary school programmes include the same eight upper secondary foundation subjects (gymnasiegemensamma ämnen [1]):

- Physical education and Health
- Swedish (or Swedish as a second language)
- English
- History
- Social studies
- Religion
- Mathematics
- Science studies.

In addition to the upper secondary foundation subjects pupils study what is nationally referred to as programme specific subjects (programgemensamma ämnen [6]), i.e. subjects that are specific to a chosen programme. General and vocational branches are provided within the same institutions. Education is given on a full-time basis.

Upper secondary schools may be run by municipalities (kommun [7]), or by independent organisers such as grant-aided independent schools (fristående skola [8]). For more information regarding grant-aided independent schools see 2.4 - Organisation of private education [9]. There is one national programme run by county councils (landsting [10]), the Natural Resources Programme. In municipalities and county councils there are one or more committees responsible for the local schools. The school head is responsible for the daily management and in some cases there are one or
more deputy heads. Each municipality has the right to establish its own upper secondary school.

For information on the national upper secondary school for pupils with impaired hearing (riksgymnasiet för döva och hörselskadade [11]), national upper secondary schools for pupils with severe physical disabilities (riksgymnasium för svårt rörelsehindrade [12]) and upper secondary schools for pupils with learning disabilities (gymnasiesärskola [13]) see 12 - Educational Support and Guidance. [14]

Municipal upper secondary schools are free of charge and during their education the pupils have access to books, tools and other equipment. Upper secondary schools may charge an insignificant fee for occasional activities, and in some cases the pupils have to purchase materials. Upper secondary schools are also allowed to charge a fee for the school lunch. Grant-aided independent schools at upper secondary level have to be approved by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen [15]). Grant-aided schools are not allowed to charge tuition fees.

The national school system is governed by the Education Act (Skollag, 2010:800 [16]), decided by the Parliament (riksdagen [17]). The Education Act contains general regulations for all types of schools. The national curriculum, adopted by the government, sets out the tasks and overall objectives of upper secondary education, as well as the values that form the basis of teaching. The parliament decides on the upper secondary programmes and which subjects that are to be common core subjects. The government sets out the programme goals, specifying the purpose and objectives of each national programme. The National Agency for Education (Skolverket [18]) adopts syllabi. The syllabi sets out the goals of teaching for each individual subject and course.

The general goals and guidelines are set out in the curriculum for the upper secondary school (Läroplan för gymnasieskola 2011 [19]), which applies to the upper secondary school, upper secondary education for pupils with intellectual impairments, the national upper secondary school for pupils with impaired hearing, national upper secondary schools for pupils with severe physical disabilities, municipal adult education (kommunernas vuxenutbildning [7]) and adult education for individuals with learning disabilities (särskild utbildning för vuxna [20]). The curriculum for non-compulsory schools sets out the tasks and goals for youth and adult education separately, see 6.2 - Curriculum [21].

The opening text of the curriculum states the school's fundamental values. At the core lies the democratic principles of the individual’s right of being able to influence, take responsibility and be involved, and these values shall embrace all pupils. The pupils’ responsibility for planning and managing their studies as well as their influence on the contents and structures are important principles in education. According to the Education Act (Skollagen, 2010:800 [16]), it is incumbent on all in school to work for democratic working structures. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are values that the school represent and impart. In accordance with the ethics borne by Christian tradition and Western humanism, this is achieved by fostering a sense of justice, generosity of spirit, tolerance and responsibility in the individual person. School education shall be non-denominational. The task of the school is to encourage all pupils to discover their own uniqueness as individuals and thereby actively participate in social life by giving of their best in responsible freedom.

Post-secondary vocational education (at ISCED level 4) is also referred to as Higher Vocational Education/HVE programmes (yrkeshögskola [3]). These education programmes are developed and run in close cooperation with employers and industries to meet their high competence demands. The education form focuses on professions which can be related to a specific trade or vocation. The programmes are comprised of hands-on activities as well as problem solving and all programmes have a strong emphasis on workplace training (lärande i arbete, LIA [10]). Since the programmes are
tailored to suit an evolving market place situation, the range of programmes change over time as the labour market changes.

Higher Vocational Education corresponds to a need of qualified labour force on the labour market which is not satisfied through higher education. It also contributes to developing or preserving qualified professional skills within a narrow trade which is of importance for the individual and society (examples can be different forms of craft where the employer demand might not be as high).

Education providers of Higher Vocational Education can be universities, local authorities or private training companies. The general goals and guidelines of each higher vocational education programme are set out in the education plan (utbildningsplan [22]) which is regulated by the Higher Vocational Education Ordinance (Förordning om yrkeshögskolan, SFS 2009:130 [23]). The education plan is a general document which sets out the objectives, main content, admission requirements, selection process, scope of the education, education provider and quality control. see 6.5 Curriculum [24]

There are several laws and ordinances governing Higher Vocational Education. The Higher Vocational Education Act (Lag om yrkeshögskolan, SFS 2009:128 [25]) and the Higher Vocational Education Ordinance are the primary regulations within the educational field.

The education providers have a lot of freedom when developing programmes as long as they stay within the framework of higher vocational education and the labour market shows a clear demand of the profession. The employers from the labour market contribute with expertise and clarify which types of competencies are needed to handle the role.

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**Links**
[1] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/glossary-70_en#G