

The Swedish Education System

Following pages are a summary from the web site of the Swedish National Agency for Education regarding how the educational system works and how immigrants can use it for their integration and future benefit from the labour market. No adult education is compulsory in Sweden, neither for Swedish inhabitants nor immigrants. The Swedish education is based on voluntary participation and individual responsibility.

The information describes the initial education in Swedish for immigrants. Here is an example of how Stockholm city inform about their immigrant basic language education (valid 23.05.2014):

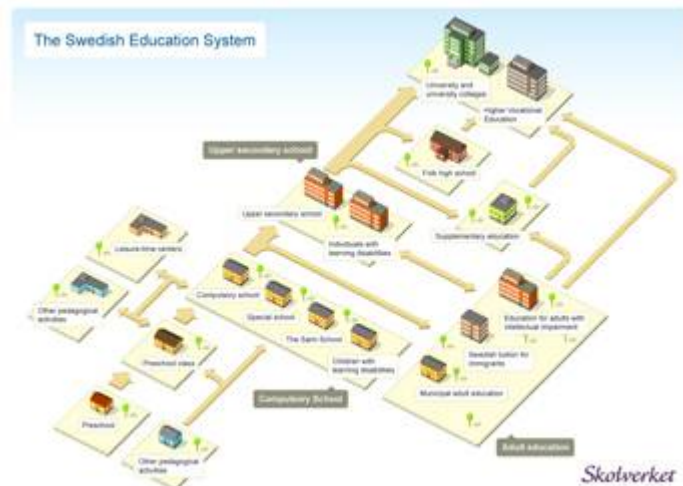
<http://www.stockholm.se/ForskolaSkola/Svenskundervisning-for-invandrare-sfi/Swedish-for-immigrants-/>

Having passed this initial level, students can apply for further second language education at schools for adults. It is possible to study Swedish basic level (A2-B2) and Swedish upper secondary level (B2-C2) afterwards the students are entitled to higher college and university studies. Mostly the higher education requests some knowledge in English, which any adult can study in adult schools. For further information about higher education in Sweden (valid 23.05.2014) see <http://studyinsweden.se/>

It is also possible to study a vocational education after having passed the A2- or in some cases B2-level (see pdf-file "Vocational education in Sweden")

Immigrants with a higher professional education (graduates) can go directly to a special language course adapted to their profession. It is a language education which started 2012 in Stockholm county (see <http://sfx-yrke.se/eng> about SFX, courses and who can apply, valid 23.05.2014) and it is an intensive course which takes the highly motivated students through all language levels in just two terms/semesters (one year). Usually it takes at least two years and most common is three years to go from beginner to higher college/university preparatory level.

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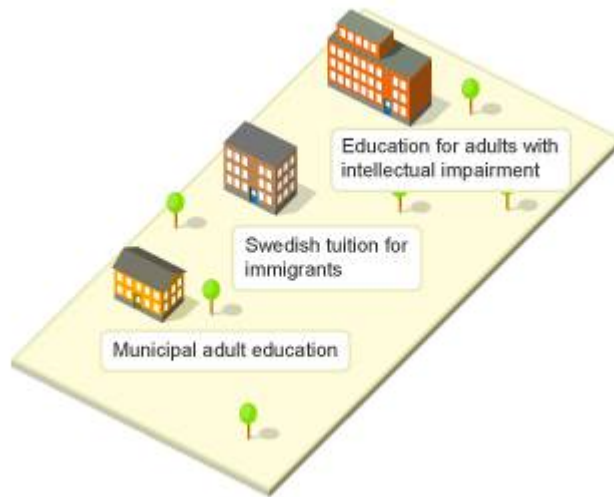


An overview of the Swedish education system

The Swedish education system comprises a number of types of schooling and education, designed for individuals of different ages and with differing needs and abilities.

To make it easier for you to find information, the National Agency for Education has produced a map that provides an overview of the various parts of the education system. Use the map to find your way around the system and find information about the areas that are of particular interest to you. You can read brief information about:

- Preschool
- Preschool class
- Leisure-time centers
- Other pedagogical activities
- Compulsory school
- Upper secondary school
- Adult education
- Supplementary school
- Folk high schools (independent adult education colleges)
- Higher vocational education
- Universities and university colleges



Adult education

Formal adult education should function as a system for adults to continuously develop and reorient their education on the basis of varying individual needs.

Swedish adult education is organised in many different forms. The school system for adults covers:

- Municipal adult education at both compulsory and upper secondary school levels
- Special education for adults with development disabilities or brain impairments
- Swedish tuition for immigrants



What is Swedish tuition for immigrants?

Swedish tuition for immigrants is advanced language education which aims at giving adults with a mother tongue other than Swedish basic knowledge of the Swedish language. In the education students learn and develop a functional second language.

It should contribute to active participation in societal life etc.

The education should provide language tools for communication and active participation in daily, societal and working life. The education aims to provide students with communicative language skills. This means being able to communicate, both orally and in writing, based on their needs. The starting point should be the needs and conditions of the individual.

Adults should acquire basic reading and writing skills

In addition, the education also aims at giving adult immigrants who lack basic reading and writing skills the opportunity of acquiring such skills. This can cover students who are illiterate with little school background, as well as students who are able to read and write but have a different writing system.



Who is the education intended for?

The right to Swedish tuition for immigrants is for those who are resident in Sweden, and who from the second half of the calendar year have reached the age of 16. And who also lack the basic knowledge in Swedish which the education aims to provide.

The right also applies to Finnish citizens who are working permanently in municipalities, but live in Finland close to the Swedish border, and who otherwise fulfil the conditions. However, it does not apply to students who have a knowledge of Danish or Norwegian, as in these cases instruction in Swedish is not considered necessary.



How are grades awarded?

Grading scale

Grades should be awarded at the end of each completed course. The grading scale has five pass levels E, D, C, B and A and a fail grade F. If the teacher does not have sufficient material for assessing the student's knowledge due to absenteeism, a grade should not be awarded and this should be registered by a dash.

Knowledge requirements are specified for three of the grades E, C and A. The grading scale does not specify knowledge requirements for grades D and B

Grade levels D and B

Grade D means that the knowledge requirements for grade E and most of C are satisfied. Grade B means that the knowledge requirements for grade C and most of A are satisfied. Grade levels D and B are based on what is specified in the knowledge requirements for the grades above and below. The basis for grades D and B can be different for different students. One student may fulfil some specific parts of the knowledge requirements for most of the grade, whilst another student fulfils other parts. However, both students can be assessed as satisfying most of the requirements for the grade. Since "most of the requirements " is an assessment which can be interpreted differently for students, these knowledge requirements are not specified either at the national or local level.

When assessing "most of the requirements", the teacher makes an overall assessment of the knowledge students have compared to the knowledge requirements of the grade above. In comparisons, teachers identify which parts of the knowledge requirements students fulfil, and assess this in relation to the aim of the subject, and the core contents of the course to determine if the student's knowledge as a whole fulfils "most of the requirements".



What steers the education?

The municipalities are required to provide Swedish tuition for immigrants. The education is based on courses. Study plans are individual and are to be tailored to the needs of the individual. Adaptation to individual needs presupposes genuine opportunities for students to influence the structure and organisation of the education.

The principal organiser should in co-operation with the Swedish Public Employment Service try to ensure that students are given the opportunities to train their Swedish in working life, and that the education in Swedish for immigrants can be combined with other activities such as orientation to working life, validation, work practice or other education. It should be possible to combine the education with employment.

Hierarchy of steering documents

The Education Act is decided on by the Riksdag. It contains general provisions for all school forms and deals with the student's right to education.

The ordinance on adult education is decided on by the government, and contains more details than the Act.

The curricula are decided on by the government. Swedish tuition for immigrants should be based on the fundamental values set out in the 1994 curriculum for non-compulsory school forms (Lpf 94).

The government decides on the syllabuses for Swedish tuition for immigrants.

The Swedish National Agency for Education