



Adult education and training in Sweden

The school system for adults includes municipal adult education (Komvux), special education for adults (Särvux) and Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). Higher vocational education and supplementary educational courses are also available.

The school system for adults

General information about the school system for adults

In July 2012, the new Education Act (2010:800) and the Ordinance on Adult Education (2011:1108) became applicable for Komvux, Särvux and SFI, as well as certain equivalent educational courses. At the same time, the new curriculum for adult education and training became applicable for Komvux, Särvux, SFI and equivalent educational courses.

The objectives and strategy for municipal adult education and training were formulated in a 2001 Government Bill entitled Adult Learning and the Future Development of Adult Education (Govt Bill 2000/01:72).

Komvux, Särvux and SFI are to be based on the needs and requirements of the individual. Support for adult learning may take the form of teaching, supervision, study guidance and assessments of goal attainment and knowledge, skills and competence gained. Each student is also to receive an individual study plan, based on the abilities and life situation of the individual.

Accessibility and flexibility as regards time and location must be a major feature of the adult education and training system. Activities are to be characterised by consideration of the knowledge, skills and competence acquired by the adult in other contexts, such in working and social life. Validation will thus be an important point of departure when designing educational activities. Komvux should be designed in close cooperation with representatives of the infrastructure developed by municipalities together with other actors and stakeholders, such as employers and representatives of other policy areas. Introductory courses may be organised locally at basic or upper secondary level within Komvux and Särvux to provide opportunities for analysis, guidance and validation.

More information on municipal adult education (Komvux)

When Komvux was established in 1968 following the Government Bill Concerning certain measures in the area of adult education, etc. (Govt Bill 1967:85, Standing Committee of Supply communication 1967:117, Riksdag Communication 1967:277), liberal adult education still dominated the educational opportunities for adults. Increased skills requirements in working life and formal eligibility requirements for admission to further education became crucial in the establishment of skills-enhancing adult education and training which was separated from liberal adult education. In the Bill, three main reasons for the establishment of municipal adult education and training are stated: reducing the growing educational inequality in society, creating opportunities for individuals to supplement their schooling and providing the labour market with a well-educated workforce.

Komvux at basic level is intended to provide adults with the knowledge, skills and competence they need to take part in society and working life. It is also intended to prepare adults for further study. Adults who lack the knowledge, skills and competence usually acquired in compulsory school, assuming that other conditions are met, have the legal right to education at basic level.

Komvux at upper secondary level is intended to provide adults with knowledge, skills and competence at a level corresponding to that of an upper secondary school education and training. During the selection process, precedence should be given to those qualified applicants who have short period previous formal education.

In all forms of education and training, the adult may obtain grades or certificates. If certain conditions are met, an upper secondary school qualification may be awarded within Komvux.

More information on special education for adults (Särvox)

Särvox, which is a distinct form of school, is also part of the school system. It consists of Särvox at basic level and at upper secondary school level. This form of school is intended for adults with learning disabilities or acquired brain damage.

On 1 January 2007, the right to Särvox at basic level entered into force for adults who do not have the skills, knowledge and competence that education and training at compulsory special school is intended to provide and who are capable of benefiting from this education.

Särvox is intended to supplement student's skills, knowledge and competence, building on the previous education, experience and abilities of each individual. Särvox courses can therefore provide skills, knowledge and competence in individual subjects and skills equivalent to those acquired at compulsory and upper secondary education schools for pupils with learning disabilities and vocational education and training.

More information about Swedish for Immigrants (SFI)

SFI forms part of the school system and aims to provide basic knowledge of the Swedish language. SFI also aims to provide adult immigrants who cannot read or write the opportunity to acquire these skills. The individual is to be given the opportunity to develop his or her ability to communicate orally and in writing in Swedish in everyday, social and working life situations. SFI is also intended as preparation for further study.

Municipalities are obliged to offer SFI to adult immigrants who lack basic knowledge of the Swedish language. Courses should normally be available within three months of the individual's registration as a resident of a municipality. Depending on his or her educational background and prior knowledge, the student is placed in one of three study programmes with varying degrees of intensity and speed. Regardless of the study programme begun by a student, he or she is entitled to continue studies until completion of the highest course.

Higher vocational education

To ensure the quality of post-secondary vocational education programmes alongside higher education programmes, the concept of higher vocational educa-

tion and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, were created. The Agency decides on whether an educational programme may constitute higher vocational education. In connection with this, several forms of post-secondary education were replaced by higher vocational education. Higher vocational education programmes are to be characterised by a strong link to working life, a theoretical basis and responsiveness to labour market needs.

The programmes are primarily characterised by their close cooperation with representatives of working life, who participate directly in devising the training programmes and finance the workplace-based training programme. These programmes are developed on the basis of local and regional initiatives and are thus also significant for regional development.

The programmes often last for two years, but there may also be shorter and longer programmes. A programme lasting at least one year can lead to a higher vocational education qualification and a programme lasting at least two years to an advanced higher vocational education qualification. The programmes are directed at those who have completed upper secondary school as well as those who have a vocational background. Like higher education studies and municipal adult education, higher vocational education studies qualify for entitlement to student aid for the entire study period. Programmes may be organised by universities or other higher education institutions, municipalities, county councils or private education providers. Funding is in the form of state grants or special funds, which are granted on the basis of a successful application. The entire programme or parts of it may also be organised in the form of contract education.

Supplementary education

Supplementary education is not part of the school system. These courses are run by independent education providers (owners), either private individuals or organisations.

These courses supplement upper secondary education and are often concentrated on a subject or vocational area. Courses can be found in such areas as art, dance, theatre, music, handicrafts, media and aviation. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is the permit authority and distributes state grants to the programmes.



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