



## Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe

# Sweden

September 2004

Information provided by:

Ministry of Education and Science  
S-103 33 Stockholm



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REGERINGSKANSLIET

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If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.eu.int>)

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## INTRODUCTION

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Europe is characterised by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) regularly update a set of national monographs entitled *Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe*.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels (from pre-primary to tertiary). Also included are descriptions of initial vocational education and training in alternance and adult education and training within provision for lifelong learning. The initial and in-service training of teachers and their status are also considered.

The information is set out in accordance with a common structure to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasised.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardised so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational provision entirely within schools). The way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational education and training in alternance is the subject of a chapter in its own right. It includes all education and training for young people that is not essentially school-based, and thus covers for example apprenticeships based on the 'dual system' pattern, sandwich course training and any other initiatives and experiments with major elements of 'on-the-job' experience.

This is followed by a chapter on tertiary education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, tuition fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment. The chapter includes any initiatives implemented as part of the Bologna process.

The last chapter deals with continuing education and training for adults (whether in or outside the labour market, employed or unemployed). It provides information on the political, legislative and financial framework of this kind of education, on the authorities concerned and their responsibilities, as well as on the general organisation of training for adults (types of institution, access requirements, programme objectives, the curriculum and quality assurance). There is also a brief description of guidance/counselling services, as well as of questions relating to assessment and accreditation including the recognition of non-formal kinds of learning.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are national statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios, attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialisation.

The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational education and training in alternance, and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the CEDEFOP REFER Network (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation (ETF) in the case of the 12 candidate countries. We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels, CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, and the ETF in Turin for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

Given the number of countries now covered <sup>(1)</sup> and the amount of data available, the description of each system of education and training may be consulted solely electronically on the website of the EURYDICE Network (<http://www.eurydice.org>), which brings it to the attention of the largest possible number of people and enables it to be updated on a more regular basis.

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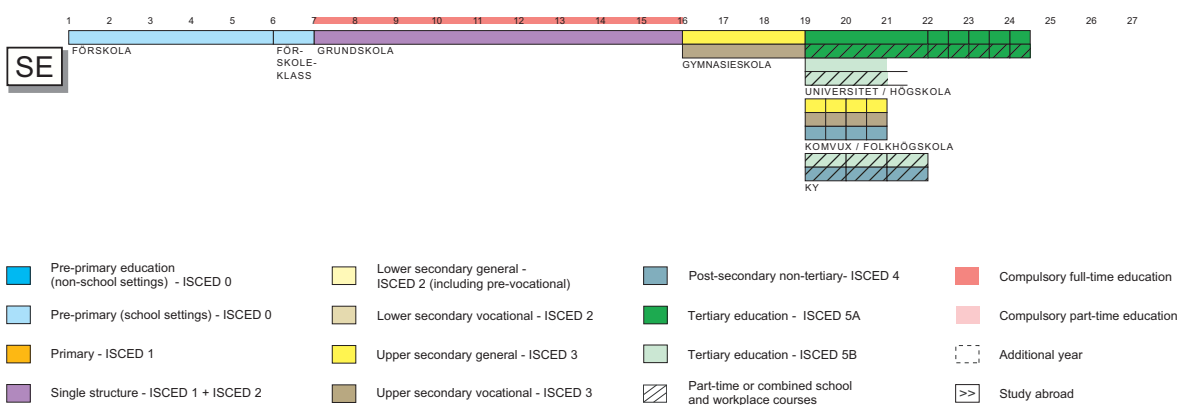
Peter de Roij  
Director of the ETF

June 2003

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<sup>(1)</sup> The 30 European countries taking part in the EU Education Programme, Socrates.

## Organisation of the education system in Sweden, 2003/04



Source: Eurydice.

# 1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

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## 1.1 Background

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Sweden covers a total area of 450,000 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of 9 million people. The national language is Swedish. For many years, Sweden was ethnically and linguistically very homogeneous with two exceptions – the Finnish-speaking population of the northeast and the Sami. Today, nearly one million of Sweden's total population are immigrants or have at least one immigrant parent. Immigrants include citizens from other Nordic countries.

The country is a Constitutional Monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. The King has only ceremonial functions as Head of State and the formal power of governmental decision rests with the Government. The Parliament (*Riksdag*) is the country's highest decision-making body. It consists of one chamber, whose 349 members are elected by proportional representation for four-year terms. Apart from nine years (1976–82 and 1991–94) of non-socialist rule, the Social Democrats have been in power since 1932, either alone or in coalition with other parties. The social democratic minority government, formed after the elections in 1994, remained in power after the elections in 1998. After the elections in September 2002, the Social Democrats formed a government supported by the Left party and the Green party, although they are not members of the Government. Local government is exercised through the 18 county councils and 290 municipalities.

In 2004 around 82 percent of the population belonged to the Lutheran Church of Sweden (which, from 1 January 2000 is separated from the State).

In 2003 the unemployment rate was 4,9 percent. The same year 75,6 percent of Swedish men and 72,8 percent of Swedish women (aged between 16 and 64) were gainfully employed.

## 1.2 Basis of the school system: principles and legislation

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### Principles

One fundamental principle of the Swedish education system is that everybody must have access to equivalent education, regardless of sex, ethnic and social background and of place of residence. This principle is mirrored throughout the entire educational system. Pre-school class, compulsory school and upper secondary school are all comprehensive, designed to accommodate all members of the young generation; and all schools are co-educational. The curricula for the various school forms are valid nation-wide. Higher education is mainly public and always free of charge, and the institutions are located all over the country, with the aim of guaranteeing everybody access to higher education, irrespective of place of residence.

There are options for further and continuing education available in many different forms, and education for adults equivalent to the education provided by compulsory and upper secondary schools forms part of the public school system. This gives everybody the possibility to make up compulsory and upper secondary education and to rejoin the formal system of qualifications. The Swedish education system is thus marked by a uniform structure stretching from compulsory to upper secondary level through to adult education.

In order to guarantee that no one should be excluded from education because of lack of personal financial resources, various funding schemes permit students in upper secondary, adult and higher education to finance their studies.

### Legislation

State regulations for the education system are set out in the Education Act, the Higher Education Act and in a number of ordinances. Since 1998, pre-school activities, childcare for school aged children and the pre-school class have been regulated by the Education Act. Previously, these or similar provisions were part of the Social Services Act. Legislation is passed by Parliament while ordinances are issued by

the Government. In addition, there are regulations issued by the national agencies.

### 1.3 Distribution of responsibilities for the organization and administration of the education system

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Overall responsibility for education in Sweden is borne by Parliament and the Government.

Nearly all education and vocational training falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, from pre-school to higher education and research. The most important institutions or sectors of education falling outside the purview of the Ministry of Education and Science are: the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, which comes under the Ministry of Agriculture, the Police Academy, which comes under the Ministry of Justice, military training, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence, and labour market training, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications.

The ministries are rather small units, consisting of 150 employees on average. They are mainly concerned with preparing the Government's bills for Parliament and issuing laws, regulations and general rules for the central administrative agencies. These relatively independent agencies are responsible for the enforcement of laws and government decisions. This division of tasks between ministries and central administrative agencies, and the independent decision making of these agencies are characteristic features of the Swedish administrative system.

Those responsible for the provision of education under the Ministry of Education and Science are the State, the county councils, the municipalities and private education organisers. Practically all public education in Sweden below university level is operated by the municipalities, while most higher education institutions are run by the central government. Universities and university colleges have however been granted a large degree of autonomy in several important areas.

Education in Sweden has traditionally been organised within the public sector. For many years, control of activities within the education system was heavily centralised. Through legislation, regulations and curricula the State issued detailed instructions and rules on educational activities, and on the spending of state grants. The education system has, however, undergone fundamental reforms during the last decades, which have changed the role of the State.

During the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, public administration underwent a far-reaching decentralisation process when a goal- and result-oriented steering system was introduced. As regards the administration of the education system – schools as well as institutions of higher education – the State has gradually replaced an approach based on detailed regulations by one based on goals and results. Within the framework set out by the Government, local authorities were granted extensive autonomy in administering the schools. Responsibility in several important areas of higher education was devolved from the central to the institutional level.

The distribution of responsibilities in the Swedish education system is based on the main principle that Parliament and the Government should control educational activities by defining national objectives, while central administrative agencies and municipalities and the organisers of the different institutions are responsible for ensuring that educational activities are implemented in line with these national objectives and achieve the necessary results.

#### Central level

Legislation is passed by Parliament, which also decides on the general funding of government appropriations to the education system as a part of the overall budget process for all public funding. The Government issues the ordinances and general guidelines applying to the various types of education. The Government also lays down the curricula and syllabi for the compulsory school system. For upper secondary and adult education level, the syllabi are laid down by the National Agency for Education.

The State is responsible for the central development and improvement of the education system and must at the same time ensure that all educational activities are monitored and evaluated. The State is also responsible for providing financial assistance to students. Subject to the authority of Parliament and the Government, these tasks in the public education system are performed by central government agencies, immediately subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Science.

The main central authority responsible for the supervision of the **school system** is the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*). Its foremost responsibilities include the nation-wide monitoring, evaluation and supervision of all school activities, and central development work within the school sector. The Agency is also responsible for ensuring that research is undertaken and that in-service training is arranged for teachers. The Agency itself arranges basic training for school heads and some in-service training for teaching staff.

The 1st of March 2003 the National Agency for Education was split into two agencies, the National Agency for Education and the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement. The task of the latter is to support the local efforts towards the fulfilment of national goals for education and training. The agency initiates and supports local school development and improvement to ensure high quality and equal opportunities for pupils and students.

Monitoring and evaluation of **higher education** activities at universities and university colleges is, at national level, entrusted to the National Agency for Higher Education (*Högskoleverket*). The Agency has the following main tasks: follow-up and evaluation, quality assessment, surveillance and investigation, controlling that laws and regulations within the field of higher education are observed, information on and recognition of degrees from other countries, and organisation of the university aptitude test.

The National Admission Office to Higher Education (*Verket för högskoleservice*) is primarily funded by the universities and the university colleges themselves. It is responsible for the co-ordination of the admission of students and the purchase of expensive equipment.

The National Board of Student Aid (*Centrala studiestödsnämnden*) is responsible for the administration, observation and evaluation of **financial support** to students for post-compulsory studies in Sweden and abroad.

The national agencies submit annual reports about their activities to the Government. In addition the National Agency for Education, the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement and the National Agency for Higher Education are, at intervals, to provide Parliament and the Government with a comprehensive picture of the situation within their field of responsibility, together with data for the long-term national development of the education sector.

Statistical data on educational activities are collected by *Statistics Sweden* at the request of the National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Higher Education.

### Local level

Practically all public education in Sweden below university level comes under the operations of the **municipalities**. These are bound by law and regulations to provide a number of basic services, of which education is one.

Each Municipal Council appoints one or more committees, which have the responsibility to ensure that educational activities are conducted in compliance with state regulations and guidelines and that the external conditions of

education are as appropriate and favourable as possible. The committee or committees responsible for schools are obliged to ensure, inter alia, that schools are built and sufficient facilities are provided, that the activities of schools in the municipality are co-ordinated, that qualified teaching and non-teaching staff are hired and receive in-service training, that municipal funds are allocated for school activities, that it is made possible to achieve the objectives laid down in the curricula and that the general guidelines are complied with. According to the Education Act, it is the responsibility of the municipalities to ensure that Swedish schools uphold equivalent standards all over the country.

On the basis of the Education Act, the curriculum and the syllabi every municipality is required to set out the general objectives for its schools in a **school plan**, adopted by the Municipal Council. It must clearly state the measures the municipality intends to take in order to attain the national goals for its schools. The municipality is obliged to monitor and evaluate the school plan, to provide the State with information relevant to the evaluation of educational activities and for quality audits. Every year each school and municipality are also obliged to present a quality report.

The organisation of administration within a municipality, such as the allocation of responsibilities and financing, varies from one municipality to another.

A small number of study programmes at upper secondary education level are provided by the **County councils**, which also appoint one or more committees responsible for ensuring that educational activities are conducted in compliance with state regulations and guidelines and that the external conditions of education are as appropriate and favourable as possible.

### Institutional level

In addition to the quality report drawn by the municipality, each school is obliged to present yearly quality reports. Independent schools present their quality report both to the National Agency for Education and the municipality where the school is situated.

Most of the **higher education institutions** are run by the Government. Responsibility for several important areas has however been transferred to the universities and university colleges. The Government lays down certain objectives and parameters – mainly financial – while course structure and content, the application of available resources and the establishment of admissions procedures are decided by the universities and university colleges themselves.

## 1.4 Inspection/supervision/guidance

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With the administration of the education system based on objectives and results, the State and local authorities as well as individual schools and institutions of higher education, are required to systematically monitor and evaluate educational activities in relation to the objectives set on the national level. As mentioned above, the National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Higher Education monitor and evaluate the system at national level.

The Government has decided on several measures aimed at strengthening quality control in school education, e.g. a supervisory committee employing state education inspectors. Inspectors, appointed by the National Agency for Education for a year at a time, will study different aspects of schooling each year.

## 1.5 Financing

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The funding of **school level education** is shared between central and local governments. The municipal tax revenue is the main income of the local government. In addition, local governments receive state grants consisting of a financial subsidy and a tax and structural equalisation payment. The structural equalisation part is determined by several underlying factors, e.g. the population figure and structurally motivated cost differentials. Within its field of responsibility, each municipality has the right to decide on the allocation of resources and the organisation of activities.

State funding, is not directly linked to school organisation; the municipalities are free to use the grant for educational services or other activities. In a growing number of municipalities the committee(s) entrust to each school an overall budget covering salaries, the costs of teaching materials and equipment, and rents. Income, for example from letting school premises, is used to offset expenses. However, if a municipality seriously neglects its obligations under the Education Act, or under regulations issued on the basis of this Act, the Government has a right to intervene. Government intervention has, so far, never been necessary.

In addition, there are special state grants for research and development, some prioritised in-service training for school staff and for a number of independent upper secondary schools.

Teaching materials and school meals in compulsory school are free of charge to the individual; in most municipalities this also applies to upper secondary schools. The municipalities are obliged to provide free school transport for compulsory school pupils, as long as they attend the school proposed by the municipality.

**Higher education** is financed directly from the State. Appropriations for universities and university colleges are based on proposals by the Government and made out as lump sums from Parliament to each institution. The basic principle of the allocation system for undergraduate education is that appropriations are made as remuneration for results achieved. Results refer to the number of credits earned by students and the number of full-time equivalent students taught at the institution.

## 1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

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Within the **school system**, teachers' organisations and other employee organisations are entitled, under the Co-determination Act, to receive information on and to influence impending decisions. Pupils' rights are enshrined in the Education Act, but their practical implementation is decided locally. In the compulsory school, it is the school head's duty, (usually performed by the teachers) to provide information to and consult pupils and parents on matters, which are of importance to the pupils and concern the entire school. Parents are organised in parents' or parent-teacher associations and are able to influence schoolwork in this way. At national level, the Home and School Federation is often consulted.

Municipalities have, on a trial basis, the right to establish local boards in compulsory education consisting of school heads, staff representatives and parents, who would form the majority. In upper secondary education municipalities may set up local boards with pupils in the majority. These pilot projects will continue until 30 June 2003. The government considers to make this pilot project a permanent option for schools. Within a municipality, it is possible that only certain schools, or even certain classes or working units are embraced by the local boards.

Co-operation with the surrounding society has been added as a third task for **universities** and **university colleges** besides education and research (or artistic development work). The governing boards of the universities and university colleges have a majority of external members (i.e. representatives from trade and industry, municipalities and County councils).

This way, experience from different parts of society may enrich and influence the management of higher education institutions. From 1998 onwards, the chairman of the governing board shall be a person whose main responsibilities lie outside the university or university college concerned

The students' right to be represented on councils and governing boards of the universities and university colleges, dealing with educational matters is enshrined in the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. Each council or governing board shall comprise at least three students' representatives.

Furthermore, students at Swedish universities and university colleges are required to join one of the student unions based at each institution of higher education. They represent students' interests and, among other things, nominate the student representatives to the various governing bodies at universities and university colleges. They are largely responsible for student welfare services and social activities.

## 1.7 Private schools

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In Sweden there are relatively few **independent compulsory and upper secondary schools** (*fristående skolor*), but the number is growing rapidly. This expansion is due to new opportunities created at the start of the 1990s for private concerns to operate within the Swedish school system. In school year 2003/04 6,2 percent of Swedish compulsory education pupils and 10,1 percent of upper secondary education pupils attended independent compulsory operated by associations, foundations, companies and private individuals.

Conditions for setting up independent schools are set by law. The basic principle, stipulated in the Education Act, is that independent compulsory and upper secondary schools should provide education equivalent to that offered in public sector schools. They should reflect its general aims and inculcate democratic values. A further principle, also laid down by law, is that independent schools are open to all.

The National Agency for Education examines and – if the result proves satisfactory – approves independent compulsory schools. The agency

also entitles independent compulsory and upper secondary schools to municipal grants. Compulsory schools are free of charge, while upper secondary schools may charge fees. However, these must not be on an excessive level.

Around two-thirds of independent compulsory schools have a distinct profile. While over half of them comply with specific teaching principles, such as those of Montessori or Rudolf Steiner, others may be denominational or specialised in particular subjects, such as music or sports.

In addition to independent compulsory and upper secondary schools, there are also **independent schools for pupils with learning disabilities** at both compulsory and upper secondary level.

A number of independent institutions – of which many are schools of art and design and schools for crafts – provide so-called **supplementary education programmes** (*kompletterande utbildningar*) at upper secondary or post-secondary level. The programmes are often based on completed upper secondary studies and/or job experience and admission decisions are often based on an evaluation of samples of previous works, portfolios, auditions etc. The Government may give eligibility for governmental student financial assistance to a supplementary education programme if the course of study constitutes an especially valuable supplement, from a national point of view, to existing courses of study. If the education is an especially valuable supplement, the government may grant the right to state funds.

There are some private institutions within **higher education**, all of them receiving state subsidies. Three of these institutions have the right to award qualifications in undergraduate as well as postgraduate courses (Chalmers University of Technology, the University College of Jönköping and the Stockholm School of economics). A further seventeen educational organisers have been granted permission to award different qualifications at the undergraduate level, such as – among others – Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Diploma in Theology or Bachelor of Theology and Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy. Students at an independent university or university college with the right to award degrees are entitled to receive financial support.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

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### 2.1 Pre-school activities

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Under the Education Act, municipalities are required to provide pre-school activities (public or private) for children 1-5 years old, whose parents are gainfully employed or pursuing studies, or for children requiring special support. The aim of these activities is to create favourable learning conditions and to stimulate a child's physical and mental development. As from 1 January 2003, all children should be offered a place in the pre-school as of the autumn term in the year they become four. Pre-school will be free of charge for 4 –5 year olds for three hours a day during the school term. Children between 1 – 5 years, whose parents are unemployed or on parental leave for care of another child, shall have the right to pre-school for at least three hours a day or 15 hours a week.

Pre-school activities are operated in the form of pre-schools (*förskola*), family day care homes (*familjedaghem*) and open pre-school activities (*öppen förskola*).

#### 2.1.1 Organisation

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Most **pre-schools** (*förskolor*) are run by municipalities. However, the number of private pre-schools (with municipal funding support) has increased steadily over the last five years. In 2003, around 16 percent of all children in pre-schools attended a private institution. Parental co-operatives are the most common form of private pre-schools. A municipality can grant approval to pre-schools under private management. These are under supervision of the municipality, which has the right to issue special instructions and to withdraw approval.

Pre-schools are usually open Monday to Friday, all year round and for most of the day. All pre-schools are co-educational and mixed aged groups are predominant.

In the **family day care home** (*familjedaghem*) a child minder takes care of registered children in the child minder's home.

**Open pre-school activities** (*öppen förskola*) is a drop-in form of activity for social and educational stimulus, primarily designed for children who do not attend any other form of day-care.

Pre-school activities are jointly financed by the municipal budget (consisting of state grants and local tax revenues) and parental fees. The fees are often income-related and taking account of the number of children participating in the activities in a family and of the number of hours in care. According to a new reform, municipalities may since 1 January 2002 introduce a maximum fee system in all childcare activity. The maximum fee for pre-school activities and school-age childcare is based on a fixed percent of income, ranging from three percent (maximum SEK 1,260) for a child in pre-school activities to no fee for the fourth child. All municipalities have introduced the maximum fee system.

The pre-school activities are regulated under the Education Act. The aims and capacity of pre-schools are decided upon by Parliament, whereas the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the preparation of laws and proposals related to pre-school classes. The responsibility for supervising pre-schools nationwide lies with the National Agency for Education.

#### 2.1.2 Curriculum for the pre-school

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Since 1998, the aims and responsibilities of the pre-school (*förskola*) have been regulated in a national curriculum replacing the pedagogical program, which earlier provided their guidelines. Other forms of pre-school activities work by guidelines issued by the National Agency of Education. The educational principles of the pre-school curriculum are built around the idea that welfare and education are linked. Care, nurturing and learning should form an integrated approach. Play is underlined as a key factor in learning.

The curriculum does not lay down the specific means by which goals are to be attained – these are determined by those working in the pre-school. There is neither a syllabus nor are there any regulations regarding the allocation of time

to the various activities. Some pre-schools employ specific educational methods, e.g. Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf etc.

### 2.1.3 Teachers

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Pre-schools are staffed by pre-school teachers and childcare attendants. These two professional categories as well as child minders are municipal employees. Staff in private institutions are employed by that institution.

The director or supervisor of the pre-school is responsible for the regular planning of the centre's work. The staff works in teams where the particular knowledge and competence of each member of staff can be utilised to fulfil the objectives of the curriculum. Parents are encouraged to participate in the activities whenever they want to.

Training for pre-school teachers takes place at universities and university colleges. From 1 June 2001, an integrated teaching degree has been introduced, in which the earlier degree in Child and Youth Training has been replaced by a teaching degree for teaching in pre-school, pre-school classes and the first years of the compulsory school. The training lasts for three and a half years (140 credits).

### 2.1.4 Statistics

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In 2003, there were around 350,000 children enrolled in pre-schools and almost 34,000 children in family day-care centres (all day child care for children between 0-5 and part time child care for children 6-12). There were around 6,000 pre-schools. There were also around 550 open pre-schools.

The number of children per annual full-time equivalent employee in pre-school was 5.7. Around 82 percent of all children aged 1-5 were enrolled in pre-school activities in 2003.

The number of staff employed in pre-schools was corresponding to around 65,000 annual workers. In addition there were 7,700 child minders.

Source: the National Agency for Education, report 218 "Child Care and School Statistics 2002".

## 2.2 Pre-school class

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The pre-school class (*försköleklass*) is part of the school system and is intended for 6-year olds. Pupils attend one year before they start compulsory education. The aim is to stimulate every child's development and to provide a sound base for education in compulsory school. It is compulsory for the municipalities to provide pre-school class for all children, attendance is however voluntary. Although optional, nearly all six year olds (over 90 percent) are enrolled. The remaining six-year-olds are normally already enrolled in compulsory education.

The pre-school class was introduced in January 1998 replacing the special activities previously run for six-year-olds within the framework of the pre-school. The reason for this reform was to support the integration of different parts of the school system, as regards premises, staff and educational activities. In most cases today, the pre-school class is organised together with the compulsory school (*grundskola*).

The pre-school class is regulated under the Education Act. The aims and capacity of pre-school classes are decided upon by Parliament, whereas the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the preparation of laws and proposals related to pre-school classes. The responsibility for supervising pre-school classes nation-wide lies with the National Agency for Education.

Pre-school classes are, like the rest of the school system, financed by the municipal budget, which consists of state grants and local tax revenues. Education is free of charge.

A municipality can grant approval to pre-school classes under private management. These are under supervision of the municipality, which has the right to issue special instructions and to withdraw approval.

### 2.2.1 Organisation

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Pre-school classes are taught for 3 hours/day, mostly in the morning, for a minimum of 525 hours per year. The majority of children combine pre-school class with attendance in a leisure-time centre, pre-school or with a registered child minder. Around three quarters of children enrolled in the pre-school class are also enrolled in leisure-time centres. For more information on leisure time centres, see chapter 3.5.

Most pre-school classes are organised in a school, but they may also be organised in a pre-school. Normally, pupils attend the pre-school class closest to their homes. Classes are always co-educational.

## 2.2.2 Curriculum

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Education in the pre-school class should stimulate each child's development and learning and provide a basis for further schooling. As from 1 August 1998, the aims and responsibilities of the pre-school class are regulated by the national curriculum for compulsory education, decided by the Government. The curriculum was adapted to include pre-school classes and leisure-time centres. There are no special syllabi nor timetable for the pre-school class.

On the basis of the curriculum, each municipality is obliged to adopt a school plan. Within the framework of the curriculum and the school plan the school head; teachers and pupils are free to adapt content, organisation and working methods to local conditions. Teachers are free in their choice of teaching materials.

## 2.2.3 Assessment/certification

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Children are not assessed at the end of pre-school-class. A regular dialogue should be carried out between the child's parents and the teaching staff on the well-being, development and educational progress of the child.

## 2.2.4 Teachers

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Staff in municipal pre-school classes is municipal employees. Staff in private institutions are employed by that institution. Teaching in pre-school classes is mainly carried out by pre-school teachers, but could also be carried out by compulsory schoolteachers and leisure-time pedagogues. The training course for pre-school teachers and leisure-time pedagogues takes place at universities and university colleges. From 1 June 2001, an integrated teaching degree has been introduced, in which the earlier degree in Child and Youth Training has been replaced by a teaching degree for teaching in pre-school, pre-school classes and the first years of the compulsory school. The training lasts for three and a half years (140 credits).

## 2.2.5 Statistics

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In school year 2003/04, there were 89,500 children enrolled in pre-school classes. Many of these children (75 percent in 2003) were also enrolled in pre-schools, family day-care centres or leisure-time centres. Almost all pre-school classes are part of a compulsory school.

Pre-school classes employed 7,009 annual workers of which almost three quarters were pre-school teachers. The pupil/teacher ratio was 12,8.

Source: *the National Agency for Education, report 218 "Child Care and School Statistics 2002"*.

## 3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

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Compulsory education in Sweden takes the form of a 9-year comprehensive school (*grundskola*) for children aged 7 to 16. If parents so wish children may start school when they are 6 and finish nine years later.

The compulsory school system comprises compulsory schools (*grundskolan*), Sami schools (*sameskolan*) for Sami-speaking children in the north of the country, special schools (*specialskolan*) for the deaf and hard of hearing and compulsory education for children with learning disabilities (*särskolan*).

All compulsory schooling is co-educational and provided free of charge. Almost all pupils in compulsory education (around 96 percent) attend compulsory schools run by the municipalities, usually in their local area. The Education Act states, however, that parents and pupils should be able to make a choice concerning compulsory education. As far as possible, parents' wishes for their children to attend a particular public school within the municipality should be considered. Parents can also choose between public and private schools.

The municipalities are obliged to provide pupils with all the materials necessary for schoolwork. School meals, health care and school transports are also free of charge.

### 3.1 Organization

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Schools are free to make their own decisions about the organisation of the school, the teaching arrangements and size of classes. Pupils may be taught in groups of the same age or in mixed age groups. Groups with pupils of the same age is the most common.

The individual teacher decides on the appropriate teaching methods, the selection of topics to be covered in lessons (within the framework of the syllabus, the local school plan and the school's work plan) and the choice of teaching material. Under the terms of the Education Act and the curriculum, pupils should have an influence over the organisation of teaching and, as they get older and more mature, are given increasing responsibility for their own work at school.

The school year is divided into two terms and should comprise not less than 178 and not more than 190 school days (Monday-Friday) and 12 days of holiday. Attendance is compulsory for a maximum of eight hours per day (six hours in the two first years of school). Usually, school days are shorter, especially for the younger children.

The autumn term lasts from the end of August to the end of December, the spring term from the beginning of January to the beginning of June. The exact dates vary from year to year and from one municipality to another.

### 3.2 Curriculum

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From the school year 1998/99, compulsory school and the pre-school class share a common curriculum. The curriculum is also applied to the leisure-time centre. The aim is to support the integration of activities to reach the goals of the compulsory school. Leisure-time centres are described in chapter 3.5.

The curriculum sets out the underlying values and basic objectives and guidelines of the school system. Goals and guidelines are specified for the following areas: knowledge, norms and values, responsibility and influence of pupils, choice of education – work and civic life, assessment and grades, responsibility of the school head.

The objectives are of two kinds, a) goal to aim for and b) goals to be attained. The goals to aim for indicate the orientation of the school's activities, whilst the goals to be attained set the minimum level of skills pupils should have attained. In addition, there is a nationally defined syllabus for each individual subject, stating the objectives, which are to be achieved by the end of years 5 and 9. This provides an opportunity for a nation-wide evaluation of the school's performance after the fifth year and at the end of compulsory education. National tests in Swedish, English and mathematics are optional for schools in year 5 and mandatory in year 9.

The **timetable**, which forms part of the Education Act and as such has been adopted by Parliament, guarantees each pupil a minimum

of 6,665 hours of teaching throughout the nine years of compulsory education. The timetable also gives the number of hours for each subject. The municipalities and the schools themselves are able to decide on the distribution of the guaranteed teaching time across the nine years of schooling. Swedish, English (which is the first foreign language) and mathematics occupy a prominent position in compulsory school. A pass grade is required in these subjects to be admitted to a national programme in upper secondary education (*gymnasieskolan*). All pupils have the right to choose a second foreign language in addition to English.

The hours set aside for pupils' options mean that individual pupils can deepen their studies in one or more subjects. Individual schools may also, within certain limits, develop a distinctive profile of their own by allocating more hours to specific subjects, such as music, physical education and health or foreign languages.

A pilot project with local timetables started in the autumn of 2000. 79 municipalities with about 900 schools are allowed to design their own timetables in order to create a more flexible organisation and to meet the needs of every pupil. The pilot project will continue until 2005. Evaluation and research projects will give the government a basis for a final decision on the future of the national timetable.

#### TIMETABLE

(Stipulates the number of teaching hours for each subject or group of subjects over the 9 years of compulsory school)

Subject	Hours as of
	1 January 1998
	Min. hours
Swedish	1,490
English	480
Mathematics	900
Geography	885
History	
Religion	
Civics	
Biology	800
Physics	
Chemistry	
Technology	
Art	230
Home and consumer studies	118
Physical education and health	500
Music	230
Crafts	330

Modern languages (except English)	320
Pupils' choice	382
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,665</b>
Of which	600
Choice of the school (decided locally)	

### 3.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

Grades are awarded from the eighth year of compulsory school onwards and relate the pupils' achievements to the national objectives stated in the syllabus for the subject. The grades are: Pass, Pass with Distinction and Pass with Special Distinction. The levels are related to national criteria for grade 9, established by the National Agency of Education.

Pupils completing their compulsory schooling obtain a leaving certificate, signed by the school head.

National tests in Swedish, English and mathematics at the end of year 9 ensure that the grading is comparable. A pupil who does not achieve the goals set out in the syllabus for year 9 does not receive a grade in that subject, but will instead be given a written assessment. Throughout compulsory school, pupils and their parents are to be given regular progress reports, including meetings to discuss development. These meetings are usually held every term and the teacher, parents and pupil participate.

Educational and vocational guidance is provided throughout compulsory school and many schools have special staff for this task.

### 3.4 Teachers

To qualify as a teacher a person must have completed a Swedish teacher-training programme or the equivalent certification from another Member State of the European Union or an EFTA country.

Teachers are municipal employees and they work full-time as well as part-time. Teachers in independent schools are employed by the schools. The State however requires teachers to be properly qualified to teach. Teachers without appropriate qualifications may be employed for a maximum of 12 months if qualified staff is not available. This temporary contract may be renewed if qualified staff is still not available when the contract finishes.

Teachers in compulsory school are trained at universities and university colleges. The majority of teachers now in service have been trained in the following way: junior level teachers for years 1 to 3 and intermediate level teachers for years 4 to 6 have completed separate integrated training programmes lasting 2 ½ years and 3 years respectively; whilst teachers specialised in a certain subject for years 7 to 9 was required to have a higher education degree in their subject(s), plus a diploma awarded on completion of a one-year course in the theory and practice of teaching.

An integrated study programme for the compulsory school was introduced in 1988, with two branches of study: for teachers of years 1 to 7 and 4 to 9 respectively. Education for years 1 to 7 takes 3½–4 years. Students could choose between three different variations of the basic curriculum and may also specialise in one of two different subject areas. Trainees for years 4 to 9 could specialise in one of five areas, and study between 3½ and 4½ years, depending on their specialisation. They could also extend their subject studies to qualify for service in the upper secondary school. In addition, there was an alternative training route for teachers for years 4 to 9, where subjects could be studied in different combinations. This was followed by one year of practical pedagogical training.

From 1 June 2001, an integrated teaching degree has been introduced, incorporating eight of the earlier teaching degrees (from pre-school to upper secondary school). The degree in Education for the Compulsory School has been replaced by a teaching degree (*Lärarexamen*) with a specialization in 'teaching in the first years of the compulsory school or in the higher levels of the compulsory school'.

The training lasts from three and a half to four and a half years (140 – 180 credits).

Remedial teachers follow an extended study programme, lasting for one year or more, after their basic training as compulsory schoolteachers. According to the new teacher training, all teachers will follow a basic course in education in special needs. In addition, there is a possibility to take extra courses or take a degree as a special educationalist. Teachers of practical and artistic subjects are trained at special university colleges. They can specialise in one area but are also able, within a training programme for compulsory schoolteachers, to opt for a combination of their main subject with one or two others.

Supervised teaching practice, equivalent to one term's full-time study, is a requirement in all teacher training.

The municipalities, which are the employers of teachers, have the responsibility for the in-service training of teachers. For in-post teachers, universities and colleges arrange in-service training courses of varying length. The municipality decides which teachers to send. The extent of in-service training is decided locally.

### 3.5 Leisure-time centres

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For children who need further care before or after the activities in pre-school classes or compulsory school and during school holidays, there is out of school hours provision. This consists of leisure-time centres (*fritidshem*), family day care homes (*familjedaghem*) and open leisure-time activities (*öppen fritidsverksamhet*). Most children who are enrolled in leisure-time centres are 6 to 9 years of age, whilst open leisure-time activities are for children 10 to 12 years of age. Over 74 percent of the pupils aged 6 to 9 years are enrolled in leisure-time centres.

Activities in leisure-time centres are often an integrated part of school. It is also becoming increasingly common for leisure-time centres and schools to share the same premises and also for staff to work both in the time in school and outside school hours. As from 1 August 1998, the national curriculum for compulsory education has been adjusted to also regulate the activities in leisure-time centres, as well as the pre-school class (*förskoloklass*).

### 3.6 Statistics

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In school year 2003/04, there were 1,046,441 pupils enrolled in around 5,041 schools. 11 percent of the schools were run by private organisers.

There were 83,784 teachers (annual workers) working in the compulsory school. The pupil/teacher ratio was 12.5.

In the spring of 2003, 109,378 pupils finished compulsory school. Almost all of these (98 %) continued into upper secondary education the autumn of the same year.

Source: the National Agency for Education, report 218 "Child Care and School Statistics 2002".

## 4. POST COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

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All municipalities are obliged by law to provide upper secondary education for all pupils leaving compulsory school and must offer a comprehensive selection of national programmes. In principle, students are entitled to study their first choice subjects. Upper secondary education is voluntary and free of charge. General and vocational education are integrated in the upper secondary school (*gymnasieskola*) and all national and specially designed programmes give general eligibility for entrance to higher education.

The right to start upper secondary school applies up to and including the calendar year in which the pupil turns 20. Thereafter there is an opportunity to take part in adult upper secondary education. Almost all compulsory school leavers (98 percent) continue studying in upper secondary school.

A compulsory school-leaving certificate qualifies pupils to apply for upper secondary school. However, in order to pursue a national programme or a specially designed programme pupils are required to have at least pass grades in Swedish, English and mathematics from the compulsory school.

### National programmes

There are seventeen nationally determined programmes. All of these provide a broad-based general education and give general eligibility for entrance to higher education. They also prepare for working life. All programmes contain the same eight core subjects. In addition, pupils take subjects, which are specific to their programmes. Out of the 17 programmes, 14 have a more vocational orientation and prepare pupils for the world of work.

The national programmes are frameworks within which the pupils can choose various specialisations. Most national programmes are divided into branches for the second and third year. In addition, municipalities may choose to set up local branches adapted to local needs and conditions.

The following national programmes are available

- **The Arts Programme** – Broad basic training for work in the arts.
- **The Business and Administration**

**Programme** – For work in retailing and in the service sector such as commerce, travel and tourism.

- **The Child Recreation Programme** – For work taking care of people in all ages in pedagogical and social vocational areas as well as in the culture and the leisure sectors, for example, child care, leisure activities, health care, sports and librarianship.
- **The Construction Programme** – For work in building and renovating houses and non-residential constructions.
- **The Electrical Engineering Programme** – For work in electrical production, installation, service and maintenance as well as with automation, electronics and computer technology.
- **The Energy Programme** – For work in the repair and maintenance of energy technology plants, technical systems in the power industry, property and shipping as well as the installations and service of VVS (heating, ventilation and sanitation), refrigeration and heat pump systems.
- **The Food Programme** – For work in the food industry, retailing and closely related areas such as processing and sales of foodstuff.
- **The Handicraft Programme** – For work in various handicraft areas.
- **The Health Care Programme** – For work with people, in health and medical care as well as care of the young or elderly.
- **The Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Programme** – For work in hotels and restaurants as e.g. a receptionist, conference organiser, waiter or chef.
- **The Industrial Programme** – For work in industrial manufacturing and other areas where competencies in manufacturing, maintenance and service is required.
- **The Media Programme** – For work in the communications area, e.g. advertising, various forms of design as well as the production of print media.
- **The Natural Resource Use Programme** – For work in agriculture, forestry, horticulture and horticultural complexes with horses, veterinary care, fishing, aqua culture, hunting, wildlife conservation, tourism as

well as environmental and nature preservation.

- **The Natural Science Programme** – Orientation mainly for further studies in i.a. mathematics, natural science and technology.
- **The Social Science Programme** – Oriented mainly on further studies in social sciences, humanities, economics and languages.
- **The Technology Programme** – For developing and stimulating interest in technology and technological development in a broad sense and to develop basic knowledge of technologies.
- **The Vehicle Engineering Programme** – For work in the repair and maintenance of vehicles and aircraft and transport using various types of vehicles.

### Other programmes

Students with interests other than those covered by the national programmes can opt to follow a **specially designed programme**. It corresponds to a national programme in terms of the level of education and length of study, but may in addition combine courses from different national programmes and/or locally devised courses. An **individual programme** can be followed by a student who leaves compulsory school without the necessary qualification to enter one of the national programmes. The aim is to help and assist students to transfer at a later stage to a national or specially designed programme. Since the individual programme must support and follow the student's needs and interest, it can vary in both length and content.

There is also a form of **apprenticeship programme** in upper secondary education in form of a pilot scheme. The content of the training is regulated by a contract between the pupil, the school, and the workplace. The programme must meet the same goals as other national programmes (the pupils study the eight core subjects) and also leads to basic eligibility for higher education studies.

## 4.1 Organization

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The vast majority of upper secondary schools are municipal and most students attend the school in the municipality where they live. The number of pupils normally varies between 300 and 1,500. All schools are co-educational. Various types of education within one school can be located in different buildings, and in many places upper secondary pupils and

students in municipal adult education share the same building.

Most of the independent (private) upper secondary schools are found in major urban areas and there are great variations between them in terms of programmes on offer. The average number of pupils in independent upper secondary schools is approximately 140.

The school year has the same allocation of time in compulsory and upper secondary school. It is divided into two terms and should comprise not less than 178 and not more than 190 school days (Monday–Friday) and 12 days of holiday. The autumn term lasts from the end of August to the end of December, the spring term from the beginning of January to the beginning of June. The exact dates vary from year to year and from one municipality to another.

## 4.2 Curriculum

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There is one **curriculum** for the upper secondary school (*gymnasieskola*) and for other types of non-compulsory schools: municipal adult education (*komvux*), the Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning (*Centrum för flexibelt lärande*), the upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities (*gymnasiesärskola*) and municipal education for adults with learning disabilities (*särvux*). The introductory section sets out the basic values and tasks that apply to the whole of the non-compulsory educational system. Other sections deal with the specific tasks and goals of the different types of non-compulsory schools.

The curriculum sets out the underlying values and basic objectives and guidelines of the school system. Goals and guidelines are specified for the following areas: knowledge, norms and values, responsibility and influence of pupils, choice of education - work and civic life, assessment and grades, responsibility of the school head. The goals specify the educational orientation of the school and are, as in the curriculum for compulsory school, of two kinds: goals to aim for and goals to be attained.

**Programme goals** and **syllabi** supplement the curriculum. There are programme goals for all national programmes and syllabi for all subjects, stating not only the aims and goals of the course but also the minimum knowledge to be attained by pupils on completion of the course.

The **credit plan** for national programmes is attached to the Education Act. The municipality or the school decide when different subjects are to be studied, how long the lessons should be

and how much time should be allocated to each course.

All national programmes contain eight core subjects. They account for approximately one third of the total teaching time of upper secondary education. The core subjects are Swedish/Swedish as a second language, Social studies, English, Mathematics, Physical education and health, the Arts, Science general and Religion.

In addition to the core subjects, pupils take subjects, which are specific to their programme. All pupils are also to carry out a project work during their course of studies. In all programmes time is provided for local supplements and individual choice to allow pupils to choose additional subjects and courses within the national programmes.

In the 14 national programmes with vocational orientation, at least 15 weeks of the pupils' total time should be spent on training at a workplace. The school is responsible for procuring such training opportunities and for supervising pupils under such training.

### 4.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

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Assessment in upper secondary education is a continuous process, i.e. marks are awarded on the completion of every course and not for individual subjects or for each term. Marks are also given for special project work.

Marks are awarded on a four-category scale: Fail, Pass, Pass with Distinction and Pass with Special Distinction. Pupils are not compared with one another, but measured in relation to the goals for the entire course. The criteria for awarding marks are specified in the different syllabi. To support this, centrally compiled tests have been developed in certain subjects.

At the end of upper secondary education students receive a leaving certificate, which summarises the marks they have achieved in all courses studied. All three-year programmes meet the general eligibility requirements for access to studies at institutions of higher education. The three programmes, which focus more on university entrance, also meet most of the specific entrance requirements.

Overall responsibility for educational guidance has been given to the school head of upper secondary school. They have to ensure that the pupils obtain guidance on the educational choices available at the school as well as guidance to further studies and vocational training. Contact with working life is an integral part of education. Co-operation between

schools and the world of work takes place in the joint committees for the programmes of local upper secondary schools. Some municipalities also have joint planning committees.

### 4.4 Teachers

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Teachers of general subjects have a university degree in two or three subjects. They have also received one year's training in the theory and practice of teaching, subsequent to their subject studies. The minimum requirements for the award of a Master of Education for the Upper Secondary School are four years' study with 2 years for the main subject, 1½ year for other subjects (2 years for modern languages, Swedish, civics or artistic-practical subjects) and one year's pedagogical training. Upper secondary schools also employ specialist teachers with a doctoral degree or similar qualification. All teachers are municipal employees and they may work full-time as well as part-time.

From 1 July 2001, an integrated, teaching degree has been introduced, incorporating eight of the previous teaching degrees (from pre-school to upper secondary school). The degree in Education at Upper Secondary School has been replaced by a teaching degree for teaching in the higher levels of the compulsory school and upper secondary school.

Vocational teaching in upper secondary schools is provided by specialist teachers with advanced economic or technical qualifications or by vocational teachers who have completed vocational training and studies of vocational theory. In addition, they have gained a long professional experience and undergone teacher training at universities or university colleges.

The municipalities, which are the employers of teachers, also have the responsibility for the in-service training of teachers. Teachers in independent schools are employed by the school.

### 4.5 Statistics

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In 2003/2004 there were 333,928 pupils in upper secondary education. There were 736 upper secondary schools, of which 31 percent were run by private organisers and 3 percent by county councils.

There were 33,283 annual working teachers in upper secondary education. The pupil/teacher ration was 10.

Percentage of students per type of programme, school year 2003/04:

Individual programmes	7,2 %
Specially designed programmes	7,4 %
National programmes	84,6 %
whereof	
Natural sciences	14,1 %
Social sciences	26,4 %
Technology	6,6 %
14 Vocationally oriented programmes	52,8 %

Almost all pupils (97,8 %) leaving compulsory school in the spring of 2002 were enrolled in upper secondary education the following autumn.

Almost 73 percent of pupils who had started upper secondary education in 1998 had completed an upper secondary program within the next four years.

Around 42,6 % of the pupils who completed upper secondary education in the spring 1999 had begun higher education studies within the next three years. About ten years earlier the share was around 24 percent.

Source: the National Agency for Education, report 244 part 2 "Children, pupils and personal -nation level 2003".

"Descriptive data on childcare, school and adult education in Sweden 2003."

## 5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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Already in 1970 the then existing different types of schools for theoretical and vocational education at upper secondary level were amalgamated into one school, the *gymnasieskola* designed to accommodate all young adults. In the mid -1990's a reform of upper secondary education was implemented in which all upper secondary school programmes were extended to three years and the same core subjects were introduced for all programmes. All national study programmes in upper secondary

education thus provide a broad-based general education and gives general eligibility for entrance to higher education. Although fifteen of the programmes have a vocational orientation, the distinction is not made between vocational and general upper secondary education. For information on vocational training, please see the section on post-compulsory secondary education.

## 6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

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Tertiary education in Sweden is divided into undergraduate studies and postgraduate studies and is undertaken at **universities** (*universitet*) and **university colleges** (*högskola*). There is no specific non-university tertiary education. Undergraduate studies at university colleges are equivalent to those at university. The difference between these types of institutions regards the postgraduate studies and research possibilities.

In addition to the 13 state universities and 23 state university colleges, there are some private institutions within tertiary education, all of them receiving state subsidies. Three of these institutions have the right to award qualifications in undergraduate as well as postgraduate courses (Chalmers University of Technology, the University College of Jönköping and the Stockholm School of Economics). A further twenty educational organisers have been granted permission to award different qualifications at the undergraduate level, such as – among others – Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Diploma in Theology or Bachelor of Theology and Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy.

Students at an independent university or university college with the right to award degrees are entitled to receive financial support.

State-run universities and university colleges are considered as central government agencies and their employees are civil servants.

### 6.1 Admission requirements

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To be admitted to undergraduate studies in Sweden, a student must first fulfil the basic qualifications for eligibility, which are common to all programmes or courses, and then meet the specific eligibility requirements, which are usually imposed on applicants by the individual university or university college. The latter requirements vary according to the field of education.

Those with a school-leaving certificate for any upper secondary national programme showing a 'Pass' for at least 90 percent of the credits required or an equivalent knowledge, have basic eligibility. Those, at least 25 years of age and having been employed for at least 4 years

or having an equivalent experience and a knowledge of Swedish and English equivalent to a completed upper secondary national programme, also have basic eligibility.

If the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of places available, a selection must be made. At least one third of study places intended for new students must be allocated on the basis of school grades, and at least another third must be allocated according to the results of the University Aptitude Test or a combination of such results and work experience. The University Aptitude Test is suited to all forms of undergraduate studies, and measures knowledge and skills of importance in studies at tertiary level. For the selection of students of fine arts and some other specific study programmes, special tests are used.

If there is cause, the institution of higher education may exempt applicants from any eligibility requirement or requirements i.e. if the applicants have the ability to benefit from the education for which they have applied without fulfilling the qualifications for eligibility.

### 6.2 Fees/financial support for students

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In Sweden all public higher education is free of charge.

Another basic principle is that all students who want help to finance their studies (cost of living) can receive assistance from the central government for this purpose. This support is a combination of a non-repayable grant and a larger repayable loan and may be awarded for both full-time and part-time studies. **The current study support system was introduced on 1 July 2001.** For a student pursuing full-time studies, the level of support equals 1,725 kronor per week i.e. 34,500 kronor (about 3,790 euro) per term of full time studies 2004. The grant is 34.5 percent (in certain circumstances, a higher grant can be awarded). The study allowance is calculated on a study unit of one week, and normally support is granted for a maximum of 240 weeks (12 terms).

To obtain financial support certain requirements must be met. To receive financial support over a period of years, students must pursue their studies with a certain rate of success. Students

earning above a certain level find their support reduced.

The financial support scheme applies to all students in undergraduate education at universities, university colleges.

### 6.3 Academic year

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The academic year comprises 40 weeks, divided into two terms. The autumn term usually runs from the middle or end of August to mid-January, the spring term runs from mid-January to the beginning of June. There is usually a two-week teaching break at Christmas.

### 6.4 Courses

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All undergraduate studies is given in the form of courses. The single-subject courses normally vary in length from 5 weeks to 1½ year. Universities and university colleges may link courses into a study programme with more or less scope for individual choice on the part of students taking the course. A first degree programme will generally take between 2 and 5 ½ years to complete.

For every course and study programme relevant study plans have been authorised by the institution of higher education concerned. The students themselves may also combine different courses into a degree programme.

The average study time is about 40 hours per week for full-time studies, including individual studies and group work. Study time is measured in credits; one week's full-time study is equivalent to one credit and one term's full-time study corresponds to 20 credits.

Instruction takes the form of lectures in large groups (up to around 300 students) and seminars/classes of up to about 30 students. Students are also expected to participate actively in group work, laboratory work and seminars. The language of instruction is usually Swedish, but a great deal of the compulsory course literature is in English.

A number of programmes include practical training in the relevant industry or the public sector. Sometimes practical training takes place during the summer vacation. In many programmes a large part of the final term is devoted to work on a degree project or paper. Students carry out these projects individually or in small groups.

### 6.5 Assessment/qualifications

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There are two kinds of degrees, **general** (*generella examina*) and **professional degrees** (*yrkesexamina*), in the system of undergraduate education.

Students are able to choose their study route freely and to combine different subject courses for a **general degree**. The general degrees are:

- **University College Diploma** (*högskoleexamen*) requiring 80 credits (2 years of study)
- **Bachelor's degree** (*kandidatexamen*) requiring 120 credits (3 years of study), including a paper of 10 credits in the major subject of 60 credits.
- **Master's degree (academic)** (*magisterexamen med ämnesdjup*) requiring 160 credits and in the main subject in-depth studies equivalent to 80 credits with a pass, of which 20 credits are for a single dissertation, or two separate dissertations of at least 10 credits each.
- **Master's degree (professional)** (*magisterexamen med ämnesbredd*), awarded after studies of at least 40 credits with a special orientation, to students who already have a degree of at least 120 credits (equivalent to 3 years of full-time studies) or the corresponding foreign degree. A dissertation of at least 10 credits is required.

There are about 55 different programmes leading to **professional degrees**. The professional degrees (*yrkesexamen*) are awarded upon completion of programmes of varying length (2 to 5½ years), leading to specific professions, e.g. University Diploma in Medicine or in Education.

For each degree, the scope and goals of the course are set out in the Degree Ordinance.

Students in all courses are subject to continuous examination, written and/or oral. There are, however, no final examinations which cover an entire three or five-year programme. This means that the students have to be prepared to give proof of the knowledge they have acquired regularly each semester.

General degrees of three or more years of study include the writing of a paper. The professional degrees – especially the longer degree programmes of three years or more – normally include a degree project.

Marks are generally awarded on a three-level scale: Fail, Pass and Pass with Distinction. Some

courses are only graded Fail and Pass, and some faculties, i.e. Engineering and Law, have other grading systems.

## 6.6 Teachers

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Each university and university college is entitled to decide on the establishment of chairs and the appointment of staff. The teaching staff is grouped into the following main categories: professors, lecturers (including senior lecturers), junior lecturers and research assistants. There are also part-time teachers and visiting lecturers. Teaching, research (or artistic development) and administration are part of the work of all categories of posts. The actual distribution of tasks is decided locally, by the university or university college.

Lecturers and research assistants must normally have a doctorate, while there is no such requirement for junior lecturers. Teaching skills have become increasingly important in the recruitment of teachers of all categories at universities and university colleges (also in the recruitment and appointment of professors). Employees at the public universities and university colleges are national civil servants.

## 6.7 Statistics

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In the autumn semester 2003, there were approximately 400,000 undergraduate students at the country's universities and university colleges. The share of women undergraduate students was 60 percent. Almost one fourth of the students were 35 years or older.

For the academic year 2002/03 the number of examinations passed in undergraduate education was approximately 43,000, of which 64 percent were taken by women. Nine out of ten degrees were awarded for studies of a minimum of three years.

The total number of employees at universities and university colleges equalled 53,100 full time positions, of which 18,240 were teachers and 9,240 had postgraduate studentship. Around 38 percent of teachers and 15 percent of the professors were women. 50 percent of all higher education teachers have a doctoral degree.

## 7. ADULT EDUCATION

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Adult education in Sweden is based on a long tradition. It is provided in many different forms and under many different auspices, ranging from municipal adult education to labour market programmes and personnel training and competence development at work.

The public school system for adults includes municipal adult education (*komvux*), post-secondary education, municipal education for adults with learning disabilities (*särvux*) and Swedish tuition for immigrants (*svenskundervisning för invandrare*). The National Agency for Flexible Learning develops new methods for distance learning, and also provides distance education courses for adults, primarily at upper secondary level. Other forms of adult education are offered by folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*) and adult education associations (*studieförbund*).

The Adult Education Initiative was a five-year programme, launched in 1997 and finished in December 2002, in order to boost adult education and training in Sweden.

Post secondary advanced vocational training for adults is also available in the scheme for Advanced Vocational Education (*kvalificerad yrkesutbildning – KY*).

Liberal adult education (*folkbildning*) has a long history in Sweden and is provided by 147 folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*) and by ten adult education associations (*studieförbund*).

Below will also be briefly described the so-called supplementary education programmes (*kompletterande utbildningar*), labour market training (*arbetsmarknadsutbildning*), on-the-job training and competence development.

A way of describing the complex system of adult education is to divide it in three main fields:

- **Basic and upper secondary school adult education.** This field encompasses municipal adult education, municipal education for adults with learning disabilities, Swedish tuition for immigrants, distance education equivalent to upper secondary school offered by the National Agency for Flexible Learning, as well as general courses (*allmänna kurser*) offered by folk high schools and some courses provided by study associations.
- **Post-secondary vocational education and training** (where admission in practice

requires completed upper secondary education or equivalent) encompassing additional training programmes (*påbyggnadsutbildningar*), advanced vocational education (*KY*) and certain labour market training. Some supplementary education programmes (*kompletterande utbildningar*) and some vocational education and training within popular adult education (folk high schools and study associations) can be included in this field.

- **Liberal adult education and some supplementary education.** This field includes folk high school courses and the study circles (*studiecirklar*) and cultural activities organised by study associations and certain supplementary education.

### 7.1 Specific legislative framework

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The public school system for adults (municipal adult education, municipal education for adults with learning disabilities, Swedish tuition for immigrants) is regulated under the Education Act and in a number of ordinances, both as regards organisation etc. and public funding. The right to basic education for adults who have not achieved the compulsory school-leaving certificate and the right for immigrants to obtain Swedish tuition for immigrants are stipulated by law.

The scheme for Advanced Vocational Education is regulated in a law and in an ordinance.

Some of the conditions for state grants e.g. to folk high schools are regulated by law. Some of the special aims of popular adult education are stated there but there are basically no rules - neither on how popular education should be organised nor regarding its content.

Supplementary education programmes (*kompletterande utbildningar*) are regulated in an ordinance on supplementary education.

Labour market training is regulated under the Employment training ordinance.

There is no legislation governing on-the-job training. Decisions related to competence development are made by the employer – with various degrees of influence exerted by the trade

unions. The conditions under which companies and organisations may purchase education and training services from municipalities and county councils are however stipulated by law.

Since 1975 all employees have been entitled by law to educational leave. The choice of study rests entirely with the individual. There are no restrictions on the duration of studies.

## 7.2 Administration

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The central and local authorities together with the different organisers are responsible for ensuring that activities are organised in line with national goals and guidelines, defined by Parliament and the Government. The **municipalities** are responsible for carrying out municipal adult education, municipal education for adults with learning disabilities and Swedish tuition for immigrants. The **State** finances and is responsible for the National Agency for Flexible Learning (CFL)

The CFL has two operational units located in different parts of the country, with the head office at a third location. **The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet)** is a non-governmental organisation responsible for the co-ordination, distribution of state grants and evaluation of educational activities in folk high schools and study associations.

Supplementary education programmes (*kompletterande utbildningar*) are state supervised programmes offered by private independent institutions or organisations.

## 7.3 Funding

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Municipal adult education, municipal education for adults with learning disabilities and Swedish tuition for immigrants are all parts of the public school system and are wholly funded by the municipal budget, which consists of state grants and local tax revenues. The activities of the National Agency for Flexible Learning and Advanced Vocational Education are funded by the state. Tuition is free of charge.

Slightly more than half of all supplementary education programmes (*kompletterande utbildningar*) receive governmental grants and/or give students eligibility for student aid and loans. The rest of the supplementary education programmes are only under state supervision and does neither receive

governmental grants nor give eligibility for governmental student financial assistance. The student has to pay registration and tuition fees at most of the schools.

Study associations and folk high schools are largely financed by funds from the State, county councils and municipalities. In addition, they have incomes from educational activities organised on a commission basis. State support to organisations and folk high schools is allocated by the Swedish National Council of Adult Education.

As regards labour market training, funds are allocated to the National Labour Market Board, which, in turn distributes funding to county labour boards and employment offices. These bodies are responsible for purchasing various training packages.

### Student financial support

Since one of the fundamental principles is that no one should be prevented from studying due to lack of financial resources, there are various financial support schemes provided by the state for adult students, normally consisting of grants (of various sizes) in combination with a repayable loan. Students have the right to student aid for both full-time and part-time studies.

People taking part in labour market training receive grants corresponding to the level of unemployment benefit.

## 7.4 Organisation

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### Municipal adult education (*komvux*)

Studies within **municipal adult education** lead to formal qualifications in individual subjects or to the equivalent of a leaving certificate from compulsory or upper secondary school. Education is organised in the form of separate courses, which should be arranged in such a way that students can study full-time, part-time or in their spare time and thus combine their studies with employment. Students are free to choose their own study programme and can combine studies at basic and upper secondary level.

### Basic adult education

Basic adult education corresponds to the nine-year compulsory school. This education is intended to provide a basis for community participation, vocational activity and further study. The level at which a student enters basic education depends on the initial qualifications

obtained. Studies are concluded when the individual education targets have been achieved. Students decide their own rate of progress. Basic education is a right for the individual and its provision is mandatory for the municipalities.

### Upper secondary adult education

All upper secondary education, be it for adults or young people have, as from 1994, the same syllabi and curriculum. Adult education is equivalent, but not identical, to youth upper secondary education. Municipal adult education consists of a number of courses in the different subjects, which follow on from each other. The courses provided can, however, differ from those in youth upper secondary education as regards emphasis, content and scope. The students themselves decide the number and combinations of subjects taken and the rate of progress. Many students take only one or two courses. Those completing the full programme can obtain a three-year upper secondary school leaving certificate. Both in basic adult education and upper secondary adult education studies can be combined with employment or work experience.

### Additional training programmes (PU)

Additional training programmes (*påbyggnadsutbildningar*) can provide further training in a particular occupation or train for a completely new one. Most of these programmes take between six months and a year to complete and focus for example on economics, information processing or tourism.

### Municipal education for adults with learning disabilities (*särvox*)

Municipal education for adults with learning disabilities is a type of school in its own right. It has the same curriculum as upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities. The programmes offered can lead to skills in individual subjects as well as equivalence to compulsory school or upper secondary vocational training for young students with learning disabilities.

### Swedish tuition for immigrants (*sfi*)

The municipalities are obliged to provide basic Swedish tuition for immigrants, for an average of 525 hours. The aim is to provide adult immigrants with basic knowledge and proficiency in the Swedish language as well as knowledge about Swedish society.

### National Agency for Flexible Learning

As a supplement to municipal adult education,

the National Agency for Flexible Learning (CFL) promotes the utilisation of flexible learning methods in adult education and liberal adult education, and complements the municipalities' own provision of adult education by offering certain courses by means of distance education. The agency has two major operational units: one in Härnösand and one in Norrköping. The head office is in Hässleholm. Participants are recruited from all over the country and the agency caters for students who for various reasons are unable to attend courses within municipal adult education.

### The Adult Education Initiative

The Adult Education Initiative (*Kunskapslyftet*) was a five-year programme for adult education, which was established on 1 July 1997 and finished in 2002. It was part of the Government's strategy to reduce unemployment. Central and local government were joining forces in an effort to raise the overall educational level by providing those with lower levels of education with a chance to acquire knowledge in the core subjects equivalent to upper secondary level. The initiative was also designed to develop and upgrade adult education and training in terms of both content and methodology. Even if the initiative now is ended special funds are still allocated to the municipalities for adult education up to and including 2005.

### Advanced Vocational Education

Advanced Vocational Education (*kvalificerad yrkesutbildning, KY*) is a post-secondary education in which one third of the time is used for learning at a workplace. This form of education distinguishes itself from the traditional traineeship period by its hand-on approach and problem-solving activities in an overall educational context. The courses are based on close co-operation between working life and various course providers (upper secondary schools, municipal adult education institutions, higher education institutions and educational enterprises). The aim is to satisfy the needs of the labour market for skilled labour with appropriate competence in the production of goods and services using modern technologies. The courses are open to those coming directly from upper secondary school and to people who are already gainfully employed and wish to develop their skills within a defined area. Completed upper secondary education or equivalent knowledge is required for eligibility. A course consisting of at least 40 credits one year, 40 weeks' full-time study or more will lead to an Advanced Vocational Education Diploma (*Kvalificerad yrkesexamen*).

### Liberal adult education (*folkbildning*)

Sweden has a long history of a popular-based system of decentralised education and course activities (*folkbildning*). Nine study associations and 147 folk high schools work with these activities in close co-operation with a variety of non-governmental organisations.

Liberal adult education is available to everyone and aims at reaching groups who often remain outside other educational systems: those who only have elementary education, the disabled, immigrants and the unemployed. The goal is to reduce the education gaps among people and to strengthen and develop democracy by stimulating the individual citizen's participation in society. Interest in culture is to be broadened and the individual's own creativity to be furthered.

Folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*), many of them residential, provide both long-term and short-term courses. Some courses can qualify students for university studies. Tuition is free of charge but students pay for their own board and lodging. State assistance may be granted to cover part of the cost.

The study associations' (*studieförbund*) activities consist above all of study circles, but the associations are also able to organise studies corresponding to those offered by the school system and within higher education.

### Supplementary education programmes

A number of independent institutions – of which many are schools of art and design and schools for crafts – provide so-called supplementary education programmes (*kompletterande utbildningar*) at upper secondary or post-secondary level. The programmes are often based on completed upper secondary studies and/or job experience and admission decisions are often based on an evaluation of samples of previous works, portfolios, auditions etc.

### Labour market training

Labour market training (*arbetsmarknadsutbildning*) is an instrument of labour market policy primarily intended as basic vocational or further training for the unemployed. Labour market training consists of specially designed training courses and of training provided within the regular education system. County labour boards or employment offices purchase various training packages from, for example municipal adult education, commercial training companies or the Employment Group (*Lernia*).

There is no formal system for recognition of further skills and competencies acquired by the unemployed in government-funded training programmes. Normally the person having

undergone labour market training receives a document describing what is included in the training.

### On-the-job training and competence development

Many workplaces have extensive programmes for employees at all levels. In-house training of this kind may involve anything from practical vocational training to extensive theoretical studies. In addition to this there are the various more or less organised forms of training, through e.g. supervision, job rotation, instruction and study visits.

A survey shows that approximately 70 percent of the on-the-job training is carried out within individual companies concerned. The second most important category of in-house training and training courses are organised by suppliers in connection with the delivery of new equipment. Private companies and public employers also purchase education from the public education system or from private organisers, e.g. the universities and university colleges, municipal adult education, the Employment Group or various commercial training companies.

In-company training does sometimes result in a diploma or course certificate. In general, however, diplomas are not widely used outside the public educational system.

## 7.5 Statistics

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### Municipal adult education

In 2002/03 there were approximately 292,700 students in municipal adult education (including basic, upper secondary and supplementary adult education, education for adults with learning disabilities and Swedish tuition for immigrants). The overwhelming majority of these, 197,552 took part in upper secondary studies, whilst 40,010 were enrolled in basic adult education and 6,735 in supplementary education.

The most common courses were upper secondary computer studies, upper secondary mathematics, social studies and upper secondary English.

Approximately two-thirds of the students were women and barely a quarter were born abroad. The number of students with a foreign background was highest in basic adult education (68,6 percent).

### National Agency for Flexible Learning

In 2003 the CFL had 11,647 students. Almost all of them studied at upper secondary level. About 57 percent of them were women.

### Advanced Vocational Education

As from 2003 there are around 13,000 students in KY in 400 different courses.

The average age of the students are 29 years. A little less than half of the students are women.

### Swedish tuition for immigrants

In 2002/03 there were 43,851 participants in Sfi. Of these 32 percent were refugees, 1,5 percent were applying for a permit and the rest were immigrants. About 58 percent of them were women. The number of teachers (full-time members of staff) was 1,292.

### Municipal education for adults with learning disabilities

There were 4,713 students in this type of education in school year 2003/04. Nearly 44 percent of these studied at compulsory level, 34 percent at training school level and the remaining 22 percent at upper secondary school level. The number of teachers (full-time members of staff) was 246. The average number of pupils per group was 2,7 and students had on the average 2.7 teaching hours per week. Nearly half of the pupils were women. The average age of the students was 38.

### Folk High Schools

There are 147 folk high schools in Sweden. Of these 44 are owned by municipalities or county councils, whilst 103 are run by various popular movements, organisations and supporting bodies.

During autumn 2003 approximately 108,000 persons took part in folk high school courses. Approximately 25 percent attend long courses (one semester to one or several years). On the longer courses, the proportion of women was 65 percent and on the shorter courses 57 percent.

### Study Associations

In 2003 the number of study circles was approximately 312,000 and the number of participants is estimated at 1.5 individuals (more than 2.5 million if participation in each circle is included). About 57 percent of the participants were women.

### Supplementary education programmes (kompletterande utbildningar)

In 2003 there were nearly 270 supplementary education programmes (*kompletterande utbildningar*) under state supervision, provided by around 100 independent organisers. A majority of programmes were in the field of art, crafts, performing arts (dance/theatre/music), advertising and communications, design, industrial/technical studies and ICT, health and health care, trade and commerce. Around 45 percent of the supplementary education programmes receive governmental grants and give students eligibility for study assistance and loans. A further 26 percent of the programmes do not receive state grants, but give students eligibility for study assistance and loans. Approximately 30 percent of the programmes are, however, only under state supervision and does neither receive governmental grants nor give eligibility for governmental student financial assistance. Programmes vary in length from less than one term through two years or more, with a majority of programmes lasting one year or more.