This VET in Europe report is part of a series prepared by Cedefop's ReferNet network. VET in Europe reports provide an overview of national vocational education and training (VET) systems of the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The reports help to understand VET's main features and role within countries' overall education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, and VET’s relevance to and interaction with the labour market.


The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Cedefop.

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ReferNet is a network of institutions across Europe representing the 28 Member States, plus Iceland and Norway. The network provides Cedefop with information and analysis on national vocational education and training. ReferNet also disseminates information on European VET and Cedefop’s work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

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CHAPTER 1.
External factors influencing VET

Modern Swedish vocational education and training (VET) is, in some respects, shaped by its historical development. Views on the aim and role of education have historically oscillated between emphasising the development of generic skills and emphasising the importance of education in skills provision. The role of, and coordination between, the state and working life in the organisation and delivery of education have also changed over time. Issues regarding skills provision, both regionally and nationally, youth unemployment and a fluctuating economy are factors that strongly impact the focus of initiatives, as well as the previous and ongoing VET reforms. In addition, the refugee crisis in 2015, and the resultant dramatic increase in newly arrived immigrants are likely to impact on VET and its policy in the years to come.

1.1. Population and employment

1.1.1. Demography
In April 2016, the population of Sweden was 9,884,285 (1), 1.1% more than in 2015. Sweden is the third largest country in the European Union in terms of land area. Its population is concentrated in the southern and central parts of the country, mainly in the Mälar Region (2), Greater Göteborg (3) and Greater Malmö (4). Just as in other parts of Europe, Sweden has an increasing proportion of elderly people in the population.

The 20-64 age group made up 57% of the population in 2015. By 2060 this proportion is anticipated by Statistics Sweden (SCB) to decrease to 52% and

(1) April 30, 2016. SCB (Statistics Sweden).
(2) The counties of Stockholm, Uppsala, Västmanland and Södermanland.
(3) The municipalities of Ale, Alingsås, Göteborg, Härryda, Kungsbacka, Kungälv, Lerum, Lilla Edet, Mölndal, Partille, Stenungsund, Tjörn and Öckerö.
the elderly will surpass those under the age of 20 by 2045 (see Figure 1) (5). The labour force will decrease and will need support a greater proportion of children, teenagers and elderly persons (aged 65 and over). The retirement age is from 61 to 67 and determined by the employee. The average retirement age is 64, the highest in the European Union (6). A debate has nevertheless emerged in recent years on raising the retirement age.

Figure 1. Population ages 0-19, 20-64 and 65 years and older 1960-2015 and forecast 2016-60

This also means that there will be a shortage of skilled labour when the older generation leaves the labour market, especially in small towns and rural areas. It is vital to take advantage of all the resources on the labour market, for example, to increase the throughput of young people in the education system and to reduce dropouts from upper secondary schools (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2010).


1.1.2. Migration
In the 20th century, Sweden has gone from being a country of emigrants, to a country of immigrants. Since 2000, the population has increased by one million or 11% \(^{(7)}\), due to high nativity rates and immigration (see Table 1). Approximately three quarters of the population increase in 2015 is due to immigration. In 2015, a record number of 134,000 immigrants came to Sweden and, of the newly arrived immigrants, 85,880 under the age of 20 were registered \((Migrationsverket)\) (Figure 3) \(^{(8)}\).

Table 1. Net population change 2000-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Births</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Immigrants</th>
<th>Emigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8 882 792</td>
<td>90 441</td>
<td>93 461</td>
<td>58 659</td>
<td>34 091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9 047 752</td>
<td>101 346</td>
<td>91 710</td>
<td>65 229</td>
<td>38 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9 415 570</td>
<td>115 641</td>
<td>90 487</td>
<td>98 801</td>
<td>48 853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>9 851 017</td>
<td>114 870</td>
<td>90 907</td>
<td>134 240</td>
<td>55 830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change 2000-15</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>129%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\text{Source: Statistics Sweden.}\)

Immigration to Sweden has increased in recent years, but before the high migration flows of the summer and autumn of 2015, it was not really higher than to other European countries. For example, the increase has been significantly higher in neighbouring Denmark and Norway. However, Swedish immigration is characterised by a relatively high proportion of refugees and their relatives, a trend that was accentuated in 2015. Such immigration is not matched by corresponding demand on the labour market. It has its origins in a desire to help people in need of sanctuary. In overall terms, Sweden has a higher proportion of people born abroad in relation to the total population than most other OECD countries. By the end of 2015 more than 1.675 million people living in Sweden, or 17% of the population, were born in another country.

A high birth rate combined with high immigration is a challenge to the education system, although it may also exert positive future effects on the dependency ratio. Due to the high immigration, the number of newly-arrived


\(^{(8)}\) Data provided for this report by the Swedish Migration Agency. For updated information on immigration in Sweden, see http://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Fakta-om-migration.html [accessed 4.4.2017].
children of school age (7-20) more than tripled in one year between 2014 and 2015. The number of newly-arrived young adults in the age group of upper secondary education was 3.6 times higher in 2015 than in 2014.

Figure 2. The total number of people, by age, 2013-16, in the reception system of the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket)

The largest share of newly-arrived immigrants between 16 and 20 study in the upper secondary introduction programme, Language Introduction Programme (Språkintroduktion), where they focus on learning Swedish. If they master Swedish as a second language at compulsory school level before the year they turn 20, they are eligible to attend another programme of upper secondary education (9). Those who do not master Swedish before the age of 20 are still eligible for the Vocational Introduction Programme (Yrkesintroduktion) in which there is a focus on VET training or courses aimed at establishing the learner in the labour market or becoming eligible for a VET programme, or individual alternative programme (Individuellt alternativ) which is individually designed to fit the individual’s needs.

However newly-arrived immigrants have a disparate educational background: slightly less than 20% have schooling of seven years or less,

(9) Other introduction programmes (Preparatory Education – Preparandutbildning and Programme-oriented Individual Options – Programinriktat individuellt val) and the national programmes which are either VET-programmes, or higher education preparatory programmes.
whereas 37% have 13 years or more (10). While some of the newly-arrived immigrants after mastering Swedish will consequently proceed rapidly through upper secondary school and tertiary education, many are likely to pursue careers in vocations for which lower pre-qualifications are required (11). The majority of the newly-arrived students who have advanced rapidly from the Language Introduction Programme to one of the national, non-introductory upper secondary programmes, have entered a higher education preparatory programme. Entry into VET programmes is more common among students who spend more time in the Language Introduction Programme (Skolverket 2016) (see also Section 2.3.1.3).

1.1.3. Labour market structure and trends, and education responses
According to the Swedish Public Employment Service’s (Arbetsförmedlingen) analysis, service sector jobs have increased while industrial jobs have declined, which has contributed to a lower level of demand for lower skill jobs, and a higher demand for labour with upper secondary or tertiary education. In comparison to the EU average more people are employed in the service sector such as in education, real estate and information services (see Figure 3). A larger share of the people working in the primary and secondary sectors (such as in the field of agriculture and manufacturing) are foreigners.

In the future, the most substantial growth is expected in the engineering sector and ICT. Another sector that is expected to grow is public administration, education and health care, enhanced by the large influx of immigrants. Most of the expected growth is in sectors for which a tertiary exam is needed. In the health care sector there is also a need for assistant nurses trained at upper secondary level. Other sectors that expect a growth include the restaurant business, retail sales, construction and transport. After years of stagnant industrial manufacturing, slight growth is expected in 2016.


(11) For eligibility to upper secondary VET-programmes, the student must have passing grades from year nine of compulsory school in Swedish or Swedish as second language, English, Mathematics and five more subjects. For eligibility to upper secondary higher education preparatory programmes, the student must have passing grades from year nine of compulsory school in Swedish or Swedish as second language, English, Mathematics and nine more subjects. For some higher education preparatory programmes, there are specific courses included in entry requirements. Compare to entry requirements before 2011, note 2.
Figure 3. **Sectoral distribution (%) of employment in Sweden and the EU (2011-14 comparison for Sweden)**

Source: Eurostat, Labour market survey, employment by sector, skills panorama.

Small and medium sized enterprises dominate private employment in Sweden. Almost three quarters of all Swedes employed in the private sector are self-employed and almost one out of five works in a company with four employees or less. Only 0.32% of the labour force work in companies with 100 or more employees (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. **Size of privately-owned companies. Share by the number of employees.**

Source: Statistics Sweden.
1.1.4. Labour market participation and unemployment

The number of registered job seekers at the employment service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*) is at its lowest level since 2008, and unemployment rates have declined from approximately 8% at the end of 2014 to approximately 7% at the end of 2015. The employment service expects last year’s job growth to continue with an increase of 1.5% in 2016 (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2016a).

Despite the strong development of the Swedish economy and a relatively low unemployment rate, certain groups show continuous difficulties in establishing themselves on the labour market. Newly-arrived immigrants, people with disabilities and people with low skill levels and only lower secondary education make up more than half (53%) of all the unemployed group. Their chances of finding employment have also fallen according to a Public Employment Agency report (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2016b).

Among youth aged 15-24 years, 20.3% were unemployed in 2015 (12), down from 22% in 2014. Youth unemployment rates, however, include anyone who is available on the labour market in search of temporary jobs and therefore includes many students for whom education is their primary activity. As such, youth unemployment rates should be view with some caution.

The fact that young people become unemployed is often associated with their transition between school and working life. However, compared with other age groups, unemployed young people generally enjoy good opportunities to find employment. Yet, for certain groups of young people, e.g. those with incomplete grades from primary or secondary education and those born outside Europe, it often takes considerably longer to gain a firm foothold in the labour market than for young people on average (Regeringen, 2013a).

Completed upper secondary education is a necessity for employment in most cases. Students who have completed the third year are twice as likely find a job than those who have only completed one or two years of upper secondary education (Skolverket 2014c). The Employment Agency expects in their long term forecast that four upper secondary school VET-programmes are the most likely to lead to rapid employment: the building and construction, vehicle and transport, industrial technology and health and social care (Arbetsförmedlingen 2016a).

Students in male-dominated VET programmes are more likely than women to find a job one year after completed upper secondary education. Approximately half of the students educated in the male-dominated vehicle,

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(12) [http://www.sverigeisiffror.scb.se/arbetsloshet](http://www.sverigeisiffror.scb.se/arbetsloshet) [accessed 4.4.2017].
construction, as well as in the heating, ventilation and air conditioning sectors have found employment. The health care sector is the female-dominated sector with the highest share of graduates who have found employment after one year. Approximately one third of all students are employed one year after completing the health and social care programme. Women have both a weaker position in establishing themselves in the labour market and also are more likely to continue studying after completing an IVET education programme (Skolverket 2014c).

1.2. **Shortage of VET teachers**

A future shortage of teachers is anticipated (Skolinspektionen 2015; Skolverket 2015). In Statistics Sweden’s (2014) forecast of supply and demand for labour up to 2035, the demand for teachers is expected to increase. Statistics Sweden explain the increase in demand by a rise in the number of compulsory and upper secondary school students during the forecast period combined with an insufficient supply of qualified teachers. The shortage of qualified teachers is expected to be greatest for qualified vocational teachers (13) and for special needs teachers. The demand is estimated to exceed supply by over 30% by 2035. Table 2 shows Statistics Sweden’s estimate of supply and demand for vocational teachers.

**Figure 5. Supply and demand for VET-teachers 2012 and predicted for 2035**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2035</th>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2035</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2035</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2035</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number working as</td>
<td>12 650</td>
<td>12 820</td>
<td>Expected demand</td>
<td>13 900</td>
<td>9 400</td>
<td>4 500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocational teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for vocational</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply of vocational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teachers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expected supply</td>
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<td>of vocational</td>
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<td>teachers</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Expected shortage</td>
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<td>teachers</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: This shortage was estimated before the large number of migrants arrived in 2015.

Source: Data is collected from Statistics Sweden (2014b).

UKÄ (2015), the Swedish Higher Education Authority, has estimated the balance between the number of graduates and recruitment needs in various

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(13) For education and CPD of VET-teachers, see Section 2.7, ReferNet thematic article Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET (Cedefop 2016).
disciplinary areas if no changes occur in the numbers of HE entrants for the academic year 2015/16 (14). The three sectors with the highest expected shortage in the labour market are teachers, with vocational teachers being at the top of the list.

(14) See Figure 27, page 48 in the report.
CHAPTER 2.
Providing VET in a lifelong learning perspective

2.1. Diagramme of the Swedish education and training system

Figure 6  **VET in the Swedish education and training system**

NB: ISCED-P 2011. EQF levels have not yet been defined.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Sweden.
2.2. Historical development of VET in Sweden

Modern Swedish vocational education and training (VET) is, in some respects, shaped by its historical development. Views on the aim and role of education have historically oscillated between emphasising the development of generic skills and emphasising the importance of education in skills provision. The role of, and coordination between, the state and working life in the organisation and delivery of education have also changed over time. Issues regarding skills provision, both regionally and nationally, youth unemployment and a fluctuating economy are factors that strongly impact the focus of initiatives, as well as the previous and ongoing VET reforms.

In 1970 an integrated upper secondary school was introduced, in which vocational programmes lasted two years and the proportion of general education subjects increased in comparison with the former vocational schools. VET in the upper secondary school was intended to be introductory and only be completed when students became employees. In 1994, a course-based upper secondary school was introduced in which vocational and academically-oriented programmes resembled each other, but were divided between higher education preparatory and vocational preparatory programmes. Approximately one third of these educational programmes was made up of compulsory core subjects, which also provided basic eligibility to higher education for learners of both paths. In 2011 a reform of upper secondary education aimed to strengthen the preparedness of learners for either higher education or a VET, allowing learners to directly enter the labour market after successful completion. The time allocated for core subjects decreased in vocational education to approximately a quarter, and eligibility for tertiary education became elective.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) was established in 2009 and has been responsible since then for issues concerning ‘higher vocational education’ (yrkeshögskoleutbildning—YH) in Sweden.
2.3. Government-regulated VET provision

VET is provided at upper secondary and tertiary levels. Age 16, after 9 years of compulsory school, students have the right to proceed to one of the 12 existing vocational programmes (yrkesprogram) or to one of the 6 existing general higher education preparatory programmes (högskoleförberedande program) in the upper secondary school (gymnasieskola). Adults without upper secondary education who wish to change career paths can enrol in upper secondary VET courses in municipal adult education institutions (kommunal vuxenutbildning).

At tertiary level, there are higher vocational education programmes (yrkeshögskoleutbildningar) leading to first or second cycle VET qualifications. This applies to education for professions requiring specific knowledge or certification to work in the profession. Many of these programmes are in health care and agriculture as well as in the educational sectors.

2.3.1. Upper secondary VET

VET in upper secondary level consists of national vocational programmes that aim at preparing students for the labour market. Students in vocational programmes can attend either a ‘school-based education’ (skolförlagd utbildning) or ‘apprenticeship education’ (lärlingsutbildning) (15). The main difference between these two programmes is the proportion of workplace-based learning. Whereas apprentices need a minimum of 50% of WBL, the school-based learners have only a minimum of 15 week (approximately 15%) of WBL (see Section 2.3.1.7). Diploma goals, subject syllabuses and orientations as well as the admission and diploma requirements are the same in both types (see following sections).

Municipal adult education at upper secondary level aims at providing adults with knowledge up to a level corresponding to that provided by the upper secondary school. Nationally determined programmes do not exist in municipal adult education; instead courses are offered based on the needs and circumstances of the adult learner.

2.3.1.1. Programmes and structure

The vocational programmes in upper secondary school which are in general accessible to young people aged 16 to 20, last generally three years and cover a broad spectrum of vocational areas and vocational outcomes (see Annex 1).

(15) See Section 2.3.1.6 for more information.
Programme structure and courses are determined nationally. The scope of the courses is defined by 'upper secondary credits' (gymnasiepoäng). In conformity with ECVET points, these credits are not related to time but indicate the scope of the studies or effort required to attain the goals for a specific course. Upper secondary credits are applied in both general and vocational programmes and courses. All upper secondary programmes require 2 500 upper secondary credits.

Figure 7. General programme structure for vocational programmes in the upper secondary school.

Upper secondary compulsory subjects, called foundation subjects, are included in all programmes in the upper secondary school, but vary in scope between vocational programmes and higher education preparatory programmes. These subjects are English, history, physical education and health, mathematics, science studies, religion, social studies, and Swedish or Swedish as a second language (16). Vocational subjects and other subjects in a

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(16) A learner whose mother tongue is other than Swedish may include Swedish as a second language instead of Swedish within the compulsory (foundation) subjects.
vocational programme are determined nationally. However, schools can combine different courses in programme specialisations enabling students to focus their studies on a specific vocational outcome.

Due to modularised programmes, students in upper secondary VET may transfer one or more successfully completed courses to another programme at upper secondary level (including municipal education) when changing study path. With a few exceptions municipal adult education at upper secondary level provides the same courses, and this means that students can build further on their earlier studies and obtain a vocational diploma or gain a qualification in a new area.

Nationally-determined programmes do not exist in municipal adult education. Instead, students study one or more courses based on their specific needs and preconditions. An individual study plan is drawn up together with the student. This should also include information about the student’s educational goals and the planned scope of the studies.

2.3.1.2. Admission requirements

Admission requirements to upper secondary school differ between vocational programmes and higher education preparatory programmes (17). To be admitted to a vocational programme, students must have passing grades in the subjects Swedish, or Swedish as a second language, English, mathematics and five other compulsory school subjects. Requirements for admission to higher education preparatory programmes are higher, and as such require passing grades in nine other compulsory school subjects. Students in compulsory school, who have not achieved eligibility for a specific national programme, may attend one of the introduction programmes (see Section 2.2.1.2) to remedy this.

Municipal adult education at upper secondary level aims at strengthening and supporting adults in their learning. An adult is eligible to participate in upper secondary education if (s)he is resident in the country, lacks the knowledge which the education aims at providing, and also possesses the preconditions to satisfactorily complete the education (18). Students are eligible from the second half of the calendar year in which they reach the age of 20, or have completed a national programme in the upper secondary school or equivalent education. The latter applies, for example, to students holding a vocational diploma from

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(17) Chapter 16, Sections 30-31 in Education Act (Riksdagen, 2010a).
(18) Chapter 20, Section 20 in Education Act (Riksdagen, 2010a).
upper secondary school and wishing to study the courses required for entry to higher education. As mentioned in Section 2.3.1.1, a Government commission (Gymnasieutredningen) has been appointed to investigate how VET programmes can provide eligibility to tertiary education (Regeringen 2015b).

2.3.1.3. Progression paths

To access higher education there are general and, in some cases, specific entry requirements. In addition to obtaining a vocational diploma (see Section 2.3.1.5) students must have passing grades in Swedish or Swedish as a second language, English and mathematics to obtain basic eligibility for higher education. Specific entry requirements are necessary to access some higher education courses or programmes. For example, engineering courses require that a student has successfully completed a higher level of mathematics. All students in upper secondary school have the right within the scope of their programme, or by adding credits, to study the courses required for basic eligibility to higher education. Individuals who have completed upper secondary school without gaining basic eligibility also have the right to study the required courses within municipal adult education. In December 2015, the Government put forward proposals to extend this right to include the courses necessary to reach the specific entry requirements in some higher education programmes or higher vocational education. This extended adult education is proposed to take effect from 1 January 2017 (Regeringen, 2016). A Government commission (Gymnasieutredningen) was also launched in 2015 with one of its several aims being to examine how VET programmes can provide eligibility for tertiary education (Regeringen 2015b).

2.3.1.4. Alternative paths

Students who are not eligible for an upper secondary school national programme may apply for one of the five existing introductory programmes (introduktionsprogram). These programmes offer students an individually-adapted education, which satisfies their varying educational needs and provides clear educational paths. These paths may lead to entrance into the labour market, but also provide a foundation for further education by giving access to upper secondary programmes (Ministry of Education and Research, 2009). Depending on the type of the programme and the students’ performance, these programmes last from one up to three years. For example:

(a) the language introduction programme (Språkintroduktion) provides young immigrants who have recently arrived in the country with an
education where emphasis is placed on Swedish language training to enable them to progress to upper secondary school, or to other forms of education;
(b) in the vocational introduction programme (Yrkesintroduktion) students receive vocationally-oriented training which eases their access to the labour market, or which leads to studies in a vocational programme;
(c) the preparatory education programme (Preparandutbildning) covers compulsory school subjects in which the student did not achieve a passing grade and which are required for eligibility to a specific national programme;
(d) the individual options oriented programme (programinriktat individuellt val) that should be designed for a group of students who do not have all the passing grades required for a vocational programme; and
(e) the individual alternative (individuellt alternativ) programme is offered to students who should progress to the vocational introduction, to other forms of education or to the labour market. The individual alternative is designed for an individual student on the basis of student needs and their preconditions. The education should contain the compulsory school subjects for students who either do not have passing grades in whole courses or parts of courses in subjects typical of a programme and in foundation subjects. Other initiatives that are favourable for the student’s knowledge development should also be included in the education.

After nine years in compulsory school, students with learning disabilities have the right to four years of education in an upper secondary school programme for learners with intellectual disabilities (Gymnasiesärskola). Upper secondary schools for students with intellectual disabilities offer eight national programmes and individual programmes, and aim at preparing students for vocational life. In a similar manner special needs education for adults (Särskild utbildning för vuxna) is directed at adults with intellectual disabilities.

2.3.1.5. Diploma requirements
Upper secondary school vocational programmes lead to a vocational diploma (yrkesexamen). Under certain circumstances, a student in municipal adult education may also receive a vocational diploma. Requirements for a vocational diploma in the upper secondary school and in municipal adult education at upper secondary level are essentially the same with some exceptions.

A student in upper secondary school must accumulate 2 500 upper secondary credits. In municipal adult education, 2 400 upper secondary credits
are required. In both paths, 2 250 of these credits must be passed. Passing grades in Swedish or Swedish as a second language, English, mathematics, and a diploma project are required. The diploma project allows the students to demonstrate their ability to carry out recurring tasks in the vocational area. The teachers are responsible for assessing and approving both general and vocational courses. However, the vocational teacher is also responsible for passing the student's diploma project, however a co-assessor with experience from the vocational sector should also provide input for the final evaluation. Further requirements are imposed on students in upper secondary school and municipal adult education concerning which courses need to be passed to obtain a vocational diploma.

2.3.1.6. Validation
Within municipal adult education at upper secondary level, validation is possible within all courses and must be based on the student's preconditions and needs. Validation is defined in the Education Act (Skollagen) (Riksdagen, 2010a) as a process that involves a structured assessment, evaluation and documentation as well as recognition of an individual’s knowledge and skills regardless of how they were acquired. A student who has validated part of a course does not have to attend classes for that part of the course. The student’s knowledge may also be documented in a certificate.

The National Delegation for Validation was appointed in 2015 by the Swedish Government and consists of the social partners and national agency representatives (Utbildningsdepartementet 2015). Its task is to develop a strategy of coordinated development of validation on the national and regional level. This strategy is intended to contribute to a transparent and efficient system in which actors in the education system, labour market and the social partners cooperate. A report on coordinated development of validation will be presented to the Government in December 2019.

2.3.1.7. Work-based learning, including apprenticeships and work placements
Learning at one or several workplaces is possible in all upper secondary education. In the upper secondary school's vocational programmes, WBL or work based learning (arbetsplatsförlagt lärande, apl) is compulsory and covers a minimum of 15 weeks of the three-year education (approximately 15%) of WBL. Similarly, in all national programmes within upper secondary school for learners with intellectual disabilities a minimum of 22 weeks of workplace-based learning should be included. There are no upper limits. It is up to the schools in cooperation with the WBL-provider to decide which subject should be learnt.
during WBL. In adult education and higher education preparatory programmes WBL is not compulsory.

If more than half the learning takes place at a workplace, it is referred to as upper secondary apprenticeship education (lärlingsutbildning), and was introduced on a trial basis in 2008 and into the regular education system in 2011. Upper secondary apprenticeship education requires tripartite individual education contracts between the student (or, if under the age of 18, the student's guardian), the employer and the school. Apprenticeship education can also be found in upper secondary school for learners with intellectual disabilities, municipal adult education and special needs education for adults.

The content of work-based learning is governed by the same syllabuses as applicable to school-based education. A student participating in WBL has a trainer at the workplace who supervises and mentors the student (see Section 2.3.1.9). In the introduction programme, it is also possible to take part in learning at a workplace where there is no link to a syllabus. This is referred to as work placement (praktik).

2.3.1.8. Teaching, governance and working methods

Each subject in upper secondary school has a syllabus that has the same general structure (19). These syllabuses contain descriptions of the subject as a whole, its aim and long term goals as well as all courses included in the subject and their descriptions. Core content and knowledge requirements are specified for each course (20). In addition to what is laid down in the syllabuses, teachers choose methods, literature and the material they wish to use in their teaching.

The Swedish Government gives prominence to some specific cross-curricular topics in education which partly correspond to the European key competences (21). One of these is entrepreneurship. The Government has drawn up a national education strategy for entrepreneurship, in which initiatives support the development of entrepreneurship in upper secondary and higher education. These initiatives should aim at encouraging entrepreneurship in education at all levels. Another recently initiated cross-curricular topic is the development of a national ICT-strategy for education to promote digital

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(19) A detailed description of the structure of subject syllabuses is found in ‘Upper secondary school 2011’ (pages 47-54), (Skolverket, 2012).

(20) The goals are expressed in terms of students ‘ability to’, ‘knowledge about’, ‘understanding of’ and ‘skills in’ and knowledge requirements are formulated using active verbs following a learning outcome-based approach.

(21) See the ReferNet thematic article on key competences (Cedefop, forthcoming).
competence. The Government tasked the National Agency for Education in September 2015 to analyse and, if necessary, propose changes in the curricula, subject syllabuses and diploma goals for IVET in upper secondary school and adult education to enhance learners’ digital competence. The proposal was presented to the Government in June 2016.

Another transversal competence included in the curricula for IVET in upper secondary school and adult education is cultural expression. If relevant to the sector, it is also included in diploma goals and as a specific learning outcome. In order to further highlight the importance of aesthetics and creativity the Swedish Government has appointed a national commission (Gymnasieutredningen) that, among other aspects, will analyse how an aesthetics module or subject could be included in all upper secondary school programmes, including VET-programmes (see also Section 3.1.1).

2.3.1.9. Teachers and trainers

Teacher in upper secondary vocational education (upper secondary school and municipal adult education) need to have a higher education degree in vocational education (yrkeslärarexamen); they can obtain it by studying 1.5 years in a vocational teacher training programme at a university college or university (22). However, it is necessary to have advanced (see Section 2.3.2.2) and relevant vocational knowledge or post-secondary education in the vocational field to be admitted to the programme. In addition, basic eligibility for studies in higher education is a requirement. A person who is already working as a vocational teacher but lacks a degree in vocational education only needs to study one year at a university college or university. Vocational teacher education comprises the core of education methodology, namely general teaching knowledge and skills, and also practical supervised training at a school (verksamhetsförlagd utbildning, VFU).

Furthermore, teaching certification is required, demonstrating that the teacher is qualified to teach the subjects. The National Agency for Education determines that a teacher is qualified on the basis of the teacher's degree. However, due to the lack of qualified teachers, teachers in vocational subjects are exempted from this requirement. Nevertheless, application for teacher registration may be made if a person has a vocational teacher's degree. Even though there may be no requirement for certification, schools should give priority to certified teachers when employing. The Government has, however, in

(22) See also the ReferNet thematic article Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET (Cedefop, 2016).
its budget proposal for 2016, signalled that its intention is to increase the attractiveness and quality of IVET, and that one measure in the future, is to introduce a certificate requirement for VET-teachers.

A trainer must be appointed when teaching is provided at a workplace. The trainer is the contact person for the school and provides support for the student at the workplace. There are no formal requirements for becoming a trainer. Those who have the necessary knowledge and experience and are also considered to be suitable can become trainers. There is an increased focus on the important role of the trainer in delivering high quality work based learning. A web-based course with an introductory general module for workplace trainers was launched in 2014 (23). This was followed up at the beginning of 2015 by a supplementary module that specifically addresses apprenticeship education and in late 2016 by a module in English and other languages for trainers of students who do their WBL abroad. The course is not obligatory but workplaces that train apprentices can receive an additional financial support if their trainer has participated in a training programme approved by the National Agency for Education.

2.3.1.10. Governing bodies and funding

Education in the Swedish school system falls within the remit of municipalities, county councils and the state who are responsible for funding and used to be the sole provider of education, with a few exceptions. Municipalities fund and provide all upper secondary education. They also fund all adult upper secondary education, but usually source out the education to providers, public or private, on an education market. Regions provide some upper secondary education programmes, primarily in the natural resources area, but the funding is provided by the municipalities. The state funds higher vocational education through the Swedish Agency for higher vocational education, but does not provide VET-education. The state also provides state grants to most municipalities and individual schools, public or private, to guarantee equity and equality in education.

In addition to these public governing bodies (24), private players may also be approved as governing bodies and run independent upper secondary schools (fristående gymnasieskolor). The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen) approves independent schools. Independent schools are

(23) http://aplhandledare.skolverket.se [accessed 4.4.2017].
(24) The governing body (skolhuvudman) is the authority or organisation (private company, foundation, NGO) that is responsible for one or several schools.
regulated by the same governing documents as municipal schools (see also Section 3.1.1). Municipalities may outsource tasks such as training to private VET providers.

Municipal and central government tax revenues provide the funding for the public school system. Independent schools at upper secondary level are also entirely financed from public funds. The major part of school funding comes from municipal tax revenues, but parts also come from general central government grants to municipalities. All municipalities are guaranteed equivalent financial conditions in accordance with a special equalisation system. The general central government grant is therefore based on a number of different parameters such as population, population structure, social structure and the number of immigrants. Each municipality determines how it will allocate resources as this general central government grant is not earmarked and is supplemented by targeted central government grants for specific initiatives, such as, apprenticeship education, adult vocational education (see Section 4.2.2), and projects to develop the quality of work based learning.

Costs per student place may consequently vary between schools and municipalities. In 2014 the average cost of a student in upper secondary school was about 11 830 Euros (25), a 2.3% increase in one year, or an 8.2% increase compared to 2012. There are, however, considerable differences in costs between the different programmes with vocational programmes being both the most diverse, and also on the more expensive end of the spectrum. The National Agency for Education has developed a system of calculating how much a student should cost on average for a particular programme. This system is used by municipalities when financing education in independent schools (26). The most expensive programme costs twice as much as the least expensive (see Figure 6, below).


Regardless of who the governing body is, both upper secondary school and municipal adult education at upper secondary level are free of charge. In adult education, however, students must pay for their teaching materials themselves.

2.3.1.11. Participation

In the autumn of 2016 there were 343,911 students in an upper secondary school, out of these 283,723 were in a national programme (excluding introduction programmes), and out of these 94,232 were studying VET \(^{(27)}\). Over the last few years the number and proportion of apprentices has increased to 9,398, so 10% of the VET-students \(^{(28)}\).

The vast majority of students (98%) continue to upper secondary school after nine years of compulsory school. The share of VET students who attended the first year in upper secondary school has decreased over the past few years and accounted for 27.4% in the 2014/15 school year. Preliminary statistics for the 2015/16 school year show that this trend continues and that the proportion of students in the first year of vocational programmes is slightly less than 26%.


\(^{(28)}\) Apprentice Center, the National Agency for Education.
Figure 9, below, indicates that almost all VET-programmes (except the health and social care as well as the vehicle and transport programme) have declined between 2011 and 2015, with the sharpest decline in programmes education for restaurant management, handicraft, and construction sectors.

**Figure 9. Students in year 1, school 2011/12 and 2015/16, distribution by vocational programme**

The same preliminary statistics show that around one fifth (20%) of the students are not eligible (29) for any of the national programmes in upper secondary school and thus attend one of the five introductory programmes (Skolverket, 2014b).

In 2015, 215 000 people, or 3.7% of the population between the age of 20 and 64, studied in municipal adult education, 81.5% among them were at upper secondary level in 2015. The number of students in municipal adult education

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(29) For example, to be admitted to a vocational programme, students must have passing grades in the subjects of Swedish, or Swedish as a second language, English, mathematics and five other compulsory school subjects (see also Section 2.2.1.2).
varies from year to year, depending on the labour market situation and state initiatives among other factors (Skolverket, 2014a).

2.3.2. Tertiary VET
Most tertiary VET programmes are provided by universities of applied science (yrkeshögskolan) in close cooperation with employers and industry. Distinct higher VET programmes exist in arts and culture, for interpreters and other occupations (see Section 2.2.2.9 above). Various education providers offer tertiary VET such as private training companies, municipalities, counties or universities. All education providers must have a permit to operate on higher vocational education granted by the Swedish agency for higher vocational education.

2.3.2.1. Programmes and structure
Higher vocational education is based on the needs of the labour market and thus offered in specific fields where an explicit demand for competence exists. Most programmes cover two years of full-time studies, but they may also be just six months or longer. The length of the education is specified in higher vocational education credits (yrkeshögskolepoäng) where five credits correspond to one week of full-time studies. Consequently 100 credits are equivalent to six months’ full-time studies, 200 credits to full-time studies over a year, 400 credits to two years’ full-time studies etc. Higher vocational education should be developed and delivered in close cooperation with working life representatives and education providers (30). The programmes consist of several courses, in accordance with an education plan drawn up by the education providers (see also Section 3.1.1). Currently, learners can chose a programme in 15 different fields, offered in more than 100 vocations (31).

Approximately 90 % of the programmes in higher vocational education also offer training in Swedish specific to the vocational field as additional support. Target groups are students with a mother tongue other than Swedish. Swedish is thus integrated with regular teaching. For a programme to be approved by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan), it must satisfy the skill needs of the labour market (see Sections 3.1.1.2) (Riksdagen, 1992; amendment SFS 2012:490). This means

(30) Chapter 1, Section 6 in of the Act on Higher Vocational Education Act (Riksdagen, 2009).
that content and focus varies. These programmes should also aim at developing or maintaining professional skills in a narrow vocational area, skills which are of importance to the individual and to society.

2.3.2.2. Admission requirements
To be eligible for higher vocational education the applicant must hold a diploma from upper secondary school or from municipal adult education. Many education programmes also impose specific entry requirements including, for example, credit for specific courses in upper secondary school or work experience in the field. The VET provider decides on specific entry requirements. The provider may also declare an applicant eligible following what is known as an open assessment of qualifications, by which his/her capabilities to fulfil the programme requirements and to practise the profession to be acquired have been assessed and considered adequate, despite not fulfilling general and/or specific entry requirements.

The higher vocational education graduate receives a diploma in higher vocational education (yrkeshögskoleexamen) if the student has received at least the lowest passing grade in all courses in the programme, knowledge, skills and competences at a SeQF Level 5, and has accumulated at least 200 higher vocational education credits. The graduate receives an advanced diploma in higher vocational education (kvalificerad yrkeshögskoleexamen) if the student has received the lowest passing grade in all courses included in the programme, knowledge, skills, and competences at a SeQF Level 6 and has accumulated at least 400 higher vocational education credits and has completed a diploma project. A minimum of 25% workplace training must also have been included in the programme (32) (Regeringen 2009).

In August 2015, the Ministry of Education presented a memorandum (En stärkt yrkeshögskola – ett lyft för kunskap) (Regeringen 2015c) proposing, among other things, ways to strengthen WBL in higher vocational VET programmes and developing flexibility in accessing the programmes. As a consequence of the latter, the Agency for Higher Vocational Education has been tasked to analyse if partial qualifications or stand-alone courses could be introduced as a complement to the higher VET programmes leading to full qualifications. Also the Agency will, in cooperation with the social partners, analyse and suggest whether more uniform eligibility criteria for certain sectors

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(32) Ordinance on Higher Vocational Education §13-14.
should be introduced. Today each VET provider decides on specific requirements to enter their programmes.

2.3.2.3. **Validation**

Within higher vocational education, validation may be used to provide a basis for decisions regarding admission to programmes. Knowledge, skills and competences acquired through training, job experience or otherwise may also be validated and recognised as part of a programme. The education provider is responsible for the validation process.

A recent policy measure is reflected in the Swedish Government decision in November 2015 to establish a National Delegation for Validation. Its task is to follow and support the coordinated development of validation on national and regional levels over four years (2015-19). The Delegation has 15 members representing trade unions, employers’ associations and national authorities (see also validation in upper secondary school-level, Section 2.2.1.5).

2.3.2.4. **Learning at workplaces (LIA)**

All education in higher vocational education combine school-based learning in a work environment (Lärande i arbetslivet – LIA). At the beginning of 2016, the Government decided on changes in the Higher Vocational Education Ordinance (Förordning om yrkeshögskolan) strengthening the education providers' responsibility for LIA. As from April 2016 VET providers in higher vocational education have to make sure that there are sufficient, relevant and high quality work placements. The training must be organised as an integrated part of the programme and its main purpose is to make it possible for the student to connect theoretical and practical knowledge by creating a real life educational setting. In advanced higher vocational education, at least one quarter of the education period must be carried out as LIA. By means of LIA, students are given the opportunity to obtain solid working life experience, and to make contacts which may lead to work after graduation. As in other courses, education providers must draw up a syllabus for LIA. This will show the goals students are expected to achieve, and how education providers evaluate knowledge, skills and competences. The goals of a LIA course must be formulated so that they contribute to the overall education goals and qualifications required for future professional roles.

2.3.2.5. **Teaching, governance and working methods**

One important element in higher vocational education is students' involvement in and their opportunities to influence the structure and delivery of the
Each programme must have a plan to ensure this is achieved\(^{(34)}\). Teaching and teaching materials are determined by the governing group of the education provider, who is also responsible for carrying out systematic quality monitoring\(^{(35)}\). Employers and industry contribute to and influence programme content by participating as lecturers, joining in projects, hosting study visits and offering work placements. In higher vocational education, education must also contribute to developing student competences in entrepreneurship. Higher vocational education may also be run in the form of distance courses.

In the learning centres (lärcentra), run by municipalities, trade unions, adult education associations and other organisations, students have access to guidance and counselling, premises and technical facilities such as computers connected to the Internet, video conferencing, copying as well as examination possibilities. Learning centres are open to adult learners in all types of education: higher education, higher vocational education, municipal adult education (see Section 2.2.1) and liberal adult education (see Section 2.3.2).

\subsection*{2.3.2.6. Teachers and trainers}
There are no formal teaching degree requirements for teachers in higher vocational education. The teachers must, however, possess good or very good knowledge and experience in their given field. The Higher Vocational Education Act\(^{(36)}\) sets out the requirements: “The persons engaged by the education provider in teaching or supervision shall, by training or experience, possess the skills for the training they will conduct”. Many teachers are recruited directly from the workplace. Some of them have long experience in teaching; others have little or no teaching experience. It is the responsibility of the education provider and the governing group to support teachers in their work.

\subsection*{2.3.2.7. Governing bodies and funding}
Higher Vocational Education programmes may be organised by state higher education institutions, municipalities, county councils and individuals or legal entities. These programmes are partially financed through public funding and partially by employers. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational

\(^{(33)}\) Chapter 14, Section 7 (Regeringen, 2009).
\(^{(34)}\) Chapter 2, Section 7 (Regeringen, 2009).
\(^{(35)}\) Chapter 4, Section 2 (Regeringen, 2009).
\(^{(36)}\) Chapter 1, Section 12 (Riksdagen, 2009).
Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) approves and allocates state grants in response to applications from education providers (37). A programme that has been approved may be offered a limited number of times as determined by the agency. Then a new application must be made to the agency to ensure that the competences provided by the programme meet the needs of the labour market. The provider has the right to charge a fee for studies with the approval of the agency (38). Students who attend publicly-funded programmes are also eligible for student aid (see also Section 4.2.1.2).

2.3.2.8. Participation

In 2015 there were 46,400 students in higher vocational education and advanced vocational education, an increase of 4% in one year and of 14% since 2012. Most students in 2015 are found in the ICT, finance, administration and sales, healthcare, construction fields and in technology and manufacturing (Myndigheten för Yrkeshögskolan, 2016).

2.3.2.9. Other forms of government-regulated education

The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) is also responsible for arts and culture education (Konst- och kulturutbildningar) and interpretation education (Tolkutbildningar). Arts and culture education is a new form of tertiary education launched in 2015. Many of the courses in arts and culture education are preparatory for academic cultural courses, whereas others are tertiary vocational courses preparing for employment in dance, design or music areas. The interpretation education programme is a vocational education at tertiary level and ranges from one to four years.

Education programmes geared to specific job positions (statliga befattningsutbildningar) are provided by different authorities such as Swedish Armed Forces (Försvarsmakten), the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap, MSB), the Swedish Police (Polisen), and Swedish Customs (Tullverket). For these programmes, different financing systems are applied. Some provide entitlement to student aid while others are provided for employees. In the latter case costs are usually covered by the employer and training may take place during working hours.

(37) Chapter 1, Section 7 (Riksdagen, 2009).
(38) Chapter 1, Section 4 (Regeringen, 2009).
2.4. Other forms of VET

There are many other players providing both initial and advanced VET. In most cases this relates to non-formal education arranged by private education companies and labour market partners. Training is financed through fees or by companies and organisations, but public grants are also provided. Even though these forms of VET are not part of government-regulated VET provision, providers may, as of January 2016, affiliate their qualifications to the Swedish national qualifications framework, SeQF.

2.4.1. Education in working life

Issues concerning competence development or training at the workplace are often regulated in agreements between the labour market partners, either nationally or locally. In some areas, the labour market partners cooperate in vocational boards (yrkesnämnder) and competence councils (kompetensråd). They may be responsible for deciding on apprenticeship periods, carrying out trade and journeyman examinations and issuing trade certificates. Industry organisations also develop validation models for professions within their industry. These models can be used to meet the industry’s skills needs, or to enhance an individual's employability or capacity to run their own business.

On completion of upper secondary education VET some industries require a so called 'completing-education period' (färdigutbildning) before the person can take trade or journeyman examinations or receive a trade certificate. This period consists of a work placement or apprenticeship. Individuals not holding an upper secondary qualification in the sector may receive all their training as an apprentice in a company. Duration varies depending on the profession, but can be up to five years. Salaries are often lower, both for those who are engaged in their ‘completing-education period’ and company apprentices.

For the past few years employer and employee organisations in several sectors have signed work introduction agreements (yrkesintroduktionsanställningar). They aim at facilitating young (15-24 years of age) people's transition from school to working life and safeguarding long-term skills supply for companies. Most of these agreements are based on the principle that employers offer young people who are lacking professional experience coaching and training during part of their working time. Normally the young person will hold a full-time position but the salary will amount to 75% of a full-time job as part of the time will consist of vocational training. Training content has to be clearly defined and a supervising trainer appointed by the enterprise. Interest in such positions has increased slowly since the introduction of financial incentives at the beginning of 2014. From its inception up to Mars 2016, a total
of around 2,100 applications for financial support for work introduction agreements have been granted (Konkurrensverket 2016). From 1 June 2016 the introduction agreements are also be open to long term unemployed people and newly arrived immigrants (39) (see Section 4.2.2 on financial incentives).

Companies fully or partially cover the cost of continuous professional development (CPD) of staff. Staff training can take place either during or outside working hours. This may cover participating in education, conferences, seminars and workshops, and also the introduction of new work tasks and self-study. In 2012, 70% of employees aged 16–64 took part in some form of staff training. The most common training inputs were found in public sectors and education fields in which more than 80% of staff had taken part in CPD. The lowest degree of participation was in agriculture, forestry and fishing, in which one third of the employees had participated in CPD during the year (Statistics Sweden, 2015).

2.4.2. Liberal (non-formal) adult education

Sweden has a long tradition of liberal adult education (folkbildning), a type of non-formal learning which is typified by being ‘free and voluntary’, offered outside the school system. Liberal adult education covers education in folk high schools (folkhögskolor) and adult education associations (studieförbund) that are not restricted to state-determined curricula or syllabuses. Each folk high school or adult education association decides on the content and organisation of their own educational offerings.

2.4.2.1. Structure and orientation

The folk high schools provide shorter and longer special courses. One to three year VET programmes are special courses for specific professions, e.g. journalist, recreation leader, treatment assistant, cantor or sign language interpreter. Both shorter and longer courses in crafts as well as art, music and drama are also common. Some vocational education is at post-secondary level and has special admission requirements, while others are at upper secondary level.

Adult education associations mainly provide shorter and longer study circles (studiecirkel) (40) across a very broad area. Programmes in truck driving


(40) The study circle (studiecirkel) is the most important form of study in the study associations and has a strong participatory approach. In a study circle, a small group meets to learn together based on a study plan with a study circle leader.
and bookkeeping are examples of vocationally-oriented study circles, which are often provided in the evenings or at weekends. One policy measure within the framework of liberal adult education is VET courses or programmes for long-term unemployed people aged 25 to 64 which are offered by the Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet) in cooperation with the employment service. The duration of these programmes could be maximum of two years and should be offered in sectors where there is a lack of skilled labour.

2.4.2.2. Providers and financing

Today there are approximately 150 folk high schools (folkhögskolor) in Sweden. The majority of these are run by non-governmental organisations, non-commercial organisations, foundations or associations, but county councils and regions can also be their governing bodies. The 10 largest adult education associations are also run by non-governmental organisations, associations and other organisations. Study circles and other activities are often provided by local or regional associations.

Liberal adult education is largely financed through support from the state, regions and municipalities. State support makes up around 70% of the grants to adult education associations and to folk high schools. Conditions for state grants to folk high schools and adult education associations are regulated in the State Grants for Adult Education Ordinance (förordningen om statsbidrag till folkbildningen) (Regeringen, 1991). The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet), a non-profit association, has been tasked by the Government to distribute grants, and also follow up and evaluate activities. Tuition in folk high schools is free of charge and in certain cases gives the right to student aid (see Section 4.2.1.2). However, participants are required to pay for course literature, study material, lunch and possible residential costs. Study circles and other activities run by adult education associations are subject to fees and do not qualify for student aid.

2.4.3. Labour market policy programmes

The Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) is responsible for a number of different activities and programmes aimed at strengthening the individual’s opportunities to obtain or keep a job. Programmes are regulated through the Labour Market Policy Programmes Act (lagen om arbetsmarknadspolitiska program) (Riksdagen, 2000) and the Labour Market Policy Programmes Ordinance (förordningen om arbetsmarknadspolitiska...
program) (Regeringen, 2000a). Several of the programmes consist of vocationally-oriented education or various forms of work placement.

2.4.3.1. **Structure and orientation**

Labour market training (arbetsmarknadsutbildning) is a form of vocationally-oriented training. The training aims at strengthening the individual's opportunities to obtain or keep a job, and also make it easier for employers to obtain the labour they need with the necessary competence. Unemployed people are offered training in professions where there is a shortage of labour to encourage economic growth. Labour market training usually lasts for a maximum of six months, or three months for young people under the job guarantee for youth.

In June 2015, the Government adopted a new ordinance on education contracts (Regeringen 2015d), agreements between young people, the employment services and the home municipality. They encourage unemployed young people aged 20-24 lacking an upper secondary qualification to start or return to studies to acquire an upper secondary qualification. Studies within the education contract can be combined with work or practical work experience. According to the regulations the Public Employment Service has to establish local cooperation agreements with the municipalities. This local agreement should include a mapping and analysis of the scope of youth unemployment and the needs of the young people concerned.

The 16 to 24 year olds who have been unemployed for three months are eligible for the job guarantee for youth. The purpose of this job guarantee is to offer young people individual employment measures at an early stage in order for them to get a job or begin or resume education as quickly as possible. The job guarantee for youth was launched in 2007, but has been revised and today is part of the Swedish strategies to implement the Youth Guarantee and made available through the employment service. Activities include, early activation measures such as enhanced support and placement assistance, study motivation courses, education or work experience.

While the VET part of work introduction agreement jobs (Section 2.3.1) mostly takes place in the workplace, VET in ‘trainee jobs’ is part of the educational system and was introduced in 2015 (Regeringen 2015e). ‘Trainee jobs’ are established as the outcome of a labour market policy targeting areas in the public welfare sector and combines work with VET at upper secondary level. Trainee jobs are open to young people (20-25 years of age) who have been unemployed for at least three months and who are studying at least 25% of their time. The programme is also open to those over the age of 25 who have
been unemployed for the last 12-month period, and to groups of newly arrived immigrants (Riksdagen 2010b). See also Section 4.2.2 concerning financial incentives.

Job traineeships (arbetspraktik) aim to provide job seekers with practical experience in a profession or a vocational orientation while retaining and strengthening vocational competence. Under supervision, job traineeships may also be used as preparation prior to starting up a company. Job traineeships may last for a maximum of six months.

2.4.3.2. Providers and financing
Labour market training is procured by the employment service and provided by a number of different players such as industry organisations and companies, as well as by education providers in municipal adult education and higher vocational education. Companies that need to recruit employees can arrange job traineeships. Practical skills development is offered by private and public employers, and also by non-commercial organisations. Those taking part in labour market training receive activity support paid by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan).

2.4.3.3. Participation
Slightly more than 43,600 individuals took part in labour market training some time in 2013, an increase of 9.7% compared to the previous year (Statistics Sweden 2014c).

Traditional gender divisions are evident in these labour market programmes. Among women, training is most extensive in the care and healthcare, services and administration fields. Among men, most participate in labour market training in areas such as construction, manufacturing, and transportation. Six of ten participants are men (ibid).

2.4.4. Private VET
There are many private companies and other organisations providing VET. This may involve short courses for a couple of days all along the spectrum to longer programmes of one to two years, and cover a number of different vocational areas. There is no state regulation or quality assurance for these education programmes. In some cases, however, the training input may be approved by an industry organisation and may lead to the student taking a journeyman or final examination. Successful completion of some programmes, allow the learner to acquire a qualification or diploma. Fees are paid by the individual or
the employer if the training is provided as part of a competence development measure (see also Section 2.3.1.1).
CHAPTER 3.
Shaping VET qualifications

VET is of great importance for securing national skills provision. Two prioritised development areas for Swedish VET are its quality, and structured cooperation between education and working life when drawing up qualifications.

In contrast to many other countries in Europe, there are few state-regulated professions in Sweden. As evident from Section 2.3.1, various forms of industrial certification occur in certain areas. State authorities can also lay down clearly-stated recommendations about the knowledge and competences necessary to work in a given area (41). Responsibility for regulating formal vocational education ultimately lies with the Parliament and the Government. The Ministry of Education and Research (Utbildningsdepartementet) is responsible for most education, and in terms of VET, this covers upper secondary school, adult education and higher vocational education (see Section 2.2).

3.1. Governance and quality assurance

The extent to which the state governs the goals and contents of formal VET varies between different education forms. The table below shows the different various responsibilities of agencies and governing bodies for controlling VET provision and assuring its quality.

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(41) For example, the National Swedish Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) sets their guidelines in the ‘Basic knowledge of for staff working with care of the elderly in the social services’ for the staff employees working in this area (Socialstyrelsen, 2011).
3.1.1. Governance of goals and contents

Upper secondary school and municipal adult education are regulated through the Education Act (Riksdagen, 2010a), the Upper Secondary School Ordinance (Regeringen, 2010b) and the Adult Education Ordinance (Regeringen, 2011a). The Education Act contains general provisions that are applicable to all types and levels of education from pre-school to adult education as well as the basic provisions for these different education types and levels. These provisions are made more specific in their respective ordinances. Similarly, higher vocational education is regulated through the Higher Vocational Education Act (Riksdagen, 2009) and the Higher Vocational Education Ordinance (Regeringen, 2009).

### 3.1.1.1. Upper secondary VET

The most recent upper secondary school reform carried out in the autumn of 2011 was preceded by a Government Commission into Upper Secondary School (Gymnasieutredningen) (Regeringen, 2007). The Commission drew up proposals for vocational programmes based on statistics available about upper secondary school and graduates’ labour market transition, and also through discussions with industry representatives and the social partners (see also Section 3.2.1). In a similar manner, consultations with representatives from working life have been an important part of the work of reforming the upper secondary programmes for learners with intellectual disabilities which was launched in 2013. In 2014 a new Government Commission (Yrkesprogramsutredningen) was appointed with the task of proposing further development of the upper secondary vocational programmes. The Commission has analysed how to further develop the involvement of the social partners and employers in VET provision by, for example, developing regional support
structures and shifting the main responsibility for IVET (both school based and apprenticeships schemes) education from school to the social partners and workplaces. The proposals (Välja Yrke) were presented to the Government in November 2015 but no further decisions have been taken (Regeringen 2015f).

One suggested reason for the decline in VET has been that, since 2011, vocational upper secondary education does not provide automatic eligibility to tertiary education (see Section 2.2). Another Government Commission (Gymnasieutredningen) was launched in 2015 which included the aims of studying how VET programmes can provide eligibility for tertiary education and analysing if it is necessary to adjust the upper secondary programmes and orientations (Regeringen 2015b).

Governing documents in the form of curricula, diploma goals and syllabuses are drawn up by the Swedish Government and by the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) (42). Fundamental values and tasks, as well as goals and guidelines for upper secondary school and municipal adult education are described in the curricula. The upper secondary school has diploma goals that guide education and teaching in the different vocational programmes. The syllabuses describe the aim and long-term goals of the subject, and the core contents and knowledge requirements (43) for each of the courses (see also Section 2.2.1). Drawing up of governing documents takes place in close collaboration with different actors and stakeholder groups, such as teachers and researchers, industry representatives and the social partners (see also Section 3.2.1). Consultation rounds and open consultation through meetings and websites are examples of methods used to collect views and proposals. Governing bodies have the opportunity to deviate from the national vocational programmes by applying for special variation courses (särskilda varianter) or education open to nationwide admission (riksrekryterande utbildningar). Special variation courses are courses that can be included in the programme that differ somewhat from nationally determined programme structures (see also Section 2.2.1) to enable local or regional labour market needs to be met. Programmes open to nationwide admission may be relevant where there is a national interest in admitting students from all parts of the


(43) Learning outcomes are expressed as the pupils students’ ‘ability to’, ‘knowledge about’, ‘understanding of’ and ‘skills in’. Knowledge requirements relate to these outcomes and are expressed using active verbs.
country. These deviations, however, should always be quality assured and approved by the National Agency for Education (Skolverket).

3.1.1.2. **Tertiary VET**

In accordance with legislation and within the restrictions of funding allocations for higher vocational education programmes (yrkeshögskoleutbildningar) the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) independently determines, following an application procedure, the programmes to be included as higher vocational education.

In contrast to upper secondary vocational education, the education providers draw up the programmes in higher vocational education. The goals and orientation of the education and training programmes are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competences which students are to have attained on completion. Information about the courses included and assessment criteria must also be given. In their applications, education providers also include information about the companies or organisations which have actively participated in developing and planning the programme.

Programmes in higher vocational education must correspond to the needs of the labour market. For this reason, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) analyses and collects information about the skills in short supply in different industries and regions. The information is then used, together with the VET provider's application, as a basis for assessing the programmes that are to be available in higher vocational education. External stakeholders such as employers and industry organisations, as well as central and regional authorities, also play an important contributory role in supplying information to the assessment and decision-making processes. The qualification demands imposed by employers and industries thus determine the programmes to be approved, where in Sweden they are offered and how many study places each programme is allocated.

For education and training programmes that require nationally equivalent content, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education issues regulations on which knowledge, skills and competences all students must have attained on completion.

3.1.1.3. **Qualifications outside the formal education system**

An ordinance (Regeringen 2015g) was put in place in August 2015 which allows for qualification awarding bodies outside the formal education system to have their qualifications assessed and placed at a level within the National
Qualifications Framework, SeQF, by submitting an application to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (44).

3.1.2. Quality assurance

The governing body or education provider bears the primary responsibility for carrying out systematic quality monitoring. In order to ensure equivalence and good quality in education and training, the State regularly inspects and monitors quality. Other forms of education also funded through state grants are regularly followed up (see Section 2.3.2).

3.1.2.1. Upper secondary VET

Responsibility for supervision and quality auditing of both upper secondary school and municipal adult education rests with the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen). Regular supervision of schools is carried out on the basis of a number of assessment areas and points, whilst quality auditing follows up a specific area. Vocational education, and especially apprenticeship education, is very much in focus within both regular supervision and quality auditing. Structured cooperation between education providers and the workplace has shown to be an important factor for success in work based learning.

Even though the education providers are responsible for carrying out systematic quality monitoring, the Government supports and stimulates the development of quality in VET via different initiatives and specific funding schemes. This may include specific tasks delegated to the Swedish National Agency, for example, to develop guidelines for work based learning. Also, the Government has decided on an extensive funding scheme consisting of grants to schools wishing to develop the quality of work based learning.

3.1.2.2. Tertiary VET

Programmes in higher vocational education are supervised by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) through inspections and quality auditing. Programmes are checked for compliance with existing legislation and other provisions. The Agency performs three different types of inspections: introductory, regular and ad-hoc inspections following up particular issues or problems.

Introductory inspection is carried out for new programmes that start or have just started. The aim of such inspection is to determine whether there are the preconditions in place to delivering new, good quality programmes. Ad-hoc inspections are carried out if there are complaints about the education itself or the education provider from a student. The ad-hoc inspections only examine the complaint area.

3.1.2.3. **Qualifications outside the formal education system**
Bodies outside the formal education system to have their qualifications placed in the National Qualifications Framework, they must apply systematic quality assurance processes in their education programmes. Their quality assurance process must be described in their application according to the EQAVET system.

3.2. **Cooperation with employers**
Cooperation between education and working life, both nationally and locally, is important in creating relevant VET. The reform of the Swedish upper secondary school in 2011 emphasised this.

3.2.1. **National cooperation**
There are structured forms for cooperation between the national authorities responsible for education, and representatives of the social partners, industries and other authorities in upper secondary vocational education as well as in higher vocational education.

3.2.1.1. **Upper secondary education: national programme councils**
At the national level there are 12 National Programme Councils (*nationella programråd*), one for each of the national vocational programmes in the upper secondary school, and also one for the dancing programme, and one for the fourth year of the technology programme (see also Appendix 1). These councils are permanent fora for dialogue between the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) and stakeholders concerning the quality, content and organisation of VET. They have 6-10 representatives from industry, the social partners, and some national or regional authorities. The National Agency for Education prepares and leads the meetings of these councils, which are held about six times a year.

The National Programme Councils are advisory bodies that are tasked to support the National Agency for Education concerning upper secondary VET
issues. Their contribution should make education and training more flexible and sensitive to the needs of stakeholders and complement initiatives from school governing bodies to improve matching between VET provision and labour market demand.

Current issues for the National Programme Councils cover contents of syllabuses and courses, information material for students, in-service training for vocational teachers, education contracts for apprentices, assessment of national need for nationally open admission to vocational education (see Section 3.1.1.1), vocational education for adults, and also analyses of labour market needs.

3.2.1.2. **Tertiary VET: Labour Market Council**
The Labour Market Council (*arbetsmarknadsråd*) is a special body linked to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*). The task of the Council is to support the Authority with information about the labour market: the vocational areas under development, the new qualifications that may be required, and the qualifications that need to be phased out. The members of the council, which is chaired by the head of the Agency, are representatives of the Public Employment Service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*) and the social partners. The Council also functions as a channel to their respective organisations in terms of synchronising the Agency's analyses.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has initiated work on developing networks for different industrial areas, such as green industry, community building, health care and also wellness care. Meetings also take place with different representative organisations for the purpose of identifying the needs and demands of each vocational area.

### 3.2.2. **Local and regional cooperation**
Governing bodies and education providers operate different forms of cooperation with local companies and other organisations. This cooperation is regulated to some extent through laws and other provisions and also takes place on the initiative of local and regional industries.

#### 3.2.2.1. **Cooperation in upper secondary vocational education**
There must be one or several local programme councils (*lokala programråd*) for cooperation between school and working life for all vocational programmes in
every upper secondary school. How these councils are organised and what their tasks are, is not regulated (45). Possible tasks could be, for instance, assisting the provider in arranging places for work-based learning, and participating in organising and assessing diploma projects (see Section 2.2.2).

One requirement for receiving a state grant in adult vocational education and apprenticeship education for adults (see Section 4.2.2) is that the education is planned together with the Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) and with companies, organisations or other stakeholders active in the industries the education relates to.

3.2.2.2. Cooperation in higher vocational education
As evident from Section 3.1 above, higher VET must be developed and run in close cooperation with working life and education providers. Every education provider utilised must appoint a steering committee for their programmes which includes representatives from working life.

3.2.2.3. Other forms of cooperation (46)
There are many initiatives for cooperation at the regional level between school and working life, unregulated by the State. For example, actors on the labour market have initiated Teknikcollege (Technical College) and Vård- och omsorgscollege (Health and Medical Care College), a form of cooperation within the framework of upper secondary and tertiary education. Behind the Teknikcollege is the Industrial Council (Industrirådet) and different employer and employee organisations in the technology and industrial sectors. The Teknikcollege wishes to be a long term competence provider that also works actively to promote quality in VET at upper and post-secondary levels. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, (SKL) together with a trade union, the Swedish Municipal Workers’ Union (Kommunal) and the Association of Private Care Providers (Vårdföretagarna), started a similar initiative in a college for health and medical care with a strong focus on ensuring the supply of skilled workers and further training for existing staff, and also increasing quality in work-based learning for youth and adults.

(45) Chapter 1, Section 8 (Regeringen, 2010a).
(46) The Swedish college concept is extensively described in the ReferNet thematic article Innovation in VET – Sweden (Cedefop 2014b).
3.3. **Follow-up of transitions between education and the labour market**

Relevant methods and forms for following up and analysing the transition of students onto the labour market are vital for the ongoing development of Swedish VET.

### 3.3.1. Regular follow-up and analysis

For a number of years Sweden has regularly produced basic data for assessing the labour market and the skills needs. Both the employment service and Statistics Sweden (SCB) regularly publish forecasts of short-term changes in the labour market. Once every three years Statistics Sweden publishes long-term forecasts of supply and demand for skilled labour in their report entitled *Trends and Forecasts* (see Section 1.3).

In recent years the focus of follow-up and analysis has been on the transition between education and the labour market, both nationally and regionally. Graduates’ employment the year after completing advanced or higher vocational education is followed up annually by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*). Municipalities that receive state grants within the framework of vocational education for adults or apprenticeship for adults (see Section 2.2) are required to report former students’ main employment situation after completing the programme. In December 2013 the Government commissioned the National Agency for Education to begin on a regular, more systematic and long-term follow-up of youth transition from upper secondary school to the labour market. The follow-up includes annual monitoring of young adults’ primary activities one, three and five years after finalising upper secondary school as well as surveys among young adults that include questions on the relevance of their training in relationship to their job. This follow-up will also include surveys directed at organisations and enterprises that have employed young adults. The agency has also been commissioned to propose a plan on how adults’ transition to work may be monitored after completing municipal adult education. Statistics and analyses will be disseminated and presented in different ways to enable the use of monitoring results by local and regional authorities, VET providers and the social partners (Regeringen, 2013a).

### 3.3.2. Cooperation in the area of skills provision

The Swedish Government has stated that coordination at regional and national level is to be developed through improved cooperation between economic growth, labour market, and educational policies. Given this background, in 2010
the Government tasked regional authorities and organisations (47) to establish regional skills platforms (regionala kompetensplattformar) to cooperate on the provision of competence and education planning in both the short and longer term. The aim is to generate greater knowledge and transparency, coordination of needs analyses, greater cooperation on the provision of competence and education planning, as well as greater knowledge of the supply and demand for different types and levels of education. Work in the development of regional skills platforms involves creating ways of cooperation and arenas for meeting, and also the dissemination of information to different actors such as vocational educators, study and vocational counsellors and employment mediators (see also Section 4.1). Identifying where current labour force shortages exist, as well as carrying out analyses and forecasts focusing on long-term strategies and regional development are further examples of activities (Tillväxtanalys, 2012).

Stressing the importance of regional skills provision, the Government has set aside specific funding to be used from 2013 to 2016 with the aim of strengthening and developing these skills platforms. Initiatives should, for example, support the development of innovative ways of securing skills provision in the short and longer term. Some of the projects will end in January 2017 and a final report on the measure is expected in early 2018.

3.4. National qualifications framework

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för Yrkeshögskolan) has been appointed by the Swedish Government as the national coordination point for the Swedish NQF, the SeQF. It encompasses and presents all types of learning by describing knowledge, skills and competence at eight different levels.

Formal learning, from compulsory to adult, vocational and academic education, as well as learning that happens in the workplace, home or community will be made visible through this framework. As of January 2016, awarding bodies outside the formal education system will be able to have their qualifications assessed and placed at a level within the framework by submitting an application to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education.

(47) Regional bodies for self-government (regionala självstyrelseorgan), regional cooperation councils (regionala samverkansorgan), or if the case these do not exist, the County Administrative Board (länsstyrelse).
The draft for the report (48) on the referencing of the Swedish qualifications frameworks to the EQF was presented to the Government in November 2015. Approval of the European Commission is still pending.

3.5. **Skills forecast**

According to the Government, Sweden must strengthen its work on matching job seekers' skills with job vacancy demands. It is also important to provide support for those who are the furthest away from the labour market (Regeringen, 2013a). The Government has as a result focused on strengthening the linkage between education and working life, both within upper secondary and tertiary VET.

According to Statistics Sweden's ([Statistiska centralbyråns](https://www.scb.se)) analysis of supply and demand for trained and educated labour by the year 2030, the demand for staff with secondary and tertiary education will increase during the forecast period (Statistics Sweden, 2011). It states that, while the availability of people with tertiary education will continue to increase, the availability of people with no more than secondary education will decline. Within the health care sector, for example, the demand for labour will be very high and increase up to 2030, particularly for staff with upper secondary health care qualifications. Similarly, availability of labour with qualifications from upper secondary and tertiary education in the area of manufacturing will decrease, creating a difficult recruitment situation for the manufacturing industry. There is also only a low interest in education programmes in business and administration at upper secondary level, which is expected to lead to a shortage of employees with this competence. In virtually all areas, the demand for post-secondary competence is expected to increase up to 2030 (49).

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CHAPTER 4.
Promoting participation in VET

Individuals with different backgrounds and in different life situations are given the possibility to study, thanks to a system of study allowances and student aid. Decreasing interest in upper secondary vocational programmes, however, has led to an increased focus on, and investment in, information activities and study and career guidance. Ongoing changes in Swedish VET create the need for information and guidance to provide everyone with an overall view of the available study paths, and what they can lead to. Increasing the attractiveness and quality of VET is an important priority for the Swedish Government.

4.1. Information and guidance

In Sweden, information and guidance about study and career paths is integrated into different activities. The governing body or education provider has the main responsibility for guiding and recruiting students for VET. Overall information on study and career paths, and also on the labour market for different professions, is supplied by national authorities and industry organisations.

4.1.1. National information

Both the National Agency for Education (Skolverket) and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) are tasked to inform and disseminate knowledge about their respective areas. The National Agency for Education also functions as a national reference point for information on VET in Sweden and other EU countries, as well as countries in the EEA area. Many national websites provide information and guidance for youth and adults. The portal Utbildningsinfo.se includes search tools for educational paths and providers. The site contains information about possible vocational outcomes, the situation on the labour market in the field, funding and information on other important considerations when choosing a study path. In addition, in 2013 a specific website aimed at pupils in compulsory education was developed including films and information on different vocations.

(50) http://www.utbildningsinfo.se [accessed 4.4.2017].
Gymnasieinfo.se (51) has been adapted for use in a wide range of devices including smartphones and tablets.

General information about higher vocational education (see Section 2.2.2) is available through the web site of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (52). The Agency also provides a web site intended for potential students (53). Besides general information about higher vocational education, this web site contains information about current higher vocational education programmes and links to various education provider web sites. Information on higher education studies is made available through the portal studera.nu (54).

Information provided by the Swedish Public Employment Service (see Section 2.3.3) focuses on finding jobs in different professions. The portal entitled Occupational Compass (Yrkeskompassen) (55) shows the labour market situation and future prospects for about 200 professions and contains information on national forecasts for 1-, 5- and 10-year periods. One year forecasts are also available at the regional level. The Occupational Compass also provides descriptions of different professions and possible education paths.

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet) is responsible for the Information Services of the Swedish Folk High Schools (Folkhögskolornas informationstjänst) whose tasks include contributing to the recruitment of course participants. The portal Folkhögskola.nu (56) provides overall information on vocational education and other courses given by folk high schools (see Section 2.3.2).

Vocational boards (see Section 2.3.1) and other industry organisations supply information about professions and career paths through different means,

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(51) http://gymnasieinfo.se/ [accessed 4.4.2017].

(52) http://www.myh.se [accessed 4.4.2017].

(53) http://www.yrkeshogskolan.se [accessed 5.4.2017].

(54) http://www.studera.nu/ [accessed 5.4.2017].

(55) http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/For-arbetssokande/Yrke-och-framtid/Yrkeskompassen.html [accessed 5.4.2017].

(56) http://www.folkhogskola.nu [accessed 5.4.2017].
and also about formal and non-formal education in their fields (57). This may cover websites, participation in industry specific trade fairs or inspiration days.

All these activities and web portals must also function to support study and vocational guidance counsellors in their work. Euroguidance Sweden is a national resource centre for counselling, which supports counsellors in their work of providing information about opportunities for studying and work placement abroad. The aim is to make it easier to study and practise in other EU countries.

4.1.2. Vocational orientation and guidance in formal education

Legislation regulates the responsibility of the governing body and education provider to provide counselling and information for students. Education Act (Riksdagen, 2010a) (58) requirements state that all students should have access to staff with the competence to meet their needs for guidance and counselling prior to choosing education and vocational orientation.

4.1.2.1. Compulsory school

The Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Preschool Class and the Leisure-time Centre (Läroplanen för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet) (Regeringen, 2010a) states that the goals of the school are that each student can examine their different choices, and determine issues concerning their own future, and also be familiar with the opportunities for further education in Sweden and in other countries.

The methods of providing counselling are not determined nationally. The curriculum states that study and vocational counselling is the responsibility of the school, and as such student choices should not be limited by gender, or social or cultural background. The headmaster also has a responsibility for ensuring that ‘cooperation with schools and working life outside the school be developed so that students gain concrete experiences of importance for their choice of further education and vocational orientation’ (Regeringen, 2010a). A number of schools organise this in the form of ‘practical orientation to working life’, which means that students, in the later years of compulsory school, spend a period of a couple of days to up to two weeks at a workplace. Study visits and information about different professions are also covered in compulsory school.


(58) Chapter 2, Section 29.
4.1.2.2. Upper secondary school and municipal adult education

The municipalities are responsible for ensuring that youth and adults are offered education at upper secondary level. Prior to choosing upper secondary school, many municipalities and regions take part in upper secondary exhibitions and open houses where schools and programmes are presented. Information meetings and guidance counselling are offered to those who wish to study in municipal adult education at upper secondary level. Frequently education providers market their education and courses via advertisements, web sites and direct marketing.

As for the compulsory school, the curriculum for the upper secondary school (Läroplan för gymnasieskolan) (Regeringen, 2011b) sets out the goals for study and vocational guidance, and also the responsibilities of school staff and more specifically, that of headmasters, teachers and guidance counsellors, for the process. For vocational education, special emphasis is given to cooperation with working life. The diploma goals of the vocational programmes and different subjects also point out the importance of students obtaining knowledge about industry and about future work prospects in the vocational sector.

4.1.2.3. Higher vocational education

The Higher Vocational Education Ordinance (Förordningen om yrkeshögskolan) lays down the responsibility of education provider governing bodies for ensuring that there is guidance and counselling concerning alternative study paths, admissions and entry, as well as vocational guidance. In their application to deliver education within the framework of higher vocational education (see Section 2.2.2), education providers must describe how this counselling will be provided.

Student fairs, where information on higher vocational education providers, universities and university colleges is presented, are held regionally and in cooperation with education providers and the social partners. There are also industry-specific trade fairs, where education at both upper secondary and tertiary level is presented.

4.1.3. Vocational orientation and guidance for job seekers

Guidance counselling is also an important task of the Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) aimed at improving matching between job seekers and working life. In addition to the Occupational compass referred to above, job seekers are offered study and vocational guidance through e.g. brief
telephone coaching sessions, or through personal meetings with a counsellor at drop-in sessions.

The public employment service is also responsible for what are called preparatory activities (förberedande insatser) aimed at facilitating job seekers' choice of work. The initiatives are tailored to the individuals and may be of a counselling, rehabilitation or orientation nature. They are intended for job seekers who need to prepare themselves for a labour market policy programme or a job (see also Section 2.3.3).

4.1.4. Vocational competitions and the year of VET
The organisation WorldSkills Sweden aims at raising the status, interest in and quality of Swedish vocational education. It arranges the Swedish championship in vocational expertise (Yrkes-SM) and is responsible for participant selection to WorldSkills and EuroSkills. Behind WorldSkills Sweden is a tripartite cooperation between the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv), the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen - LO) and the Swedish state.

The Government has joined forces with the social partners and declared 2016 as the Swedish year of VET with events and activities targeting young people in lower secondary school, their parents and guidance counsellors to help students to make well-informed career choices and contribute to national competence provision. These activities will culminate in EuroSkills in December 2016, the first major vocational skills competition held in Sweden.

4.2. Financial incentives
Students have the right to different forms of financial support for both upper secondary and tertiary studies. Also, employees have the right to take leave of absence to attend education.

4.2.1. Financial incentives for individuals
Swedish study support gives everyone the opportunity to study irrespective of their financial background. The form and the size of the support vary depending on age and life situation and also on the scope and level of studies.

The Swedish Board for Study Support (Centrales Stödsnämnden, CSN) is responsible for and administers the majority of student support. The education programmes entitled to support are determined by the Swedish Government through the Study Support Ordinance (Regeringen 2000b). Special investments in higher levels of grants are used as an incentive for further
studies. This applies, for instance, to the initiative for higher grants to students in vocational education for adults (see Section 1.3), where one aim is to encourage more unemployed people over the age of 25 to apply for vocational education.

Both regular support and temporary measures are important in recruitment to post-secondary studies and adult vocational education. For example, close to 4 of 10 recipients of higher level grants within the framework of the above-mentioned initiative in adult education state that they would not have started studying without this incentive (CSN, 2011a). Various studies also show that the effect of study support is greater among students, whose parents have low levels of education, and amongst women (CSN, 2011b).

4.2.1.1. Study allowance for students under the age of 20
Study allowance (studiehjälp) in the form of student grants, supplementary allowance and boarding supplement can be paid to students under the age of 20 who are studying in upper secondary school, municipal adult education or folk high schools. The grant, under certain circumstances, can also be awarded for studies abroad. One prerequisite for receiving this grant is that the student studies full time and participates in the relevant courses. This means, for example, that a student who is frequently absent runs the risk of losing the support and may be liable for repayment. The school has an obligation to report when a student is absent without a valid reason.

Students, who wish to live and study in a place other than their home municipality, may apply for a boarding supplement from the Swedish Board for Study Support or from the municipality. For example, this applies in cases where the specific education is not provided by the home municipality, or where the education programme is open to national admission (see Section 3.1.1.1). The grant makes it possible for students to participate in specialist vocational education that is provided at only a few places in the country. In 2014 a supplement for students attending apprenticeship education (lärlingsutbildning) in upper secondary school was introduced. The supplement is to cover extra living costs, for example travel to the workplace and lunch. As of July 2014 students attending apprenticeship education in upper secondary school may be employed in what is called an upper secondary apprentice position (lärlingsanställning). As a result, upper secondary apprentices can be offered employment while still in education in accordance with adapted labour law provisions. An apprentice employed in such a position is not entitled to the supplement.
4.2.1.2. **Student aid for students aged 20 and above**

Student aid (studiemedel) can be granted to students in post-secondary education, such as higher vocational education, supplementary education, and vocational education in folk high schools (see Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). Students studying at upper secondary level who have reached the age of 20 are also entitled to student aid. They can apply for grants and loans and also for certain supplementary allowances. Parents of minors (59), for example, can receive a supplementary allowance. To be eligible for further funding students must demonstrate satisfactory results in previous studies.

4.2.2. **Financial incentives for education organisers and enterprises**

As evident from Section 2, many different actors can become involved in and receive state or municipal support to run vocational education. The system of independent schools (see Section 2.2.1.9) makes it possible for companies, industries and other organisations to run their own upper secondary schools. One example that can be mentioned concerns the two company groups Peab AB and SKF, which provide education in the building and construction programmes and the industrial technological programmes in upper secondary school.

State grants may, on application, be paid out for higher vocational education and supplementary education, and also to folk high schools and adult education associations. Employer involvement in higher vocational education is dependent on labour market needs for a particular profession or qualification. Education provider involvement is partially dependent on the interest in providing Sweden with qualified higher vocational education programmes that match labour market needs. Involvement is also dependent on existing opportunities to run profitable operations with the funds received.

Upper secondary schools providing apprenticeship education (see Section 2.2.1.6) may apply for an additional grant. A part of this grant is earmarked for the employer accepting an apprentice. Among other aims, the grant is intended to encourage more workplaces to become involved in apprenticeship education. As of January 2016 the extra state grant for schools for apprenticeships has decreased by 17% (from EUR 5 941 to EUR 4 907) per apprentice and year, of which 79% (EUR 3 874) is for the exclusive use of the work place receiving the student. The work-place may, however, receive an additional SEK 1 033 per year and apprentice if the trainer at the work place has participated in a training program.

(59) The supplementary allowance can be granted until the semester term the child turns 18.
programme for trainers. This part of the grant remains unchanged. The aim is to encourage more workplaces to supply trained trainers. In 2014 the Government decided on a grant geared at the social partners and vocational boards to develop support for companies and other employers in the provision of workplace-based learning. In November 2015, the Government decided to broaden the scope of the grant and it now also includes the opportunity for the social partners to apply in order to develop regional support structures. These structures are to enhance cooperation between VET providers in upper secondary VET (both upper secondary school and adult education) and workplaces in the region. The funding scheme covers both school-based and apprenticeships schemes.

An initiative in adult vocational training was introduced in 2009. It consists of earmarked state grants to municipalities to provide more VET for adults within the municipal adult education system. The aim is to reach those who either lack, or need to complement their, upper secondary education. Financial support may also be granted for apprenticeship education within adult education and special needs education for adults.

Employer and employee organisations having signed work introduction agreements (yrkesintroduktionsanställningar) (see Section 2.3.1) can apply for funding for information activities geared to their members. The aim of these grants, administered by the Ministry of Employment, is to stimulate enterprises to offer training opportunities. In January 2014 financial support to employers was introduced to stimulate employment of young people within these agreements. The support is provided partly in the form of a wage subsidy and partly in the form of a trainer subsidy (Regeringen, 2014b).

### 4.2.3. Key challenges

An increasing population, a large rise in the number of newly-arrived immigrants under the age of 20, a shortage of teachers in general and VET teachers in particular, taken together constitutes one of the challenges for the Swedish educational system to tackle in the next few decades. In addition, the provision of VET (and other upper secondary) programmes is largely determined by the preferences of the students.

According to the Education Act (Skollagen) (Riksdagen 2010a), municipalities are responsible for ensuring that education and the number of places provided should, as far as possible, be adapted to the wishes of
students’ (60). In municipal adult education (kommunal vuxenutbildning), adults ‘should be given opportunities to develop their knowledge and competence to strengthen their position in working and societal life…’ where ‘the starting point for education should be the needs and preconditions of the individual’ (61). Consequently, the difficulty in planning and determining the scope of VET provision is that it is controlled by the individuals who choose their own study paths, and not by the needs of the different business sectors. Thus guidance, information and different incentives are the means by which students can be attracted to specific vocational education programmes. The Education Act therefore emphasises the importance of students having access to study- and career guidance when choosing their course of study (see Section 4.1).

One of the rationales of the reform of upper secondary school in 2011 was to strengthen the vocational content of, and admission requirements to, VET programmes while also increasing preparedness for academic studies in the entry requirements to the higher education preparatory programmes. The proportion of VET students has declined after the reform, from 35% in 2007 to 27% in 2013. From the academic year 2013/14 to 2014/15 the proportion of VET students declined by another two percentage points (Regeringen 2015a). The Government has consequently taken policy measures to strengthen education in general and vocational education in particular. These aim at increasing recruitment and raising throughput to enable students to establish themselves on the labour market.

One consequence of the reform was that learners did not automatically become eligible for admission to tertiary education after completing a VET programme. It has been suggested that the changed admissions eligibility has influenced the declining interest in VET. One policy measure has been launching of a government inquiry in March 2015 with the task to analyse and suggest how to make all upper secondary programmes more attractive (En attraktiv gymnasieutbildning för alla) (Regeringen 2015b), another is to propose how to widen upper secondary education and include eligibility for tertiary education in all programmes, including upper secondary VET (62). A third measure is a proposed legislative change (effective 1 January, 2017) for adult education introducing a right to study courses that provide eligibility for admission to higher education (Regeringen 2016) (see also Section 2.2.1.1).

(60) Chapter 15, Section 30 of the Education Act (Riksdagen, 2010a).
(61) Chapter 20, Section 2 of the Education Act (Riksdagen, 2010a).
(62) See also Section 3.1.1 on how upper secondary education is governed.
Another challenge is to integrate the large number of newly-arrived immigrants. A ‘fast track’ programme for newly-arrived immigrants to enter the labour market was introduced by the government in February 2015 (63). The aim was to establish cooperation between the social partners and the employment service. The fast track programme is a comprehensive process in which the newly-arrived immigrant is offered practical training in a workplace, training in vocational Swedish, validation of skills and competences as well as supplementary education, if necessary. As of June 2016, the social partners had agreed on fast tracks in a wide range of vocations, including chefs, teachers, butchers, pharmacists, nurses, painters, truck drivers and construction engineers (64). The large number of newly-arrived immigrants has also contributed in emphasising the need for validation of skills and competences. The National Delegation for Validation (Valideringsdelegationen) was appointed by the Swedish Government in November 2015 with the aim of developing a national strategy for validation (see Section 2.2.1.5).

In order to enhance the attractiveness and quality of VET and to reflect modern vocations and working life, the government has joined forces with employer and employee organisations and declared 2016 as the Swedish year of VET. The government and its partners have financed actions and activities targeting young people in lower secondary school, their parents and guidance counsellors. The objectives are to increase the attractiveness and quality of VET by improving relations between school and working life, helping learners to make well-informed career choices and contributing to national competence provision.

There have also been several policy measures directed through the National Agency for Education to increase quality and attractiveness of VET. One such effort is the development of a CPD programme about the labour market for study and career counsellors.

Both the Government budget bill for 2015 and the opposing Alliance parties recognise the need for measures to facilitate the transition from education to the labour market and the role of VET in doing so. Even though there are differences in the proposed initiatives, both agree on further developing apprenticeship education (gymnasial lärlingsutbildning) at upper secondary level and work introduction jobs. In 2014 the Apprenticeship Centre


(Lärlingscentrum) was established with the broad task of stimulating the provision of, and promoting young people’s interest in, apprenticeship education in upper secondary school (see Section 2.2.1). They will also support and provide advice to VET providers, employers and social partners, for example on organising apprenticeship education and training of trainers at workplaces (65). Similarly, a committee for workplace training within the work introduction agreements (see Section 2.3.1) was formed in 2014. Its mission includes supporting the social partners and employers in developing workplace training and stimulating regional cooperation among stakeholders.

(65) See also the thematic ReferNet article (Cedefop 2016), Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET Section 3.
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| APL     | Arbetsplatsförlagt lärande  
[Workplace training in upper secondary school and municipal adult education] |
| CPD     | Continuous professional development |
| CSN     | Centrala studiestödsnämnden  
[The National Board of Student Aid] |
| LIA     | Lärande i arbetslivet  
[Workplace training in higher vocational education] |
| LO      | Landsorganisationen i Sverige  
[The Swedish Trade Union Confederation] |
| SCB     | Statistiska centralbyrån  
[Statistics Sweden] |
| SFS     | Svensk författningssamling  
[Swedish register on laws and ordinances] |
| VET     | Vocational education and training |
| VFU     | Verksamhetsförlagd utbildning  
[practical supervised training in a school within vocational teacher training at university college or university] |
| WBL     | Work-based learning |
Annex 1
Upper secondary school vocational programmes

Figure 11. National vocational programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Orientations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Child and Recreation Programme</td>
<td>Recreation and health / Pedagogical work / Social work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Building and Construction Programme</td>
<td>Plant vehicles / House construction / Land and construction / Painting / Sheet metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Electricity and Energy Programme</td>
<td>Automation / Computers and ICT / Electrical technology / Energy technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vehicle and Transport Programme</td>
<td>Goods handling / Bodywork and paint spraying / Lorries and mobile machinery / Passenger cars / Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Business and Administration Programme</td>
<td>Administrative services / Commerce and service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Handicraft Programme</td>
<td>Cabinetmaking / Floristry / Hairdressing / Textile design / Other handicrafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hotel and Tourism Programme</td>
<td>Hotel and conference / Tourism and travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Industrial Technology Programme</td>
<td>Operations and maintenance / Process technology / Product and machine technology / Welding technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Natural Resource Use Programme</td>
<td>Animals / Agriculture / Forestry / Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Restaurant Management and Food Programme</td>
<td>Baking and patisserie / Fresh foods, delicatessen and catering / Kitchen and serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The HVAC and Property Maintenance Programme</td>
<td>Property / Refrigeration and heat pump technology / Ventilation technology / HVAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Health and Social Care Programme</td>
<td>No national orientations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 12. Other vocational programmes within upper secondary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dancing programme</td>
<td>Vocational programme in classical ballet and modern dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fourth Year of the Technology Programme</td>
<td>A one year vocational oriented training programme in engineering, based on the three year higher education preparatory Technology Programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Air Traffic Technology Programme</td>
<td>A vocational programme with national open admission within upper secondary school with specific diploma goals and the following orientations: airplanes and helicopters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Marine Technology Programme</td>
<td>A vocational programme with national open admission within upper secondary school with specific diploma goals and the following orientations: service and repairs; electricity and electronics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shipping Programme</td>
<td>A vocational programme with national open admission within upper secondary school with specific diploma goals and the following orientations: deck and machine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Annex 2

## Overview of authorities responsible for VET issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish Public Employment Service (<em>Arbetsförmedlingen</em>)&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se">http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se</a></td>
<td>The Swedish Public Employment Service is responsible for the public employment services and labour market policy activities. The agency’s most important task is to bring together those who have a vacancy to fill with those who are looking for work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (<em>Folkbildningsrådet</em>)&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.folkbildning.se/">http://www.folkbildning.se/</a></td>
<td>The Swedish National Council of Adult Education distributes government grants to study associations and folk high schools and is responsible for follow up and evaluation of non-formal adult education activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (<em>Forskningsrådet för arbetsliv och socialvetenskap</em>, FAS)&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.fas.se/">http://www.fas.se/</a></td>
<td>The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research promotes and supports basic and applied research in areas relating to working life and the understanding of social conditions and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish Higher Education Authority (<em>Universitetskanslerämbetet</em>)&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.uka.se/">http://www.uka.se/</a></td>
<td>The Swedish Higher Education Authority is responsible for quality assurance and legal supervision of higher education. The operations of the authority include also monitoring efficiency, follow-up and horizon scanning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (<em>Institutet för arbetsmarknads- och utbildningspolitisk utvärdering</em> - IFAU)&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.ifau.se/sv/">http://www.ifau.se/sv/</a></td>
<td>The institute is a research institute under the Swedish Ministry of Employment. The institute carries out evaluations including the effects of labour market policies and the effects of education reforms and policies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Swedish National Council of Adult Education is a non-profit association with certain authoritative tasks delegated by the Government and the Swedish Parliament.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Swedish Council for Higher Education</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>(Universitets- och högskolerådet)</em>&lt;br&gt;<a href="https://www.uhr.se/">https://www.uhr.se/</a></th>
<th>The Swedish Council for Higher Education provides information about higher education and is also responsible for recognition of qualifications from other countries. The council is also the national agency for EU programmes and other international programmes for the whole education sector. The agency is also the Swedish National Europass Centre.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>(Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan)</em>&lt;br&gt;<a href="https://www.myh.se/">https://www.myh.se/</a></td>
<td>The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is responsible for all matters concerning higher vocational education. The agency decides which programmes are to be provided as higher vocational education and allocate public funding to education providers, and is responsible for a quality assurance program that aims to preserve and maintain high educational standards. The agency is also responsible for coordinating the national framework for prior learning and validation, as well as serving as the national coordinator for the EQF - the European Qualifications Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Swedish Schools Inspectorate</strong> <em>(Skolinspektionen)</em>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.skolinspektionen.se/">http://www.skolinspektionen.se/</a></td>
<td>The Swedish Schools Inspectorate conducts regular supervision of all municipal and independent schools, from pre-school to adult education and assesses applications to run an independent school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The National Agency for Education</strong> <em>(Skolverket)</em>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.skolverket.se/">http://www.skolverket.se/</a></td>
<td>The agency supervises, supports, follows up and evaluates the school in order to improve quality and outcomes. The agency is also the Swedish ECVET National coordination point and acts as the Swedish National Reference Point for EQAVET.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The National Agency for Special Needs Education</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>(Specialpedagogiska myndigheten)</em>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.spsm.se/">http://www.spsm.se/</a></td>
<td>The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools provides support and information in the area of special needs education. The support offered includes individuals’ learning, the work and activities of teachers, organisational issues as well as accessible teaching materials. The agency also distributes government grants to education providers and producers of teaching materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis</strong> <em>(Myndigheten för tillväxtpolitiska utvärderingar och analyser - Tillväxtanalys)</em>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.tillvaxtanalys.se/">http://www.tillvaxtanalys.se/</a></td>
<td>The Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis (Growth Analysis) is charged by the Government to shed light on the areas most significant to growth. The Agency conducts evaluations, analyses and statistical studies with a broad Swedish and international perspective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) http://www.tillvaxtverket.se/

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is responsible for working pro-actively for sustainable growth and for strengthening regional development and facilitate enterprise and entrepreneurship throughout Sweden. The Agency collaborates actively with several different agencies and organisations to make it simpler to start and run a business successfully. The agency also manages the Regional Structural Fund programmes.