



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices
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FACT SHEET

Ministry of Education and Research

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Adult Education in Sweden

The public adult education system comprises municipally-run adult education (*komvux*), adult education for the intellectually disabled (*särvux*) and Swedish for immigrants (*sfi*). There is also advanced vocational education and training (*KY*) as well as supplementary educational programmes.

The public adult education system

Municipal adult education (komvux)

Part of the public education system for adults, the municipally-run adult education system was established in 1968 with the aim of providing adults with skills at levels equivalent to 9-year compulsory school education (basic adult education) and upper secondary school education (upper secondary adult education). Continuation courses for participants educated to upper secondary or adult upper secondary level were also introduced.

Municipal adult education comes under the Education Act and the Municipal Adult Education Ordinance. The ordinance, which came into force on 1 January 2003, is based on the strategy and objectives set out in a government proposal approved by the Riksdag (the Parliament) in the spring of 2001. The Government's Adult Education Initiative, launched on 1 July 1996 and concluded in 2002, marked the start of a programme of extensive reform and renewal in a number of areas including municipal adult education.

Municipal adult education and upper secondary schools share the same curriculum. Although they may differ in terms of content, the goals of the national syllabuses for upper secondary adult education and upper secondary schools are also the same. In addition, municipal adult education provides for the establishment of locally initiated courses to meet local or regional needs. Individual courses may also be organised within upper secondary adult education.

Under the ordinance, the content of municipal adult education is to be based on the needs and abilities of the individual. Support for adult learning may take the form of teaching, supervision, study guidance, or assessments of goal attainment or knowledge. Each learner is also given an individual study plan based on her or his abilities and life situation.

Educational activities must be distinguished by accessibility and flexibility in terms of time and lo-

cation. They must be designed to take account of the knowledge and skills acquired by an adult in other contexts, such as her or his working and social life, so that validation of such knowledge and skills is an important starting point. Municipal adult education may be designed in close cooperation with representatives of the infrastructure developed by local authorities along 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 to provide opportunities for analysis, guidance and validation.

The purpose of basic adult education is to help adults acquire the knowledge and skills they need to take part in society and working life. It also aims to prepare adults for further study. Municipalities are required to offer basic adult education to all adults who lack skills normally acquired in the compulsory school system.

The aim of upper-secondary adult education in turn is to help adults gain knowledge and skills that correspond to levels set for young people at upper secondary school. When selecting from a pool of qualified applicants, precedence should be given to those with relatively little previous education.

The purpose of continuation courses is to train adults for new jobs or for a new level in their existing occupations.

Learners may be awarded grades or certificates at all levels of municipal adult education. In certain cases, leaving certificates may also be issued.

Adult education for the intellectually disabled (särvux)

Adult education for the intellectually disabled is another part of the public adult education system. The scheme, which is divided into basic adult education and upper secondary level education, is intended for adults with intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injuries, autism or autism-related conditions.

1 January 2007 marked the introduction of the right to basic adult education for the intellectually disabled for people who do not have the skills that compulsory special schools are designed to provide but who are capable of benefiting from such an education. The system follows the same curriculum as municipal adult education but uses specially adapted syllabuses.

The purpose of adult education for the intellectually disabled is to extend the individual learner's knowledge and skills on the basis of her or his previous schooling, experience and abilities. Learners can thus acquire skills in individual subjects in addition to skills equivalent to those taught in compulsory special schools, upper secondary special schools and vocational training.

Swedish for immigrants (sfi)

Swedish for immigrants forms part of the public adult education system in Sweden. The purpose of the scheme is to provide learners with basic Swedish language skills. It also aims to give adult immigrants who cannot read or write the chance to acquire these skills. Immigrants must be given the opportunity to develop their ability to communicate in Swedish – orally and in writing – in everyday situations, social settings and working life. Swedish for immigrants must also prepare learners for further studies.

Municipalities are required to offer Swedish language instruction to all adult immigrants who lack basic Swedish language skills. This should normally begin within three months of registration of residence in the municipality. Depending on the learner's educational background and previous knowledge, she or he is placed in one of three differently paced study tracks, with the right to progress to course D in study track 3, regardless of which track she or he started on.

Advanced vocational education and training (KY)

Advanced vocational education and training is a collective term for vocational training in a range of subject areas. Such training is distinguished by close cooperation with representatives of working life who take part in designing the training programmes and fund the workplace training scheme Learning in Working Life, which covers about one third of the total training period. Training programmes are developed on the basis of local and regional initiatives and are thus also important for regional development.

Courses of between one and three years' duration leading to an advanced vocational qualification in the trainee's chosen occupational area are aimed at students who have completed upper secondary school and people with a professional background. Advanced vocational education and training participants are entitled to study support throughout the training period on the same basis as higher education students. Training may be organised by universities or other higher education institutions, municipalities, county councils or private education providers. Funding, in the form of state grants or special funds, may be awarded on application following suitable assessment. The entire course or a part of it may be organised on a contract basis. The authority responsible for qualified vocational training is the Swedish Agency for Advanced Vocational Education.

Supplementary education

Supplementary education is not part of the public adult education system. Unlike other forms of adult education, it is privately owned and run, either by physical persons or organisations.

Courses may supplement upper secondary education and are often dedicated to a specific subject or vocational area. Subject areas include art, dance, theatre, music, handicrafts, media and aviation. The supervisory authority is the National Agency for Education.



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You can read more about adult education on the Swedish Government website at www.regeringen.se. Additional copies of this fact sheet may be ordered from the Ministry of Education and Research, fax. +46 8 723 11 92 or e-mail: info.order@education.ministry.se. The fact sheet is also available on the Ministry of Education and Research website at www.regeringen.se/utbildning. Questions relating to the fact sheet or its contents may be addressed to Berndt Ericsson, Tel. +46 8 405 44 92 or Viveka Wetterberg, Tel. +46 8 405 23 73.

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