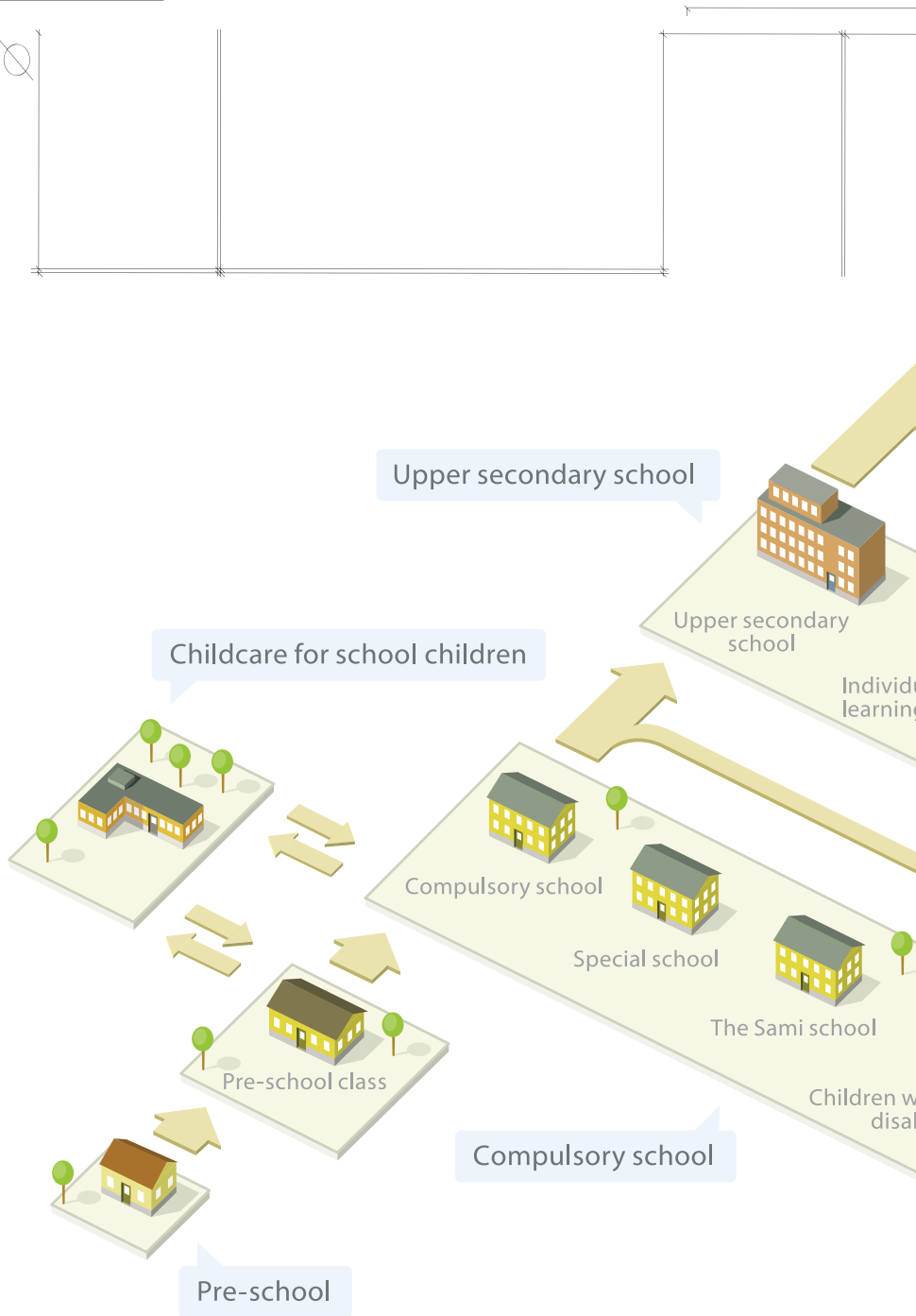




What types of VET are there in Sweden?

Vocational education and training in Sweden



What types of VET are there in Sweden?

Initial vocational education and training (IVET)

Upper secondary education

The majority of Swedish vocational education and training (VET) is provided at the upper secondary school level where students are typically aged between 16 and 19. Almost all compulsory school students continue directly to upper secondary school in Sweden.





Upper secondary education is divided into 17 national three-year programmes, 14 of which are vocationally oriented. Unlike many countries, Swedish upper secondary school education integrates vocationally oriented programmes with those geared to preparation for higher education. VET programmes thus provide both vocational competencies as well as general knowledge to prepare students for higher education. Approximately 50 per cent of upper secondary school students in Sweden take a vocationally oriented programme.

Apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship training in Sweden is mainly provided outside the public education and training system. After upper secondary school some sectors, mainly in construction, organise apprenticeship training. However, in upper secondary school a few students may take the apprenticeship option from an individual programme.

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Continuing vocational education and training (CVET)

In Sweden there are several forms of CVET for adults, covering:

- Advanced vocational education (Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning)
- Supplementary education (Kompletterande utbildningar)
- Post-secondary training (Påbyggnadsutbildning), funded through the municipal adult education framework
- VET programmes through folk high schools.

Advanced vocational education and training (AVE)

Advanced vocational education (www.ky.se) is the largest form of purely vocational post-secondary VET in Sweden with almost 27,000 students in 2005. AVE was first piloted in 1996 and is designed to provide training to meet labour market demand for specialist know-how in various sectors.



Advanced vocational education offers courses designed in consultation with employers to meet labour market needs.

An advanced vocational education and training programme can vary between one and three years, but most span two years. At least one-third of AVE training is workplace-based. The Swedish Agency for Advanced Vocational Education administers this educational form at the national level, reviews applications and provides funding to training providers.



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Supplementary education programmes

Supplementary education programmes are provided outside the public education system and last from 200 hours to 2-3 years. Some of these programs receive government funding.

In others participants may apply for student financial assistance.

The third category is programmes with government approval without funding or financial assistance. There are currently about 150 different education providers offering courses in, for example; fine arts, music, design, handicrafts and pilot training. Supplementary education programmes do not provide any formal eligibility for further study, but can be seen as vocational training that prepares for higher educational courses where skills in one or more of the above fields is required.

Post-secondary training programmes



Post-secondary training programmes provide further training in a profession. Most post-secondary training programmes last for 1.5 years and are funded under the municipal adult education framework. The goal of post-secondary training is to lead to a new level within a profession, or to a new profession for the trainee.

CVET at folk high schools



There are 148 folk high schools – independent adult education colleges – in Sweden. Each school decides independently what courses it provides and teaching methods to be used. Programmes can vary in length

but year-long courses are common and often have a VET theme such as specialised handicrafts, recreation leadership, sign language interpretation, etc. More information on folk high schools can be found at www.folkhogskola.nu

Challenges for VET in Sweden

Similar to many countries Sweden is facing the problem of an ageing population and subsequent large wave of retirements from the labour force, particularly in many vocational trades which have a high proportion of older workers. Society's emphasis on university education, combined with the relatively low number of entrants to VET, have intensified this challenge in recent decades. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the link between education outputs and labour market needs.

It is important to raise the status of vocational education and training, and increase the number of young people entering trades facing skills shortages. Another challenge in this area is to research and investigate the barriers – real and perceived – to non-traditional groups entering VET.

There is also a need in Sweden, as in many countries, to investigate how to improve access to VET for people currently outside the education system. A critical issue is improving the access of adults to post-secondary vocational education and training – an issue that is likely to become increasingly urgent as many industries (e.g. construction and resource extraction) face shortages of skilled labour.

Although vocationally oriented upper secondary education in Sweden provides a broad education, there are increasing demands for the training to be better aligned with labour market needs in the country. In coming years, major reforms will be introduced to support three distinct forms of upper secondary education focusing on:

1. academic
2. vocational
3. upper secondary apprenticeship training.

More information can be found at www.senrp.se