

European Lifelong Learning Policy – Country report

Sweden

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LLL-RADAR

Regional Arrangements for Dissemination and Application of Lifelong Learning Strategies

Project funded by the European Commission under the frame of LLP Key Activity 1 "Studies and Comparative Research"

National lifelong learning strategies

Country report Sweden

LLL Radar

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National Lifelong learning strategies. Country report - Sweden

1 Introduction

This report on policies and practices on lifelong learning and Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) in Sweden, describes the development in the country, political decisions and how the EU common guidelines for validation and mobility are developing. The report aims to provide a basis for comparisons between other EU countries' status and plans for the area.

2 Status and genesis

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) has since 1968 been developed by municipalities (Komvux). A system of schools (Folkhögskolan) existed even earlier. The possibilities to finance ones studies have also been good in Sweden. The formal VET does not get resources at the same level as in the past, but the government and parliament emphasises that VET must work to enable people to be able to influence their life situation and help equalize educational disparities and increasing the over all educational level of society.

The number of university colleges and courses they provide has been constantly expanded. Basic courses and further training courses are also offered to employers, professional bodies, private companies and educational associations. The fact that Sweden is relatively high on the list of adult students can have its background in tradition, culture and choice.

The Swedish National Agency for Education, however, writes in their report VET policy report Sweden 2008[1]

"many employers feel IVET in Sweden is too theoretical and does not adequately prepare students for the labour market. Major reform from 2010 will move the focus of IVET programmes towards VET and slightly away from theoretical studies"

During the last years and for various reasons changes have been made that may pose some limitations in the education system and study traditions that have been well established in Sweden. But maybe this is partly an adaptation to general demand? Many policy decisions and new reforms make the real status of how IVET is developing difficult to predict. While the availability of VET and distance learning at university colleges has increased it may also be that the availability can be reduced, depending on how high school and VET is developing as well as systems for validation.

The Political organisation have taken on the concept of lifelong learning and taken up activities in the areas addressed here. This report questions if other political action is always in line with the intentions of the LLL and the EQF and whether they achieve the objective of bridging social gap, or if it only helps to move the social gap. This is difficult to predict.

This national work on *mobility, validation* and decision on developing *national qualifications frameworks* (NQF) has been organized, tested and implemented partially.

- Work with industry-specific validation is ongoing and in many practices national guidelines for validation are available.
- The responsibility of managing Europass issues has been delegated to various organizations and authorities.

Table 1: Overview of current VET status in Sweden

VET – overview	Preliminary status
National qualifications framework (NQF)	<i>Political target (Utbildningsdepartementet)</i>
Credit system(s)	Legal or statutory regulation in force
Europass	<i>Pilot or work in progress</i>
Procedures and regulation of validation accreditation or certification of prior learning	<i>Pilot or work in progress</i>
Procedures of permeability between different parts of the education and training system	Permeability was previously quite good! Policy decisions, which affect VET and access to higher education, has been made - but the question is whether these with the results aligns well with the EQF will improve permeability or reduce it...
Legal regulation or other means (e.g. financial, guidance etc.) to improve and increase access to learning, in particular to continuing vocational training.	The status has been good. Policy decisions, which affect, among other things VET and accessibility to higher education, has been taken - but the question is whether these decisions can be inhibiting or promoting from a career and VET point of view.
Guidance and counselling	<i>Political target or work in progress - but in good standing from the beginning?</i>
Learning outcome approach: is it used and can examples be given, how and what is the impact	
Mobility	
Financing	The status was relatively good earlier. Restrictions have been made of the state financing of VET.
Institution building	<i>Pilot or work in progress</i>
Participation rate	Good status. Depending on labour market. No known change due to the EQF.

3 Elements of national lifelong learning strategy

3.1 National qualifications framework (NQF)

Today, the development efforts are fragmented, in lifelong learning and national qualifications framework NQF and alignment with the EQF, and differ in various sectors and professions. On 1 July 2009 the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education was established to develop and oversee a new form of publicly funded vocational education at post upper secondary level.

The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is the coordinator of education in various sectors and of validation of competence acquired through informal learning. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education and The Swedish National Agency for Education have the responsibility to work with other national issues in education.

Regarding the European Commission proposal for a common European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) the Ministry of education and research stated Sweden's position on the introduction of a national qualification framework for lifelong learning, NQF that: The European Commission proposal for a common European Qualifications Framework should be seen as a tool that is not controlling individual countries' education systems.

The ministry proposed implementation of pilot projects to ensure that the EQF can operate as intended and emphasized the importance that the EQF and the Bologna Process frameworks are in line with each

other and assess the proposed eight reference levels according to the Bologna model to be appropriate to strive for. Further down the ministry welcomed the proposal on validation and reluctant to personal and professional skills would be achieved through a just progression in the education system. The major reason for this is the difficulty to assess and measure the personal qualifications.

A new educational and degree structure in accordance with the Bologna model was introduced in connection with “högskolereformen” 2007, when a new university regulation came into force.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Research summarizes current topics, from their first formal meeting on implementation of the European qualifications framework, EQF, and announced that Sweden will progressively implement the EQF in the context of all public education. A national qualifications framework, NQF, will also be developed in line with the industry and work in various sectors concerning this [2].

The objective of the NQF is that it should be more concretely formulated than the EQF and with well-defined levels. The importance of creating an NQF that is so open; that sectors can easily adopt the system is also stressed. The new National Agency for Higher Vocational Education was proposed as the appropriate national coordination point for the EQF.

The Ministry of Education and Research summarized the difficulties surrounding any further work on a national framework NQF, as:

- It will take a lot of efforts to link the different sectors qualifications framework to the EQF.
- The difficulty in clearly defining the different levels.
- The linkage between validation and EQF is unclear and need clarification.
- The difficulty to predict future competence needs, such as in knowledge-intensive industries where professional roles are rapidly changing.
- Education and training of different lengths, with the same *learning outcome* can be difficult to manage under the EQF
- Some of the concepts in the defined levels, e.g. personal qualities and skills, need to be better defined.

The implementation of the EQF is planned in several steps [3]:

- Establish that Sweden meets the requirements of the recommendation
- Establish a national framework of qualifications
- Linking national qualifications levels to EQF
- Establish references to EQF

The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education was in December 2009 commissioned [4] to propose descriptors for a national qualifications framework. On October 4, 2010, the proposal is scheduled for presented to the government. The hope is to form an opinion about the proposal already in 2011 and report to the Commission.

Several industries have come a long way in preparing a SQF at the national level. However, one remaining issues of SQF is whether the connection is directly to the EQF and other SQF or go through the NQF. How coordination and overall responsibility will function at EU level is not yet determined. One problem is connecting SQF directly to other countries is the lack of a common authority.

3.2 Credit system(s)

In Sweden there is an established system for calculating credits in higher education. The system is based on the scope of the education which in turn is calculated by dividing the estimated study hours per week during the period of training is provided. The credits are calculated on both teacher-led lecture

time, assessed individual study time and the time required for the execution of practical work that is part of the education.

Each university course and programme is thus based on a predetermined number of credits – which the student obtained after the passing the examination. The credit system does thus not give an absolute measure of the actual qualifications. For certain further study programmes and individual postgraduate courses the only prequalification measure is previous received academic credits that determine whether a person is admitted or not. Entitlement to student support from the Swedish board for Study Support is based among other things on the scope of the education, i.e. the number of week's full-or part-time study, and how many credits completed in previous studies with governmental funding.

On 1 July 2007 a new credit system in line with the ECTS was introduced [5]. A full-time students study 60 credits per year, instead of the previous 40 points in the old system. The same study is the basis for the calculation of credits. 1.5 credits are equivalent to full-time studies during one week, or 40 hours of study including self-study.

The bill (2008/09: 68) regarding higher vocational training states regarding ECVET [6]:

"The scope of higher vocational training should be provided according to a credit system where 100 credits are equal to full-time study for 20 weeks. Training should be completed by a vocational degree if it contains at least 200 credits. Training of at least 400 credits including an independent work and where at least 25% is made up of learning at work should be completed by a qualified vocational degree".

Each individual's totally collected credits is therefore a popular measure of how many weeks of full-time studies, an average student is supposed to spend on the absorption of education.

3.3 Europass

The Europass system is implemented and the responsibility for managing information and is broken down as follows:

- The Employment Service has responsibility for Europass CV
- Uppsala University is responsible for the Europass Language Passport
- Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is responsible for the Europass Diploma Supplement.
- Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is responsible for the Europass Certificate Supplement (together with Swedish National Agency for Education)

Europass Diploma Supplement – Higher education

Since 2003, it is mandatory for universities to issue a Europass Diploma Supplement to all diplomas. The National Agency for Higher Education has developed regulations for design, nationally set texts and frameworks for the design in general.

Europass Certificate Supplement – Higher vocational education

Certificate Supplement for higher vocational training is being developed and will be posted on a website where anyone who wants can download a certificate supplement for their education.

In 2009, the Programme Office issued 915 Europass Mobility documents. This is an increase from the previous year, when around 600 mobility documents were issued.

Information, templates and brochures about preparation of Europass are available at <http://www.programkontoret.se>, this also includes Europass mobility. Europass can be completed online or via templates that are downloaded on EU countries' joint portal for Europass (<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>).

3.4 Procedures and regulation of validation, accreditation or certification of prior learning

There is a need for tools for validation of foreign qualifications in order to increase the possibilities for immigrants to enter the Swedish labour market and to improve the conditions to make use of foreign experts in various industries, such as the care sector.

It has also been possible to use the municipal VET (komvux) for validation of competence in specific subjects at secondary school level, such as language skills acquired during studies or work abroad. Each municipality shapes the content of the municipal VET. A restriction could also be the availability of subject teachers to validate the current competence.

In SOU (2001:78) *Validation of knowledge and competence of adults* [7] it is said that the municipalities will be responsible for offering validation. An example is a validation model for health professionals. This is based on self-assessment, validation of the theoretical knowledge by teachers and an internship at a workplace for assessment of practical skills. The validation leads to an individual training program.

In government bill 2003/04:1 [8] it was suggested that a special delegation is assembled under a four-year period. The Validation mission lasted until 2007. Centre for Flexible Learning, CFL, was the host agency for the Validation mission. *Validus* was a national project run as part of the Validation mission has described validation based on different values. The Validation mission final report, *Towards a national structure* [9,10], describes the application of the concept of validation.

The Validation Mission description of the validation process:

- *Synoptic survey* - the overall picture, the basis for the further validation
- *Deeper survey* – to assess the need for further assessment and valuation of knowledge.
- *Assessment of competence for certification* - knowledge assessment using method that compares knowledge with the criteria for traditional knowledge and competence areas of expertise and that can lead to certification of mastered areas.
- *Assessment of competence for ratings, certification or licensing, etc* - an assessment of knowledge and skills in relation to the criteria for different fields of knowledge.

The Validation mission proposal was that Sweden could learn from other countries' models for validation. As an example, it mentions the Danish Agency Cirius working with both academic and professional validation.

The National Agency for Higher Education has been mandated to follow and support the universities' work with the assessment of real competence and report to the government June 30, 2010 [11]. The National Agency of Higher Vocational Education has been instructed to coordinate the work on validation and consistency among others with the Employment Service, the National Agency for Higher Education, National Agency for Education, Agency for Service in Higher Education and key industry associations to disseminate national and international knowledge and experience of validation in employment and educational.

The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education participates, by coordinating the network of industry representatives working to develop validation methods in their respective professional fields. The Agency is also working on establishing a national database of industries and validation of its professions. According to the validation coordinator of the Agency the difficulties in validation is rarely on the technical level. Question regarding the validation of the so-called "soft skills" or generic skills is however something that needs to be discussed.

To date, approximately 25 industries have developed methods for the validation of a total of approximately 140 different professional skills. In construction trades there are already 14 occupational categories represented with methods for validation. Industry and trade are other industries that have made good progress. Health-care personnel who have worked long with validation are still working with validation in upper secondary school, since national guidelines for the validation process is missing.

All models for the validation based on the same basic sub-processes [12]:

- Comprehensive qualifications mapping
- In-depth qualifications mapping
- Assessment of competence for certificates
- Assessment of competence for diplomas

When validation leads to vocational qualifications it results in an industry vocational document, such as certificate, license or authorization. The national agency for higher vocational education offers validation of foreign vocational qualifications and tertiary education.

According to the representative of the construction workers' union validation for Skilled Workers in the construction industry is mainly seen as a tool when changing jobs or during unemployment. A confirmed skilled worker in construction has no possibility to influence his/her wages through validation.

In a Bachelors thesis at Malmö University the perspectives of VET-educators is described together with issues regarding the validation process. From a pedagogical perspective it highlights that validation focuses more on *knowledge* than on *learning*, which is actually the main competence of the teachers. The professional role of the teachers could move from traditional teaching to be a validation pedagogue. Most of the teachers in the project wanted to have a national education in the validation.

3.5 Procedures of permeability between different parts of the education and training system

Although there are vast offerings of education and courses in Sweden, there may be barriers for individuals to go further between different educational systems. In order to be admitted to university studies there is a requirement of basic competence that is normally achieved through upper secondary school. Specific prerequisites are in place for certain programmes and courses. It is possible, in individual cases, to be exempted from the formal prerequisites, by verifying other appropriate experience. This is where an assessment being made in each case.

Traditionally, training opportunities and opportunities for professional development and career changes has been good. There have been good opportunities in the Swedish educational system that, even as an adult to acquire both general and special qualification to higher education, for example through municipal VET. The design and content of the Municipal VET design is the responsibility of municipalities and can therefore vary between different municipalities.

If someone in primary or upper secondary school grades does not have a grade in one of the core subjects Swedish, English or Mathematics this means that he/she is not qualified for further studies - no matter knowledge and grades in other subjects. It is possible to fill this gap of qualification but then it might only qualify for a specific limited quota group to higher education. The regulation for Higher Education [5] governs the size of the various quota groups. One third of the seats are to be distributed to those who are basing their application on the "academic test".

According to the regulation for Higher Education the universities have an obligation to value other knowledge that can provide "basic competence". In the regulation for Higher Education [5] it is said that basic eligibility to higher education has:

"By Swedish or foreign education, practical experience or because of some other circumstance has the potential to assimilate"

It can be questioned if the Recent Policy Decisions on adult learning and change in higher education is in line with strategies on Lifelong and flexible learning and the utilization of personnel competences and skills in different occupations - and if they really promote permeability between different educations. Some examples:

- The previous possibility to take into account work experience in applications to higher education has been removed.
- New rules of admission to higher education have been implemented. Missing grades from compulsory and upper secondary school can be completed at a later stage. The possibility remains - but the change means that those who have complemented their qualification do not qualify for a general quota group according to their school grades, but must compete for a separate smaller group quota. In practice this means that the choice of secondary education at a young age may limit future opportunities for further study.
- A special test for higher education "academic test" allows another opportunity for higher education, but competition for places in this quota group could be hard and the test is generally designed and not tailored to individual qualifications and skills so that a screening is already done in connection with the test and not on the basis of qualifications for different professions or studies.
- A new reform of the upper secondary school GY11 [13] - may lower skill requirements in for example, the subject of Swedish in vocational training at the level of upper secondary school. This also means that the basic qualifications for higher education are also lowered. The student at the vocational school who wants to achieve basic qualifications for higher education must, if the reform takes effect, read the core subjects as optional courses.

3.6 Legal regulation or other means (e.g. financial, guidance, etc.) to improve and increase access to learning, in particular to continuing vocational training

In 1975 the *Study leave Act* was instituted which governs the individual's right to leave of absence from employment for studies - regardless of the orientation of the studies. At the same time the act "Förtroendemannalagen" gave the possibility of trade union studies in paid working hours in areas such as labour rights and health & safety.

The formal adult education do not have the same level of resources from government as earlier, but the government and parliament are demanding that adult education, among other things enables people to influence their life situation and help equalize educational disparities and improve the level of education in society.

Most educations is provided free of charge. There are also some opportunities for an individual to apply for funding to study charges. A highly developed system of funding of an individuals study is available via the State and the Swedish Board for Study Support (CSN).

Voluntariness and flexibility can be considered as a couple of key words in Swedish history of education. The impact of new rules and the upper secondary school reform, GY11 [13], next year is not yet easy to grasp. The new rules of admission to higher education should perhaps be seen as a form of regulation of education and learning towards a more homogeneous and linear learning path.

Participation in job training is often regulated through the right to unemployment or other government grants. This is why this type of training can be seen as more "compelling". Those who do not participate in the designated courses are in danger of losing their jobseeker's allowance or other income support.

3.7 Guidance and counselling

Access to guidance counselors is good and free advice is available in the local compulsory and upper secondary schools and at universities and employment agencies. The Swedish National Agency for Education says in its report in 2008 that the system of *lifelong guidance* for vocational and adult education should be developed.

Information is available through the organizations concerned and the Internet. At the jobseeker's service guidance for international study and work is available. Through the International Programme Office for Education and Training links to various actors and information sites is available.

3.8 Learning outcome approach: is it used and can examples be given, how and what is the impact

In the academic world today knowledge levels achieved is measured primarily through acquired credits, which can be viewed as a quantitative measure of knowledge. The criteria for higher education credits are, however, based on whether the student has passed or not, and is therefore not an absolute measure of the actual qualifications.

The grading systems also vary between different courses and levels of education, some courses have a finer grades while other measures whether the students passes the exam or fails.

Grading systems in compulsory and upper secondary school is occasionally undergoing radical reforms. From alphabetic to the five-digit scores scale and a system Fail and three Pass levels is the system currently applied in compulsory and upper secondary school. Currently a new grading reform is introduced [6,14]; comparisons have been made with the Danish 7-grade system.

Through examination and grading test the knowledge levels are measured, *learning outcome*, but this is not a measure of how much study time the individual had to traverse in order to achieve results. Valuation of competence is another instrument for establishing of *learning outcome*.

3.9 Mobility

Swedes have a tradition of moving much around the globe to work or study in other countries. Sweden have also adopted the Bologna model overall goals and decided to work to implement the EQF. To work together to promote mobility and employability in Europe so this must be seen as an overall national effort to collaborate between countries in order to achieve these goals.

Within the Leonardo da Vinci program a total of about 160-180 applications for study and practice are granted each year. In 2009 the number of grants was 159, which is a decrease from previous years. The number of applications has increased and amounted to 279 in 2009. Within the academic exchange, i.e. Erasmus, fewer applications were made and difficulties may arise to fill seats.

Recipient of Swedish students in Europe is among others Britain, Germany and France [15]. The number of Swedish students who choose to study abroad has declined by 5% in recent years. There are now fewer Swedes who travel abroad to study than at the number of foreign students coming to Sweden. The majority of Swedes who study abroad do so on their own, so-called "free movers" [16].

Among the immigrants who come to Sweden are people with professional training and work experience. Many of these have had great difficulties to get credit for their qualifications in Sweden - even in shortage occupations!

The proportion of foreign nationals working and studying in Sweden has grown after Sweden joined the EU. In the construction industry many people from countries including the Baltic States and Poland.

An interesting figure in this context is also that out of the 65 000 people who in 2005 immigrated to Sweden was 14 000 Swedes who returned after having lived and worked abroad; “returners”, is the largest single immigrant group that comes back to Sweden with foreign education or overseas work experience in their luggage.

3.10 Financing

All public education activities are funded via tax revenues. The Swedish state's cost of education is approximately 14% of the total expenditure in the public sector.

From the specification of the central government budget expenditures for 2009 are among others the following items concerning education activities, funding of adult learning and social action as part of lifelong learning:

- Education and University Research: 5,230 million €
- Study support: 2,180 million €
- Cost of unemployment programs and activities: 700 million €

The publicly funded education in Sweden is thus free for the students. Starting in July 2011 universities shall introduce admission from foreign students. [17,18]

3.11 Institution building

Around the concept of lifelong learning, adult education and validation of professional learning, workshops and special organizations have been formed. In 2002 the Government, formed a National Agency for Flexible Learning, CFL, a government agency that was commissioned to support the development of flexible learning in adult education. CFL was disbanded in 2007

Between 2003 and 2007 work was conducted with support from the European Social Fund, in the project *NTG-Learn - about informal learning in work and everyday life*. The project was conducted in collaboration between among others Luleå University of Technology, the research network Larena and CFL. One goal was to develop an *infrastructure for adult learning*.

The International Programme Office for Education and Training coordinates and informs via its web-portal on the EU project on lifelong learning. The national agency for higher vocational education is the authority that has overall coordination responsibility for learning at work and validation of knowledge acquired.

In 2001 the National Centre for Lifelong Learning - *Encell*, was formed. The mandate by the government is to have overall national responsibility for research and dissemination of knowledge about adult learning. Encell is based in the School of Engineering in Jönköping and has focused on adults learning as a collaborative role with the national players in adult learning. The activity revolves around research and knowledge dissemination.

The Nordic countries have NVL, a formal network of adult learning, cross sectoral working with adult learning in a lifelong learning perspective and promote cooperation between the Nordic countries.

3.12 Participation rate

Roughly half the adult population in Sweden every year participates in some form of adult education [18]. During 2002/03 around 60% of those aged 25-64 years took part in some form of formal education

or training [19]. Sweden had at that time the highest rate in Europe. Compared with other European countries Sweden was in 2005 in sixth place regarding the proportion of adults participating in some form of education and training. Both genders are represented in the statistics but, as in other countries, the proportion of highly skilled are over-represented. Statistics Sweden has carried out several statistical summaries of participation in organized training activities [19,20].

The Swedish council for working life and social research FAS describes how the percentage of students at all levels declined throughout the late 1990s - with the exception of training in advanced vocational training and Swedish for immigrants (SFI) - and indicates the following potential explanations for the development:

- Education Policy measures, such as declining resources to municipal adult education and limitations on various measures for the unemployed.
- Different individuals and groups' perception of the usefulness of adult studies.
- Adult Learning perhaps moving more and more outside the formal framework for education, for example in the workplace which constitutes the largest component of adult learning.

During the same period as enrolment in education decreased, the economy, labour market and individuals' earning potential improved significantly.

As unemployment is increasing, it is common that a greater proportion begins learning at organised courses, including the special employment training. Today CSN, the Swedish Board for Study Support report that the proportion of older applicants of student support has increased. The availability of individual courses in higher education and distance learning provides not only skills but also the opportunity to livelihood support through student support.

There may be cultural differences at the bottom of the differing views on theoretical studies and how different individuals choose their vocational and educational pathways. In Sweden the blue-collar workers in the construction industry is one of the occupational groups with the lowest participation rate in training activities. At the same time it is said that many construction workers do not consider themselves in need of further education and the interest for this is cool. The reason could be that after the professional qualifications certificate is obtained there are no more individual opportunities for wage increases, not in accordance with collective agreements.

Representatives of the Swedish building workers' union calls attention to the serious shortage of learning events among construction workers and it is mainly the lack of information/training during start of new project and new activities on site. Almost every new construction project involves new materials, standards and practices. Learning at this stage is a prerequisite for efficiency, quality and safety. This workplace learning requires frequent communication at several stages in the projects. Otherwise, this means that every individual learns afterwards when mistakes happen.

4 Perspective, plans, expectations

One of the main drivers in Swedish education policy is to level social gaps. Swedish tradition of education and adult education and financial support for this goes quite far back in time. In this report, fears are expressed that the recent policy decisions and changes in the education system will have a negative impact on existing opportunities in IVET. Limitations in the ability of adults to lifelong learning can occur - at least in relation to the opportunities that have existed.

The consequences of political decisions in the education system changes are difficult to predict. Some of the recent educational policies, may be in line with the EQF although nationally restricts. Work on validation may outweigh any negative impact due to changes in the adult education.

In the debate on unemployment and learning, the opposition accuses the present government for not having acted in accordance with strategies for lifelong learning. Opposition politicians believe that including the ability to return to work after unemployment has been worsened by reduced investment in labour market and skills training, and validation of professional skills of workers with long work experience but who lack formal education.

The national work towards a common framework has nevertheless been progressing well in applications such as the following areas:

- The decision was taken in Sweden to work at developing national qualifications frameworks, NQR and that this should follow the European qualifications framework, EQF
- The calculation of credits in accordance with the Bologna model that corresponds with the ECTS credits has been implemented.
- Concerning the prerequisite for increasing labour mobility, Sweden has gone some way in that responsibility is delegated to various organizations and agencies for implementation of Europass.
- The advanced work on the validation of professional skills can also be adopted to help increase the possibilities of movement between countries. The approach to learning at work should be seen as a good adaptation to the overall objectives and a "fair" way to take advantage of individual possibilities

New opportunities in the education system as new rules of admission to higher education from upper secondary school and reduction of state investment in adult education can be consistent with similar conditions for other EU countries. These measures are likely to include restrictions - compared to previous national status - on individual opportunities of choice and for formal VET.

Other policy decisions and work on the EQF can outweigh negative effects of changes in the education system. By tradition, there also tends to develop parallel paths that can alleviate new obstacles in career and educational path. If nothing else, usually private options come available for those who are willing to pay for their education themselves.

The overall plan of Swedish education policy is to continue to work towards a nationally consistent framework according to the EQF and the Bologna model.

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 - [19] På tal om utbildning, Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB 2008 - translated: *Talking about education*
 - [20] Det livslånga lärandet, Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB 2005 – translated: *The lifelong learning*