Introduction

Initial teacher education and training

The bill ‘Top of the class – new teacher education programmes’ (Govt. Bill 2009/10:89) was passed by the parliament in April 2010 and replaced the degree of Bachelor/Master of Education by four new professional degrees: a degree in preschool education, a degree in primary school education, a degree in subject education and a degree in vocational education. The current teacher education programmes started in the autumn of 2011. The four professional degrees include knowledge objectives in the subject to be taught, and objectives concerning other key knowledge, and skills of a more general nature, for school and preschool teachers. The professional degrees aim to offer greater clarity regarding the three components of teacher education: studies in the subject to be taught, a school placement comprising 30 higher education credits and an educational science core of 60 higher education credits (equivalent to one year of full-time studies).

Teacher training in special needs education

Teacher training in special needs education is offered at advanced level for those who have a teaching degree. There are varieties of the course, but they are typically 90 higher education credits or 1.5 years full-time studies.

Institutions, Level and Models of Training

Teacher education is provided at universities and university colleges across the country. The length of studies varies from three (180 Higher Education Credits) to five and a half years (300-330 Higher Education Credits) depending on the chosen subject area and age level. Practical supervised training in a school should account for one sixth of the general common education area and one fourth of each orientation.

A teaching qualification is obtained after completion of between three and five and a half years of full-time studies, different educational levels require different amounts of credit points. There is also a short teacher education programme of one and a half year for those with a previous bachelor or master degree. The teaching degrees comprise general courses as well as specialisation courses such as sports, foreign languages etc. Some of the university colleges for arts provide teacher education in practical arts subjects. Teacher students who intend to work with pupils with special needs receive special training. School heads undergo special training upon their appointment. Mainly as a result of the Bologna process, the former degree system has been reformed and structured to fit a new three-cycle structure of higher education.

Teacher education is divided into four different professional degrees and include knowledge
objectives in the subject to be taught, and objectives concerning other key knowledge, and skills of a more general nature, for school and preschool teachers. The reformed teacher education aims to offer greater clarity regarding the three components of teacher education: studies in the subject to be taught, a school placement comprising 30 higher education credits and an educational science core of 60 higher education credits, ECTS, or the equivalent of one year of full-time studies.

Preschool

As from autumn 2011, the degree in preschool education comprises 210 higher education credits. The programme is clearly oriented towards work in the preschool. In the course of the programme, prospective preschool teachers will acquire the knowledge and skills required to meet the learning and care needs of the youngest children, and have very solid knowledge of how reading, writing and basic mathematical skills are acquired.

Compulsory School and School-age Childcare

As from autumn 2011, the degree in primary school education allows for three specialisations: the first directed at work in preschool class (for children the year before they start the compulsory school) and years 1–3, the second at work in years 4–6, and the third at work in leisure time centers which cater for children before and after the school day and during holidays. There are two specialisations for students in subject education: one directed at work in years 7-9 of compulsory school (ISCED level 2) and the other at work in upper secondary school (ISCED level 3).

Degree in primary school education directed at work in preschool class and years 1-3 of compulsory school

The degree in primary school education directed at work in preschool class and years 1-3 of compulsory school comprises 240 higher education credits. This programme gives the teacher a broad range of knowledge and equips her/him to follow pupils’ development and teach most subjects. Knowledge about the development of reading and writing skills and in-depth knowledge of mathematics for younger children should be an essential part of their skills.

Degree in primary school education directed at work in years 4-6 of compulsory school

The degree in primary school education directed at work in years 4-6 of compulsory school comprises 240 higher education credits. The requirements concerning both a broad orientation and in-depth subject studies are considerably higher, and students will acquire a well-defined identity as a teacher oriented towards teaching in school years 4–6 (ages approximately 10-12). Apart from knowledge of Swedish, mathematics and English, the subject studies should allow for choice, with students choosing between social subjects, natural science subjects and technology, or one or more practical or artistic subjects.

Degree in primary school education directed at work in out-of-school care

The degree in primary school education directed at work in out-of-school care comprises 180 higher education credits. The focus of the programme should primarily include knowledge in the field of out-of-school teaching and one or more practical or artistic subjects.

Degree in subject education directed at work in years 7-9 of compulsory school

The degree in subject education directed at work in years 7-9 of compulsory school comprises 270 higher education credits, 195 of which are to be in the subjects themselves (this includes the degree
project and parts of the school placement). This specialization will provide teachers with the skills to teach three subjects. The programme provides a limited number of subject combinations so as to suit the needs of the school system and to increase teachers’ employability.

Upper Secondary School

Degree in subject education directed at work in upper secondary school

The degree in subject education directed at work in upper secondary schools comprises 300 or 330 higher education credits, 225 or 255 of which will be in the subjects themselves (this includes the degree project and parts of the school placement), depending on the choice of subjects. This specialisation will provide teachers with the skills to teach in two subjects. The programme provides a number of subject combinations so as to suit the needs of the school system and to increase teachers’ employability.

Vocational Education

Degree in vocational education

The degree in vocational education comprises 90 higher education credits. To be accepted on the programme, basic eligibility for higher education studies is required as well as advanced and relevant vocational knowledge. It is possible to provide programmes with great flexibility in terms of time and location as well, as to enable those with vocational skills to study to become a vocational teacher.

Training for Headteachers

The headteacher training programme

The municipalities are responsible for recruiting and appointing school heads. A precondition to be appointed a position as school head is good pedagogical insight through training and experience. Appointed school heads at compulsory and upper secondary school levels are obliged to take part in the national school head training programme. The organisers of the programme receive state funds allocated by the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket [1]). The national school head training programme is open to persons who, in accordance with the Education Act, serve as school heads either in the public school system or in recognised grant-aided independent schools and who have not attended such a programme earlier. Admission to the programme is made in consultation with the municipality concerned. The purpose of this programme is to enable school heads to develop and apply democratic learning and communicative leadership as laid down in the curricula. The programme aims at better equipping school heads to exercise their responsibilities as laid down in curricula and other legal instruments. The training is carried out during working hours and includes seminars, residential courses and supervised practice, and must be completed within four years from the day the school head was appointed. For more information about the headteacher training programme, in Swedish only, see the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket [1]).

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the general qualifications for eligibility to higher education, and any additional qualifications prescribed by the higher education institution concerned. For more information on eligibility requirements, see 7.2.1 - Admission Requirements [2].

All who are offered employment in preschool, school and school age child care are checked against a register of persons convicted of sexual offences, crimes of violence or crimes related to child
pornography. This also covers teacher trainees, participants in adult education and other trainees within this field as well as staff who work under circumstances similar to employment, for example temporary staff from companies in the staffing industry, kitchen staff and cleaning personnel.

**Curriculum, Level of Specialisation and Learning Outcomes**

The Qualifications Ordinance (Examensordningen [3]) states which learning outcomes to be fulfilled to obtain a particular degree in addition to those laid down in the Higher Education Act. The higher education institutions may lay down additional specific goals and decide themselves the content of their courses as well as how to organise the education in order to reach the goals. The skills needed to receive a teaching qualification are described further on in this chapter.

A new teacher training programme was introduced in the autumn 2011. All teachers get a common basic competence, combined with specialisations in particular subjects/subject areas and/or age groups. The teacher education programme comprises a minimum of three years of full-time studies and a maximum of five and a half years of full-time studies depending on the chosen subject area and age level:

- At least 3.5 years for teaching in preschool, preschool class, the lower level of the compulsory school as well as school age child care and mother tongue tuition.
- At least 4 years for teaching at higher level of the compulsory school and the upper secondary school, with exception for the upper secondary schools vocational subjects. One or two specialisations (of at least 1.5 years each) in a subject or subject area should be included.
- At least 3 years for teaching in subjects specific to vocationally oriented programmes in upper secondary schools. Instead of emphasis and specialisation, extensive professional experience as well as higher education in relevant subjects (of at least 1.5 years) or other equivalent education is required.

The teacher education programme consists of three education areas:

1. The general education area, common for all students, covering key topics such as learning, special needs education, socialisation, fundamental values as well as interdisciplinary subject studies (at least 1.5 years)
2. Subject/subjects that the prospective teacher intends to teach (at least 1 year)
3. Specialisation complementing earlier acquired knowledge (at least one term)

In the general education area, practical supervised training in a school should account for at least half a term. To receive a teaching qualification, students must also complete an independent project work corresponding to half a term’s studies. Mainly as a result of the Bologna process, the degree system has been reformed and structured to fit the new three-cycle system.

The teaching qualification can be taken at first and second level, depending on orientation and specialisation. Teaching qualifications with orientations that require 3-3.5 years education are at the first level. These cover education in preschool, the preschool class and leisure-time centres. At the first level there are also programmes for vocational education and mother tongue tuition. The qualification focusing on the earlier years of compulsory school can be taken at either the first or second level.

Teaching qualifications requiring at least four years education and some additional specialisation are at the second level. These cover programmes that focus on the later years of the compulsory school and the upper secondary school. The qualification focusing on the earlier years of the
compulsory school can be taken at the second level if this includes specialisation. University colleges and universities can choose the level at which teacher training shall be offered; first level, second level or both.

The teacher education programme emphasises the importance of competence in special needs education, enabling the teacher to identify frequently recurring problematic situations in the school and to assist pupils. All teachers, irrespective of category, obtain special needs education within the general education area. In addition, teachers can deepen their knowledge in this area by studying orientations or specialisations within special needs education. There is a 1.5 year long teacher training programme in special needs education for those who already are teachers.

There are no special eligibility limits between different levels within the school. Prospective teachers choose an orientation and the normal situation is to teach at the level appropriate to one’s specialisation. The employer decides whether the teacher has the competence required.

**Teacher Educators**

There are no national regulations for how teachers working in institutions providing teacher education are trained themselves. It is up to each higher education institution to decide, although a normal requirement is a relevant PhD. Many teacher educators have own teaching experience from schools.

Teachers who choose to be mentors to teachers in training must have a relevant degree and be certified teachers. There is a 7.5 ECTS voluntary mentoring course offered at higher education institutions open to all mentors. The placement of students is a collaboration between municipalities and the higher education institutions.

**Qualifications, Evaluation and Certificates**

Evaluation in teacher training is carried out continuously by means of written and verbal examinations. A teaching qualification is awarded in the first or second cycle depending on the number of credits attained, the degree of specialisation demanded in a subject or a disciplinary domain, and the extent to which second cycle study is required. On completion of the programme a student receives a degree from the higher education institution. The degree certificate states which orientations and specialisations a student has completed. The certificate includes grades for all courses completed and is signed by the principal of the higher education institution. The Qualifications Ordinance (Examensordningen [3]), an appendix to the Higher Education Ordinance (Högskoleförordningen [4]) stipulates which qualifications may be awarded in undergraduate education.

For a teaching qualification the student shall have demonstrated the knowledge and skills required to attain the objectives of the relevant level and also to participate in the development of the appropriate educational area in accordance with the applicable regulations and guidelines. The degree certificate is to state what specialisation(s) and advanced studies the student has completed and for what kind of teaching or educational level the qualification is intended. To obtain a teaching qualification the students also have to complete an independent study, degree project, of a certain length depending on the programme:

- A teaching qualification comprising 180 credits or 210 credits requires an independent project of at least 15 credits.
- A teaching qualification comprising 240, 270, 300 and 330 credits requires an independent project of at least 30 credits or two such projects for at least 15 credits each.
Once a student has obtained the professional degree in teaching he/she can apply to the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket [1]) to become registered as a teacher. A teacher certificate is necessary for full-time employment as a teacher and to be allowed to give marks.

**Alternative Training Pathways**

At present, there are many teachers employed to teach subjects for which they lack formal qualifications. The government has therefore initiated a further educational programme for unqualified teachers. Through this, higher education institutions can validate previous professional teaching and offer individualised educational programmes that enable participants to meet the requirements.

Those with previous academic studies relevant to the teaching profession can be admitted to the later part of the teacher training programs and supplement with the necessary specialisation and the general education training (90 credits, 1.5 years full-time studies) required for teachers.

A special supplementary educational programme is offered at higher education institutions to those with foreign teaching qualifications to enable them to qualify for employment in the Swedish school system.

The teacher education programmes are available as distance education. Distance courses and campus courses at an higher education institution can also be combined into a teaching degree. Some Swedish universities offer such distance and ICT-based courses, of which some are aimed at competence development as part of continued professional development.

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