2019

Expansion of Higher Vocational Education

As announced in the Government budget bill for 2018, Higher Vocational Education (yrkeshögskola [1]) is currently going through an expansion and increasing the amount of offered student places. The expansion began in 2018 and will take place in steps until 2022 when the full-time equivalent student places will have increased with 45%. This is an increase from 30 000 to 44 000 full-time equivalent student places and an increase in students from 50 000 to 70 000. In January 2019 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan [2]) presented the results showing which higher vocational education and training programmes that can start from 2019. The frequency of grants was 45%, which equals 14 171 new student places. Three education areas were prioritized in 2019, Social structure and Building Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing and Computer/IT.

Read more about Higher Vocational Education in chapter 6 Upper Secondary and Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education. [3]

Read more about the application process for education providers to start new higher vocational education and training programmes in article 6.4 Organisation of Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education [4].

Budget for liberal adult education

In March 2019 the Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet [5]) submitted their budget data for financing of the operations 2020-2022 to the Government. The Council wants the Government to increase the funding to liberal adult education with approximately SEK 700 million (approximately 67 million EURO). Examples of the proposed initiatives are 2000 new full-time equivalent student places at folk high schools (folkhögskola [6]), establishment initiatives for foreign-born people and that activities with the target groups asylum seekers and some newly arrived immigrants are made permanent. In addition, the council suggests that Swedish tuition for immigrants (s [7][8] at folk high school level is investigated.

2018

A contemporary municipal adult education

The government (regeringen [9]) has presented the comission of inquiry En andra och en annan chans – ett komvux i tiden (reference number SOU 2018:71). The inquiry has been commissioned to investigate the need for changes in the regulation within adult education, mainly in the area of
municipal adult education (komvux [10]) and special education for adults (särvux [8]).

Examples of the inquiry’s suggestions are that:

- The Education Act (Skollagen [11]) is clarified so that emphasis is put on municipal adult education as a part of the labour market’s skills supply and preparation for further studies.

- The selection rules for municipal adult education at the upper secondary level would change so that it is no longer the least-educated education that automatically get selected, but the individuals with the greatest need for education.

The inquiry is under consultation until 12 December 2018.

Swedish tuition for immigrants and municipal adult education of higher quality

The government has appointed a comission of inquiry which will investigate the the need for changes in municipal adult education when it applies to Swedish tuition for immigrants (sfi [8]) and sfi in combination with other forms of education. The objective is to analyse the prerequisites for sfi students to be offered an education of good quality that corresponds to the students' needs. Another objective is to analyse and improve the flow of learners within sfi and facilitate the transition to other forms of adult education.

In order for learners to achieve the goals of education and to better be able to combine sfi with other forms of adult education the inquiry has for example been tasked to investigate and propose how it can be ensured that municipalities offer personalized education for newly arrived migrants to make sure that they can take part in sfi and other education. The inquiry shall also investigate how support measures and other interventions can be used to achieve the goals of education.

Parts of the inquiry is to be reported to the government by 29 February 2019 and the remaining parts are to be reported by 21 May 2019.

Interpreter program

Beginning in January 2019, 645 spots have been made available for a new vocational program in professional interpretation. The programme will be 1.5-2 years long and include a practical placement. An interpreter translates between individuals who do not speak Swedish, and works within Swedish authorities, social offices, employment agencies, healthcare centres and justice departments.

New higher vocational education programmes

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education introduced 525 new courses and eight new career options that were not included in the system before. The portfolio for higher vocational education is constantly changing based on future demands of the labour market. Nine out of ten people who hold a diploma from a higher vocational education programme finds a job within a year.

For more information in Swedish, please see here [12].
Increased funding for Swedish training for newly arrived immigrants

The government proposes to increase in finding for ‘Swedish from day one’ for asylum seekers and recently arrived immigrants. The initiative has been successful and involves language training and community information through study associations (Studieförbund) and folk high schools (Folkhögskolor), and the government therefore proposes to give the initiative SEK 20 million for 2018.

Vocational education with access to higher education

The Ministry of Education and Research has sent a proposal for a referral on extending vocational programs to ensure that students are able to take courses for basic qualifications to the university without reducing time for vocational courses. The proposal means that the teaching time is extended so students are given the opportunity to take courses that provide professional skills while also giving them eligibility for higher education. The government proposes to invest SEK 234 million per year from 2022 for the extension of vocational programs.

Increased investments in higher vocational education

The government is proposing increased investments in higher vocational education (Yrkeshögskolan) in the budget bill for 2018. It would be the largest expansion since the introduction of higher vocational education in 2009. The proposed investment means that the number of students could increase by almost 45 percent by 2022. The full expansion comprises SEK 920 million, which opens up for 14,000 additional students in 2022.

Increased funding for vocational training for adults

The government wants to give more people the opportunity to get upper secondary vocational education, to complete their upper secondary education or to retrain for a new profession. The government therefore proposes to invest a little more than SEK400 million in vocational training for adults in 2018.

5000 new places in folk high schools

The government is proposing a large investment (Kunskapslyftet) to boost knowledge, lifelong learning and increase employment rates. As part of the investment, the government proposes in the budget bill for 2018 that SEK 641 million annually be paid to Folk high schools (folkhögskolor) during the next mandate period.

Increased opportunities for vocational education

The government has submitted a proposal to test activities with industry specific schools (branschskolor). The proposal suggests that upper secondary schools will be able to offer vocational courses within their own school, even when the number of pupils would not previously have been enough. Vocational courses will be given at industry specific schools where students can undertake parts of their vocational education. The regulations are proposed to apply to education commencing after 1 July 2018. Swedish Government official webpage. [13]

Investments in higher vocational education

In the 2018 budget bill, the government proposes investment in higher vocational education (Yrkeshögskolan [11]) that would be the largest since the program was introduced in 2009. It is estimated that the investments will lead to a 45 percent increase in participation by 2022. The full
expansion comprises a total of SEK 920 million, corresponding to 14,000 students. Today, there is a lack of qualified professional competence, which impedes companies in Sweden to grow and create more jobs. The proposal aims at improving the provision of skills needed in the labour market. It also allows more people to retrain within a profession or convert to a new one. For more information please see Swedish Government official webpage. [14]

**New paths to higher vocational education**

The government has decided that higher vocational education will include preparation courses and individual courses. The aim is to give more students access to higher vocational education to improve the shortage of skilled labour.

**Extended right to municipal adult education**

In the budget bill for 2016 the government announced that a right to study municipal adult education at upper secondary level would be introduced. It implies a right for adults to education leading to eligibility for higher education. The opportunity to complement previous studies though municipal adult education currently varies across different municipalities. The introduction of a right to municipal adult education at upper secondary level will strengthen equality in education. Adults who have aspirations to get an upper secondary education in order continue to higher education or improve their chances in the labour market will have the right to do so regardless of where they live. The extended right to adult education at upper secondary level came into force in 2017. The cost of the right to adult education at upper secondary level is estimated at SEK 537 million from 2017.