

Overview of the Swedish upper secondary school



Skolverket

All youth in Sweden who have completed compulsory school have the right to a three-year upper secondary education. Upper secondary education should provide a good foundation for work, further studies, personal development and active participation in the life of society.



18 National programmes

The Education Act that entered into force on 1 July 2011 now covers both independent and municipally run public upper secondary schools.

There are 18 national programmes in the upper secondary school, 12 vocational programmes and 6 programmes preparatory for higher education. All programmes in the upper secondary school are three years in duration.

After completion of a vocational programme, students should be well prepared for working life and the education should be of high quality, and provide them with competence in their profession. It should be possible for students to immediately begin their professional career on completion of the education. All students in a vocational programme also have the opportunity of achieving basic eligibility to higher education during their upper secondary education. Achieving this requires that students choose courses which provide basic eligibility for higher education.

After completion of a higher education preparatory programme, students should be prepared for studies in higher education.

There are also five introductory programmes for students who are not eligible for a national programme.



At some schools, the education available differs from the national programmes: examples of this are special variants, education based on national recruitment, and nationally approved sports education (NIU).

The 18 Programmes

Vocational Programmes

- Child and Recreation Programme
- Building and Construction Programme
- Electricity and Energy Programme
- Vehicle and Transport Programme
- Business and Administration Programme
- Handicraft Programme
- Hotel and Tourism Programme
- Industrial Technology Programme
- Natural Resource Use Programme
- Restaurant Management and Food Programme
- HVAC and Property Maintenance Programme
- Health and Social Care Programme

Higher Education Preparatory Programmes

- Business Management and Economics Programme
- Arts Programme
- Humanities Programme
- Natural Science Programme
- Social Science Programme
- Technology Programme

Eligibility requirements for the upper secondary school

Eligibility requirements for admission to upper secondary education differ between vocational programmes and those preparatory for higher education.

To gain admission to a national programme, irrespective of whether it is a vocational programme or a programme preparatory for higher education, students must have received passing grades in Swedish, or Swedish as a second language, English and mathematics.

Admission to vocational programmes also requires passing grades in a further five subjects, making a total of 8.

Admission to a higher education preparatory programme requires passing grades in a further nine subjects, making a total of 12.

For the Business Management and Economics Programme, the Social Science Programme, and the Humanities Programme, 4 of the 9 passing grades must be in the subjects of geography, history, social studies and religion. For the Natural Science and Technology programmes, 3 of the 9 other passing grades must be in the subjects of biology, physics and chemistry. For the Arts Programme, the 9 other passing grades can be in any of the subjects studied by the student.

Some of the education in the arts area, specialist education and sports programmes may have specific admission requirements, sometimes combined with tests.



The introductory programmes

Five different introductory programmes are intended to provide those students who do not fulfil normal eligibility requirements with new opportunities.

By means of these programmes, students can become eligible for a national programme, be prepared for the labour market, or progress to other forms of education.

The Five Introductory Programmes Are:

- Preparatory education
- Programme oriented individual options
- Vocational introduction
- Individual alternative
- Language introduction

Courses and subject syllabuses

The upper secondary school in Sweden is based on courses. This means that students study one or more courses in different subjects that are included in their programmes.

Most of the courses cover 100 credits which broadly corresponds to about four weeks of full-time studies. The subjects and contents of different courses in upper secondary education are described in the subject syllabuses that specify the education.

Diploma goals

Each programme has its own diploma goals. The diploma goals provide the foundation for planning education and teaching from the student's very first day in the programme. They are intended to steer the education and the design and content of the diploma project.

Structure of the programmes

The foundation subjects are subjects studied by all students in the upper secondary school. These are English, history, physical education and health, mathematics, science studies, religion, social studies, and Swedish or Swedish as a second language. Students study foundation subjects in varying degrees in the different programmes.

In addition to the foundation subjects, each programme contains a number of programme specific subjects which all students in a specific programme study. These subjects define the nature of the programme.

All programmes, apart from the Health and Social Care Programme, have different orientations which students can choose from. In addition, each programme contains different courses, called programme specialisations. In their education students also can choose an individual option.

In the individual option in vocational programmes, the school should provide courses required to achieve basic eligibility for higher education. In all programmes,



students should have the opportunity of studying at least one aesthetic course and at least one course in physical education and health in their individual option.

All programmes also include a diploma project, which essentially corresponds to the education in their programme. For students to receive a diploma, they must achieve a pass in the diploma project.

Apprenticeship Training

In vocational programmes, it is possible to choose an upper secondary apprenticeship education.

Students who choose this option carry out a major part of their education at one or more workplaces. Apprenticeship education has the same goals and knowledge requirements as the other education provided in upper secondary schools.

In order to strengthen cooperation between the vocational programmes of the upper secondary school and working life, there are both national and local programme councils.

Two types of diploma

A student who completes an upper secondary programme receives a diploma from the upper secondary school.

For a vocational diploma, students should have studied 2,500 credits, of which 2,250 should result in passing grades. Students should have achieved passes in Swedish 1, or Swedish as a second language 1, English 5 and mathematics 1. One requirement is also that the student has received passing grades for 400 credits in the programme specific subjects, and a pass in the diploma project. Students can receive a vocational diploma both through apprenticeship education and through school-based vocational education.

For a diploma providing eligibility for higher education, students should have studied 2,500 credits, of which 2,250 should result in passing grades. Students should have passed in Swedish 1, 2 and 3, or Swedish as a second language 1, 2 and 3, Eng-

lish 5 and 6, and Mathematics 1. In addition, students should achieve a pass in their diploma project.

Programmes preparatory for higher education lead to a diploma preparatory for higher education.

A vocational diploma and passing grades in Swedish 2 and 3, alternatively Swedish as a second language 2 and 3, and English 6 also provide basic eligibility to higher education.

All students in vocational programmes have the right to study the courses required to achieve basic eligibility for higher education.

Further information on eligibility for higher education studies can be found at www.skolverket.se under "Förskola & skola" (Preschool & school), and thereafter Gymnasieutbildning (Upper secondary education).

In addition to basic eligibility, passing grades are often required in courses that are particularly important for the education applied for, namely "special eligibility".

A student who has not fulfilled the requirements for an upper secondary school diploma receives a certificate as proof of studies.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship should permeate the whole of the upper secondary school. In all programmes, students have the opportunity to study entrepreneurship in some depth. Entrepreneurship may cover such areas as starting and running a company, being creative, taking initiatives, seeing opportunities and solving problems.

Grading scale

The grading scale has the classifications A–F, where A is the highest grade and E is the lowest passing grade. F means not passed. Students receive a grade on completion of each course. Knowledge requirements are specified for the three grades E, C and A.

A part of Europe

The Swedish upper secondary school is linked to the European Credit Transfer System ECTS (qualification system).

The aim is to promote the mobility of citizens between countries and to facilitate lifelong learning.

Adult education

Municipal adult education at the upper secondary level should use the same subject syllabuses and knowledge requirements as the upper secondary school. At the same time, adult education should be flexible and adapted to the needs of adult students.



The information in this brochure has also been translated into the minority languages, and a number of immigrant languages. Translations are available as PDF files from www.skolverket.se in the publications database.

ISBN 978-91-86529-71-0
Graphic design: AB Typoform
Photo: Michael McLain

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