

REPORT 2023

Referencing report of the Swedish Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, SeQF, to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, EQF

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Disclaimer

This referencing report was first drafted in 2015, but comments and viewpoints were not remediated until the summer of 2023. In particular, the report has been given a clearer description of the formal education system. Because of the late finalising of the report, background information that is outdated – but does not interfere with the referencing – has been updated to provide the latest available information. These updates include an overview of the Swedish education system and information about the number of learners at the various educational levels. For that reason, the report should be read as a product of 2015 with some factual updates regarding the education system.

If there are updates elsewhere in the text, this will be noted in a separate disclaimer/update box.

1 Development of the referencing report

In the recommendation of the European Qualifications Framework, EQF¹ the member states were invited to create a national qualifications framework, NQF, which could be connected to the EQF. This is achieved by the member states clearly referencing levels in the national qualifications framework to the levels specified in the European framework in Annex II of the Recommendation on the EQF. How levels in the national qualifications framework relate to the EQF should be described in the so-called referencing report that each member state presents to the EQF advisory group. This group was introduced when the Recommendation on the EQF was adopted and is responsible for the overall coordination and coherence, and to promote transparency in the work to link national qualifications frameworks to the EQF. The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan – MYH), has been assigned by the Government to develop a Swedish referencing report in accordance with the recommendation and the criteria established by the advisory group on the European Qualifications Framework.

The development of the reference report has been carried out together with the relevant national authorities, stakeholders from the social partners and education sector, national and international experts. A working group of experts and a secretariat participated in the work on the content and design of the referencing report.

The experts:

- Ingegerd Green – labour market skills, Skärteknikcentrum Sweden AB
- Janerik Lundquist – higher education and the Bologna process, Linköping University
- Anders Färdeman – upper-secondary education, consultant
- Torbjörn Matsson – higher vocational education, Jönköping University

The Secretariat consisted of the following persons:

- Sebastian Steele – head secretary, consultant, translator
- Britt-Inger Stoltz - senior administrative officer, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education
- Stefan Skimutis - project manager, The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education

There have been two international experts attached to the expert group: Kim Faurschou, international expert on several of the European mobility tools such as EQAVET; and Volker Gemlich, professor, Fachhochschule, Osnabrück, Germany, expert on qualification systems.

A reference group has also participated in drafting the referencing report. In the reference group, the following organisations and agencies participated:

- Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen),
- Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet),
- Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen i Sverige),
- Swedish National Agency for Education (Statens skolverk),
- Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt näringsliv),
- Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Sveriges akademikers centralorganisation),

¹ EUROPAPARLAMENTETS OCH RÅDETS REKOMMENDATION av den 23 april 2008 om en europeisk referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande (2008/C 111/01)

- Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges kommuner och landsting²),
- Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Tjänstemännens centralorganisation),
- Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitet- och högskolerådet), and
- Swedish Higher Education Authority (Universitetskanslersämbetet).

Individual meetings have also been conducted with The Swedish Federation of Business Owners (Företagarna), Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Statens skolinspektion), and The Association of Swedish Higher Education (Sveriges universitets- och högskoleförbund).

The referencing report has been reviewed by the Ministry of Education and Research (Utbildningsdepartementet).

² Sveriges kommuner och regioner, SKR, since November 2019.

2 Structure of the referencing report

The referencing report begins in chapter 3 with a description of lifelong learning in Sweden, delivered through formal, non-formal and informal learning and the number of students at different educational levels. Chapter 4 is a description of the governance of the formal education system. Chapter 5 provides an introduction to the Swedish Qualifications Framework, SeQF. Chapter 6 gives a more detailed description of SeQF – the law, ordinances, the descriptors and progression in the framework. In the next chapter, number 7, the two frameworks in Sweden, SeQF and QF-EHEA, are presented. Chapter 8 provides an assessment of how well the ten referencing criteria are met – how SeQF is linked to EQF. In chapter 9, there is an overview of the Swedish model on how qualifications not levelled by the government can be levelled to the SeQF after an application procedure. The report concludes with chapter 10 by a description of how the implementation of the Swedish Qualifications Framework will be carried out.

The law and the regulations governing the Swedish qualifications framework are reported as annexes at the end of the report. The framework and level descriptions of the SeQF, the international experts' views and the authorities signed attestation are also reported as annexes.

3 Lifelong learning in Sweden

3.1 Introduction

Historically, Sweden has had the ambition and tradition that the people, regardless of where they live and their social and economic status, shall have access to both basic education and training and opportunities for further education and training throughout their lives. Lifelong learning has been viewed as important both from an individual and societal perspective. The learning can take place on several different levels, in several forms and aims to strengthen the individual's position for employment and in community life, to promote personal development and to cater for the labour market's need for competence.

In Sweden, as in other Nordic countries, there is a long tradition of formal and non-formal learning which occurs both within and outside the formal education system. In a report based on a survey on adult learning, published by Statistics Sweden (SCB) in 2018³, it is reported that two out of three adults participate in some kind of formal or non-formal learning. It is shown that six out of ten employed persons aged 25–64 took part in staff training during a twelve-month period, and that that nine out of ten enterprises offered staff training to their employees in 2015. See also table 1, below.

Table 1. Adults participating in formal and non-formal learning.

	Formal and/or non-formal education and training	Formal education	Non-formal education
Share of 25-64 years olds participating in	64 %	14 %	56 %

Informal learning, on the other hand, is difficult to measure, and is therefore reported to a lesser extent in SCB's survey, but from the survey it is estimated that eight out of ten have conducted some form of informal learning during the twelve-month period.

3.2 The Swedish education system

The Swedish education system encompasses both formal and non-formal learning and can be delivered by both public and private providers.

Formal education refers to the structured education system that runs from preschool to university, and includes specialised programmes for vocational, technical and professional training. Learning outcomes and quality assurance are regulated by the state in laws and ordinances; it is financed by public means and free of charge for the learner. Training within the formal education system is also free of charge to EU-nationals and a member state of the EES or Switzerland⁴. Non-formal education refers to planned, structured education outside the formal educational curriculum. Some non-formal schemes are under state supervision and granted aid in the form of state grants and/or student financial aid. Liberal adult education, as an example, is a non-formal education scheme that includes general courses in folk high schools which provide eligibility to higher education and are levelled to the SeQF by reference to the same ordinance as the

³ Source: Statistics Sweden, Adult participation in education – staff training and other forms of training. Statistiskt meddelande - Vuxnas deltagande i utbildning – personalutbildning och andra former av utbildning (scb.se)

⁴ EES, the European Economic Area. Switzerland is part of EFTA, the European Free Trade Association. Higher education can also be free of charge because other reasons. See Ordinance (SFS 2010:543) on application and tuition fees at universities.

equivalent qualifications within formal education. Table 2, below, provide an overview and information on the structure of this chapter.

Table 2. Provision of formal and non-formal education and training in Sweden 2023.⁵

Key						
Formal education						
Non-formal education under state supervision						
Non-formal education						
	Degree (diploma) awarded	Publicly financed	State regulated LO	Levelled to SeQF in ordinance 2015:545	SeQF level	Described in section
Preschool	—	Yes	Partly	No	—	3.3.1
Preschool class	—	Yes	Yes	No	—	3.3.2
Compulsory school	Final certificate	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	
Compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities	Final certificate	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	
Compulsory Special Needs School	Final certificate	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	
Upper secondary school	Upper secondary school diploma	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	3.3.3
	Upper secondary engineering diploma	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	3.3.5
Upper secondary school for pupils with intellectual disabilities	Upper secondary school certificate for pupils with intellectual disabilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	3.3.3
Municipal adult basic education	Final certificate from basic municipal adult education	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	3.3.4
Municipal basic education for adults with intellectual disabilities	Final certificate from basic education for adults with intellectual disabilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	
Municipal upper secondary education for adults with intellectual disabilities	Certificate from municipal upper secondary education for adults with intellectual disabilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	

⁵ Note that this table reflects the Swedish education system as of 2023 and that some educational programmes leading to qualifications levelled by the government (in Ordinance 2015:545) to the SeQF, as shown in section 8.5.6 and annex 3, are no longer offered.

Municipal upper secondary adult education	Upper secondary diploma from municipal adult education (after a minimum of 2400 credits)	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	
	No (if less than 2400 credits)	Yes	Yes	No	—	
Municipal adult upper secondary Swedish tuition for immigrants	Certificate from municipal adult upper secondary Swedish tuition for immigrants, course D	Yes	Yes	Yes, course D	2	
Liberal adult education – Folk high school: general courses	Study assessment of passing results in general courses at Folk high school at basic or upper secondary level	Yes	Yes, corresponding to LOs of compulsory school and upper secondary school.	Yes	2/4	3.4.1
Liberal adult education – Folk high school: Swedish tuition for immigrants	Certificate corresponding to certificate from municipal adult upper secondary Swedish tuition for immigrants, course D	Yes	Yes, corresponding to LOs of municipal adult upper secondary Swedish tuition for immigrants	Yes	2	
Liberal adult education – Folk high school: special/ vocational courses	Study Assessments	Yes	No	May be levelled after an application process.	—	3.4.1
Liberal adult education – Study associations	Study Assessments	Yes	No	No	—	
Higher Vocational Education (HVE) programmes	Higher Vocational Education Diploma	Yes	Yes, in ordinance 2009:130	Yes	5	3.3.5
	Advanced Higher Vocational Education Diploma	Yes	Yes, in ordinance 2009:130	Yes	6	
HVE short courses	No	Yes	No	No	—	
Arts and culture courses	No	Partly	No	No	—	3.4.5
Higher education	First cycle qualifications /degrees	Yes	Yes, in ordinance 1993:100	Yes	6	3.3.5
	Second cycle qualifications/ degrees	Yes	Yes, in ordinance 1993:100	Yes	7	

	Third cycle qualifications/ degrees	Yes	Yes, in ordinance 1993:100	Yes	8	
Labour market training programmes organised by the Public Employment Service	—	Yes	No	May be levelled after an application process.	—	3.4.2
Private training – CVET in working life	Sector certificates, diplomas, proof of attendance, etc	No	No	May be levelled after an application process.	Varying	3.4.3
Education procured from formal education providers	Yes: grades and diplomas can be awarded to participants if the procured education fulfils all regulations and quality standards for HVE or HE education.	No	If formal education diplomas are awarded.	If formal education diplomas are awarded.		3.4.3
Training conducted by other authorities	Certificates, diplomas, proof of attendance, etc	Varying	No	May be levelled after an application process.	Varying	3.4.4

3.3 Formal learning

The Swedish government has overall responsibility for the education system and sets the policy framework at all education levels.

Primary and secondary education are governed by the state and financed by the municipalities, but provision is highly decentralised. Preschool activities, compulsory and upper secondary education are governed by the State in the Education Act (2010:800) and the different curricula for preschool, compulsory school, upper secondary school and municipal adult education. There are also tailored curricula for the special needs school, the sámi school and for compulsory and upper secondary education for pupils with intellectual disabilities. Education is delivered by private and public education providers competing on a school market for pupils. A voucher is paid by the municipality to the education provider the pupils selects for his/her education. Approximately 2.6 million pupils were registered in education governed by the Education Act (preschool – primary and secondary education – adult education) during the academic year 2021/2022. See table 3 below.

Table 3. Number of pupils (registered learners) during the academic year 2021/2022

	Children/students	Municipal Adult Education (2021/2022) ⁶ (students in)	Total
Preschool	513,038		513,038
Compulsory school (preschool class to year 9)	1,235,862	74,285	1,310,147
Upper Secondary school (years 10-12)	368,427	263,032 ⁷	631,459
Swedish tuition for immigrants		132,753	132,753
Total	2,117,327	470,070	2,587,397

Higher Vocational Education is governed by the Higher Vocational Education Act (2009:128) and the Higher Vocational Education Ordinance (2009:130). It is financed through a government grant allocated by the Swedish Agency for Higher Vocational Education which approves and finances training providers who then cooperate with the world of work to develop and deliver programmes. Training provision can be organised by municipalities, counties, universities or private providers.

Higher education is governed by the Higher Education Act (1992:1434). Higher Education Institutions are funded by the state but autonomous regarding curricula and which programmes to deliver in accordance with degree awarding rights. The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)⁸ describes the learning outcomes needed for first, second and third cycle qualifications.

Qualifications from the formal education system were levelled to the national qualifications framework in 2015 by the Government through an ordinance.⁹

3.3.1 Preschool

Preschool (förskola) is a voluntary form of schooling for children from the age of 1 and has its own curriculum. Children can begin preschool at different ages and participate for different durations. Municipalities are required by the Education Act to provide preschool activities and childcare to all children that live in Sweden. Preschool may also be offered by independent (private) providers. The municipalities distribute grants to grant-aided independent preschools and they are also responsible for ensuring that the operations meet the requirements of quality and safety. The same legislation and financial framework apply to grant-aided independent preschools and municipal preschools.

Sweden's maximum fee policy makes childcare affordable. Fees are calculated according to income with low-income families paying nothing while the cost is capped for all families. In 2021/22, 513,038 or almost 86 percent of children aged 1–5 years old attended preschool. The preschool is meant to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and to support families in their child rearing responsibilities. At the same time, it must be

⁶ Adult municipal education is flexible and allows adults aged 20, or older, to study Swedish tuition for immigrants, subjects at compulsory school level, or courses in upper secondary education. One person can study one or more courses during an academic year. Therefore, the number of course participants (which are counted more than once if the individual is enrolled in more than one course) – rather than individuals, are more often listed in the statistics. In 2021, the total number of course participants were 1.294,800. (Source: Skolverket, statistics, table 4 A: Kursdeltagare kalenderåren 2018-2021.) This number can be compared to a population of 5,9 million between the ages 20 and 64.)

⁷ This number includes 3,220 individuals in municipal adult education for students with learning disabilities. They, may however, attend compulsory level or upper secondary level.

⁸ Annex 2 - Swedish Council for Higher Education (uhr.se)

⁹ Förordning (2015:545) om referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande.

organised so as to make it possible for parents to work or study. No regulated learning outcomes are defined, and no qualification is awarded.

3.3.2 Compulsory education (primary and lower secondary education)

Swedish compulsory education has a single structure that corresponds to primary and lower secondary education for children. The compulsory school and the preschool class, as well as the leisure-time centre, share a common curriculum, *the curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the leisure-time centre*. Compulsory education includes also Compulsory Special Needs School, Compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities and Sámi school. Compulsory school has regulated learning outcomes and results in qualifications at levels 1 for learners with intellectual disabilities, and level 2.

Municipalities are required by the Education Act to provide compulsory education which can be offered through municipal schools or independent schools.

Preschool class

Starting from the autumn of 2018 the preschool class (*förskoleklass*) is mandatory for all children living in Sweden from the age of six. In 2021/22 there were 122,100 pupils attending preschool class. The activities should be considered as teaching in the same sense as in other types of education. The education in preschool class will encourage each child's learning and development at the same time as providing a foundation for continued schooling. It is mandatory for municipalities to provide preschool classes and for all six-year-olds to be offered a placement for a minimum of 525 hours.

Compulsory school

Compulsory school (*grundskola*) is a nine-year mandatory school form free of charge for all children resident in Sweden. In 2021/22 there were 1,106,077 pupils in compulsory school. A child usually begins compulsory school at the age of 7 years and has completed compulsory education at the age of 16. Compulsory school should be equivalent wherever in the country it is provided. It is the springboard for the individual's continued education, but the purpose is broader than that. Compulsory school should provide pupils with the knowledge and values as well as contributing to personal development, for active life choices and provide a good basis for active participation in social life.

Upon completion, the pupils receive a *final certificate from compulsory school* (*slutbetyg från grundskolan*). To proceed to a national programme in upper secondary school pupils have to have achieved passing grades in Swedish or Swedish as a second language, English, Mathematics and five other subjects to attend a VET-programme. If the pupil wishes to attend a higher education preparatory programme, she or he has to have passing grades in four additional subjects.

Sámi School

Since 1962, the national minority of the Sápmi region (formerly known as Lapland) the Sámi have three choices of education – the compulsory school, integrated sámi teaching in a compulsory school or sámi school (*sameskola*). In 2021/22 there were 181 pupils in sámi school. Integrated sámi teaching is provided at a number of compulsory schools in the north of Sweden. Integrated sámi teaching may take place throughout the nine years of compulsory education. The curriculum for the sámi school reflects the curriculum for compulsory school but includes a syllabus and adds time to include the sámi language and culture. It is available for year 1-6 and after six years in the sámi school, pupils complete their compulsory education (school years 7 to 9) in the compulsory school.

Compulsory Special Needs School

Special school will provide pupils with developmental disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments, an education that is tailored to each individual's precondition and, as far as possible, correspond to that given in the compulsory school. In 2021/22 there were 750 pupils attending special school. Education in special schools should form the basis for further education. Upon completion, the pupils receive a *final certificate from special school at compulsory level* (slutbetyg från specialskolan).

Compulsory School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities

Children with intellectual disabilities can attend the school for pupils with intellectual disabilities as an alternative to the compulsory school. In 2021/22 there were 6,754 pupils attending compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities. It should provide the pupils with an education that is tailored to each individual's precondition and, as far as possible, correspond to that given in the compulsory school. Upon completion, the pupils receive a *final certificate from compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities* (slutbetyg från anpassade gymnasieskolan).

3.3.3 Upper Secondary School

Upper secondary education in Sweden is voluntary. While the responsibility for obtaining an education, after nine years of compulsory schooling, increasingly is transferred from the parent or guardian to the individual learner, there is a strong municipal responsibility for educating young people. The local authorities are obliged to take an active role in motivating young people under the age of 20, who have not completed upper secondary school, to begin or resume upper secondary school. In effect, almost all youth attend upper secondary school in Sweden. (An alternative study path is available in the Folk high schools which are discussed in section 3.4 – Non-formal learning.) Upper secondary education has regulated learning outcomes and results in qualifications at levels 2 (for learners with intellectual disabilities) and level 4.

Upper Secondary School

Upper secondary school should provide a solid foundation for professional work, further studies, personal development and an active participation in community life. It builds on compulsory school and admission is offered until the year the learner turns 20 years of age. Upper secondary school is voluntary and intended to last for three years, typically from age 16 to 19 or four years for pupils with learning disabilities. Parents/guardians have a responsibility to financially support their children until they complete upper secondary school or turn 20 years of age.

The municipality is responsible for offering upper secondary school education, in-house or in collaboration with other municipalities. The offer shall include a comprehensive selection of national programs and orientations. There are 18 national programs, twelve vocational programs and six higher education preparatory programs. All 18 national programs are three years in duration. Students are eligible for admission to Higher Vocational Education (HVE) after graduation, while eligibility for admission to Higher Education (HE) differs. Before 2003 only higher education preparatory programmes provided general eligibility and students graduating from VET-programmes were eligible for HE if passing grades from certain elective courses were included for the diploma. All pupils in vocational programs had the right to elect the courses required for basic eligibility for HE. Since 2003, all vocational programmes provide general eligibility to higher education by default since necessary subjects/modules were added. Pupils may, however, choose to opt out of studying the added subjects/modules and still receive their upper secondary VET diploma. Admission requirements to HVE remain unchanged.

There are also four introductory programs for learners who are not eligible for a national upper secondary program. These programmes are intended to lead to eligibility for a national programme, or to employment.

Table 4. Pupils in upper secondary school during the academic year 2021/2022

	Pupils in upper secondary school 2021/22	Pupils in upper secondary school for students with intellectual disabilities 2021/22	Total
National programmes:	324,241	3,880	
• Higher education preparatory programmes	218,623		
• Vocational programmes	105,618		
Introductory programmes	37,432		
Individual programmes		2,874	
Total	361,673	6,754	368,427

Work based learning is mandatory in all vocational programmes, but it is also possible to choose an apprenticeship track in which the pupils carries out a larger part of the education and training in one or several workplaces. Both pathways should result in the same learning outcomes and lead to the same diploma. After a vocational program, pupils should be well prepared for the labour market. It should be possible to immediately begin a professional career after graduation.

Upper Secondary School for pupils with intellectual disabilities

Upper secondary school for pupils with intellectual disabilities is a voluntary form of schooling that young people with an intellectual disability can choose after completing compulsory education. There are nine national VET-programmes and individual programmes for learners that provide an adaption of the education to individual needs. The duration is four years, and the qualification is levelled at SeQF 2.

3.3.4 Municipal adult education

The municipalities are obliged to offer adult education to its residents. Municipal adult education should mirror the education municipalities offer the youth and as such be available for education at basic level, for upper secondary level and as special education for adults with intellectual disabilities. It is also available as Swedish tuition for immigrants.

Municipal adult education and training at compulsory and upper secondary level

Municipal adult education should support adults to develop knowledge, skills and competence in order to strengthen their position for professional work, further studies, personal development and an active participation in community life. Municipal adult education at basic level is corresponding to the education in compulsory school for the youth, but adults study subjects and these are adjusted for adults and more concentrated. In 2021/22 there were 74,300 individuals studying municipal adult education at basic level. A final certificate is levelled at SeQF 2.

The same courses (modules) as in education for youth are used in municipal adult education at upper secondary level, but adults do not study in national programmes. Instead the starting point should be the individual's needs and therefore adults combine courses to optimise their learning to meet the individual objectives. Thus, the adult learner will be studying according to regulated learning outcomes, but it is the combination of courses that may decide if a full qualification can be awarded. In case the

adult learner combines courses which are equivalent to three years of full-time studies (2,400 upper secondary credits), a municipal adult education upper secondary diploma of SeQF level 4 can be awarded.

The individual who has the most to gain from the education shall be prioritised. In 2021/22 there were 259,812 individuals studying 1,294,800 courses (2021) in municipal adult education at upper secondary level.

Validation is possible in municipal adult education. Knowledge, skills and competence acquired through training, job experience or otherwise may be validated and recognised. Education providers are responsible for the process.

Education for adults with intellectual disabilities

The goals of education for adults with intellectual disabilities are that adults with intellectual disabilities or acquired brain injury should be supported and encouraged in their learning. They should be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and competencies in order to strengthen their position in working and social life and to further their personal development. Municipalities have an obligation to provide education for adults with intellectual disabilities. The starting point should be the individual's needs and preconditions. In 2021/22 there were 3,220 individuals studying education for adults with intellectual disabilities in municipal adult education. The qualification at basic level is levelled at SeQF 1 and at upper secondary level at SeQF 2.

Swedish tuition for immigrants

Swedish tuition for immigrants is a qualified language training which aims to provide adults, with a mother tongue other than Swedish, basic knowledge of Swedish. The starting point for education should be the individual's needs and preconditions. Those who live in Sweden, from the second half of the calendar year he or she turns 16 years, have the right to Swedish tuition for immigrants. It is the municipality in which the person is a resident which is obliged to provide training for those who are entitled to participate. Since 1 July 2016, Swedish tuition for immigrants is part of municipal adult education curriculum and in 2021/22 the number of individuals in the programme were 132,753. The highest module (course D) results in a qualification levelled at SeQF 2.

3.3.5 Post-secondary and higher formal education in Sweden

Post-secondary formal education in Sweden is provided by different actors, at different levels and regulated by different legislations. There is a post-secondary fourth year of upper secondary education leading to an upper secondary engineering qualification, two higher vocational education qualifications/diplomas, and first, second and third cycle programmes in higher education leading to qualifications/degrees.

Upper-secondary engineering qualification

Learners under the age of 22 with a degree from the national higher education preparatory *Technology programme* can study post-secondary vocational applied courses during a fourth year, leading to what is called an upper secondary engineering diploma (gymnasieingenjör) which is placed at SeQF level 5, ISCED 454. The fourth year is delivered in collaboration between the school and industry. A local programme council is linked to the programme to ensure that it is relevant and leads to employability. The course has four profiles: Design and product development; Production engineering; Information technology; and Urban planning. The fourth year is funded through state grants and in 2021 there were 418 individuals that entered the programme¹⁰.

¹⁰ <https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/rapporter/2022/uppfoljning-av-gymnasieskolan-2022>

Higher Vocational Education, HVE

Higher Vocational Education was introduced within the formal education system in 2009. It is a flexible form of education in which structures and qualification types stay permanent over time, but the inclusion of programmes and providers varies according to labour market needs. A distinctive feature of the higher vocational education programmes is that they have a strong labour market connection and that both the labour market and education providers jointly design the programmes. The programmes are jointly financed by public funds and the labour market, and lead to a Higher Vocational Education Diploma at SeQF level 5, or an Advanced Higher Vocational Education Diploma at SeQF level 6.

Providers apply to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) for the right to start a higher VET programme. The Agency assesses the application, rejects or grants the application and allocates government grants, performs analysis of future skill needs, produces statistics, evaluates and audits the programmes and promotes quality improvement. For most programmes, a substantial part is delivered through work-based learning. A programme can be approved for up to five start-ups and then needs to renew the application to the Agency. In 2021, 19,800 students graduated from an HVE-programme and of these, 91 percent were employed in 2022.

Labour market stakeholders are part of the management team for each programme and provide teachers and trainers, equipment and access to learning in workplaces. Programmes within Higher Vocational Education shall allow further training after upper-secondary school, further education of professionals and the possibility of changing the orientation of education or profession.

Eligible for the HVE-programmes are those with a formal upper secondary school diploma, or equivalent – meaning that candidates can demonstrate through validation of prior learning that they meet the entry requirements otherwise than through formal education. Diplomas from higher VET-programmes do not, however, provide eligibility for admission to higher education.

A new HVE-concept with courses shorter than a half year full time studies, was introduced in 2020. These courses do not lead to full qualifications, the scheme rather aims to reskill and upskill professionals. Courses are flexible regarding their mode of delivery (campus, distance or remote) and study pace (full-time or part-time); this way they also attract learners who wish to combine work and education. Like the HVE-programmes, higher VET courses are adaptable and change over time in response to the skills needed on the labour market. Most courses are offered in the fields of digitalisation and automation, green technology and energy efficiency. By the end of 2022, more than 20,000 learners have enrolled in HVE-courses.

Higher Education¹¹

All higher education is offered by public-sector Higher Education Institutions, HEIs, or by independent education providers granted degree-awarding powers by the Government. Third-cycle courses and programmes are offered by universities or university colleges that have been granted entitlement to award third-cycle qualifications (degrees).

Higher Education is a collective term for all higher education, regardless of the education provider's judicial status. Higher education in Sweden is governed by the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) and the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100). The Higher Education Act is enacted by the Parliament and contains regulations about the operations of HEIs.

¹¹ Source: The Yearly report by The Swedish Higher Education Authority. Rapport 2015:16. Higher education in Sweden 2015 STATUS REPORT. Report 2015:16 UKÄ, the Swedish Higher Education Authority

These are supplemented by the provisions laid down in the Higher Education Ordinance, including the degree ordinance, annex 2. The Higher Education Act contains basic regulations about the courses and programmes offered by HEIs. For instance, it sets out what should characterise these courses and programmes at the different levels and stipulates freedom of research. It provides a framework for the organisation and governance of the HEIs, and states that every HEI must have a board of governors and a vice-chancellor. Within these parameters, the HEIs are relatively free to decide on their own organisation, allocation of resources and course offerings.

The Swedish Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance have been amended in accordance with the agreements reached within the framework of the Bologna Process, including the European Qualifications Framework (QF-EHEA). These amendments apply to courses and programmes offered from 1 July 2007 as well as to qualifications awarded after that date. All courses, programmes and qualifications are ascribed to three cycles: first (SeQF 6), second (SeQF 7) and third (SeQF 8). All first and second-cycle educational offerings consist of courses. These courses can be combined to form programmes. The level division is part of the adjustment to the Bologna process, the so called QF-EHEA, which aims to make higher education more comparable in the 47 states included in the process.

The mission of the HEIs is to offer education based on an academic or artistic footing and proven experience. They must also undertake development work, including research or artistic development. In addition, the HEIs must co-operate with their surrounding communities, provide information about their operations and also act to ensure that benefits are derived from the findings of their research. Swedish higher education has traditionally included, not only the education of young people after completing upper-secondary school, but also the training of professionals.

Table 5. Number of HE qualifications awarded during the academic year 2021/2022.

Qualification	Number of qualifications awarded (academic year 2021/22) ¹²
General qualifications	47 878
Qualifications in the fine, applied and performing arts	1 093
Professional qualifications	36 634
Total	85 605

Both general qualifications and qualifications in the fine, applied and performing arts are awarded within the first, second or third cycles. Professional qualifications are awarded within the first and second cycles and mainly in the regulated professions. There are about 50 different programmes leading to a professional qualification, of which two-thirds lead to a qualification at the master's level or second cycle. A majority of professional qualifications awarded in the second cycle do not require a previous first-cycle qualification and the programmes leading to their award cover both cycles. Swedish higher education differs from higher education in many other countries in this respect.

Basic entry requirements for admission are provided by a diploma from a higher education preparatory upper secondary programme, or an upper secondary VET-programme if the students has added elective courses providing eligibility. Many first and second cycle courses and programmes also have specific entry requirements.

¹² Data extracted from the interactive webpage Högskolan i siffror - Universitetskanslersämbetet (uka.se)

3.4 Non-formal learning

3.4.1 Liberal adult education

Liberal adult education (folkbildning) consists of 154 folk high schools with students from across the country and 10 study associations. Liberal adult education has a special position and tradition in the Swedish education system. Independent autonomous folk high schools and study associations, in the context of the liberal adult education regulation, has the mandate to develop its schemes based on profile or ideology. There is often a close cooperation with NGOs and other organisations which are the accountable authorities of folk high schools and members of study associations. Liberal adult education has had an established role for decades as an educator in Swedish society. The first Folk High schools started in 1868 and the first study association in 1912.

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education is a non-profit organisation with three members, The Interest Organisation for Popular Movement Folk High Schools (Rörelsefolkhögskolornas intresseorganisation, RIO) representing 113 folk high schools that are owned by civil society organisations, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR) represents the county councils and regions which are the accountable authorities of the remaining folk high schools and The Swedish National Federation of Study Associations which is the professional organisation for the ten study associations. The activities of folk high schools and study associations are financed in large part through support from the state, counties and municipalities. The state allocation for liberal adult education amounts to nearly 7,2 billion SEK, or 1,7% of the total budget allocated to education¹³.

Study associations

Study circles and cultural programmes are the central activities of the study associations. Participation is voluntary and study associations also are tasked to support refugees seekers and people with various disabilities. All activities are characterised by pedagogy based on active participation, conversation and joint learning in groups. The study circle is a small group of people who systematically study and seek knowledge together based on their need and interest. It is open to anyone, and no formal prior learning is required. Participants influence the content and in 2021 there were 85,600 study circles with 294,500 individuals participating. Therefore, there are no regulated learning outcomes, and no qualifications are awarded.

Cultural programmes provide cultural experiences through activities like lectures, music, drama, performance, film and photography, dance, literature – book clubs, arts and craft, performed in front of a group or together. Cultural programmes should be organised so that they contribute to participants sharing, and to reflection. In 2021 there were 4.7 million people participating in a cultural programme.¹⁴

Folk high schools – general courses

Learning in the so-called general courses of the folk high schools corresponds to the regulated learning outcomes of the courses and syllabuses of compulsory and upper secondary school and therefore leads to qualifications levelled to SeQF 2 and 4, respectively. These courses at upper secondary level give access to both higher vocational education and university courses and a passing study assessment is a

¹³ Studieförbundet and Folkhögskolor 2020. Source: Budgetpropositionen 2022, tabell 3.2.

¹⁴ fbr_fickfakta2022_webb.pdf (folkbildningsradet.se)

qualification that is levelled to the national qualifications framework. There were 21,500 participants in general courses in 2021.¹⁵

Folk high schools – special courses

Folk high schools have a large number of long special courses (profile courses) at different levels and with different entry requirements geared toward specialty areas, some with vocational orientation. There were 36,400 participants in special courses in 2021. Each school decides which courses are provided, sets its own learning objectives and determines how advanced each course will be. This is done without any connection to the formal education system and is not coordinated nationally. Liberal adult education providers can apply to the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education to have these special and profile courses levelled to the SeQF according to the criteria in the ordinance¹⁶ governing this process. Folk high schools offering courses for leisure activities leadership for the youth have organised cooperation and serve as examples of special profile courses that have been levelled to the SeQF after an application process.

3.4.2 Labour market training programmes

Labour market training (arbetsmarknadsutbildning) is a form of VET that is regulated by an ordinance¹⁷ and aims to strengthen the individual's opportunities to obtain or keep a job, and to counter competence shortages in the labour market. Eligible for labour market training programmes are, with some exceptions, those aged 25 and older, in unemployment or in risk of being unemployed. Arbetsförmedlingen (the Swedish Public Employment Service, PES), is responsible for the execution of the programme. Labour market training usually lasts for a maximum of six months.

3.4.3 Continued learning in working-life

Sweden has since the early 1990s an upper-secondary school that prepares students for further study in higher education or for the labour market directly, higher education preparatory programs or vocational programs. A student can, after finishing studies at a vocational program, also enter the labour market right after upper-secondary school completion for a 'completing-education period.' Collective agreements between social partners of some sectors, e.g. in the construction sector or for a journeyman's certificate as a hairdresser, specify that students after completing an upper secondary diploma, continue their training in a workplace, a so called 'completing-education period' (färdigutbildning) before the person can take trade or journeyman examinations or receive a trade certificate. This period consists of a work placement or apprenticeship. This means that the final stage of learning towards sectorial certificates and certain occupations is completed outside of the formal education system. In some sectors, an apprenticeship training is also offered as an alternative pathway to upper secondary VET.

Several of the large and medium-sized business organisations in the country have their own internal training programs that lead to certificates or diplomas which are required for different types of tasks. Some internal training does not lead to a certificate or a diploma, but rather to necessary competences for the staff to be up to date in the field. Employers can also procure commissioned education from the formal education system, i.e. primarily from higher vocational education providers or universities, for continuous professional development (CPD) for their staff. Employed learners do not need to show proof of eligibility to participate, nor is there a selection process for admission, since the employer finances the training and consequently can select for whom it should be open.

¹⁵ fbr_fickfakta2022_webb.pdf (folkbildningsradet.se)

¹⁶ SFS (2015:545)

¹⁷ Förordning (2000:634) om arbetsmarknadspolitiska program

Nothing, however, prevents the academic institution to award participants grades or a diploma if the programme is deemed to hold the same quality and academic standards as a regular academic programme.

3.4.4 Training conducted by authorities

Sweden has several agencies and authorities engaged in basic and further education for various positions in the area of national authorities. Examples of agencies engaged in such programs are Swedish Customs (Tullverket), Swedish Coast Guard (Kustbevakningen) and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och bevakning, MSB). If these qualifications are to be levelled to the qualifications framework, the responsible agency will have to apply to the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education for a decision of SeQF level.

3.4.5 Arts and culture courses

Arts and cultural courses is a post-secondary form of education that was introduced in 2015 and are available in areas such as dance, music, theatre, film, art, and fashion. Arts and cultural courses are delivered by independent (private) schools under state supervision and are granted aid in the form of state grants and/or student financial aid. Many of the arts and cultural courses prepare for further studies in higher education, in for example art-, music- or theatre university colleges. Other courses lead directly to a profession, such as dancer, designer or musical artist. In 2020, the number of students entering an arts and culture long course (20 weeks or longer) were 1,822, and the number of students entering a short course (19 weeks or less) were 658.¹⁸

If the provider of an arts and cultural course would like to level the qualification provided to the national qualifications framework, they must apply, according to the procedure set out in section 9, for a decision on what level the qualification is equivalent to in the Swedish framework.

3.5 Informal learning

Informal learning is the learning that occurs in everyday life and at work. Exact data on the extent of informal learning is difficult to obtain. According to Statistics Sweden (SCB)¹⁹, there are approximately 3.5 million adults in education and training in Sweden every year and a large part of that learning is informal learning. Examples of informal learning are work experience, active participation in non-profit organisations, private business or trade union involvement. Learning outcomes of informal learning can be made visible through validation in municipal adult education, higher VET and higher education.

3.6 Chart of the Swedish education system

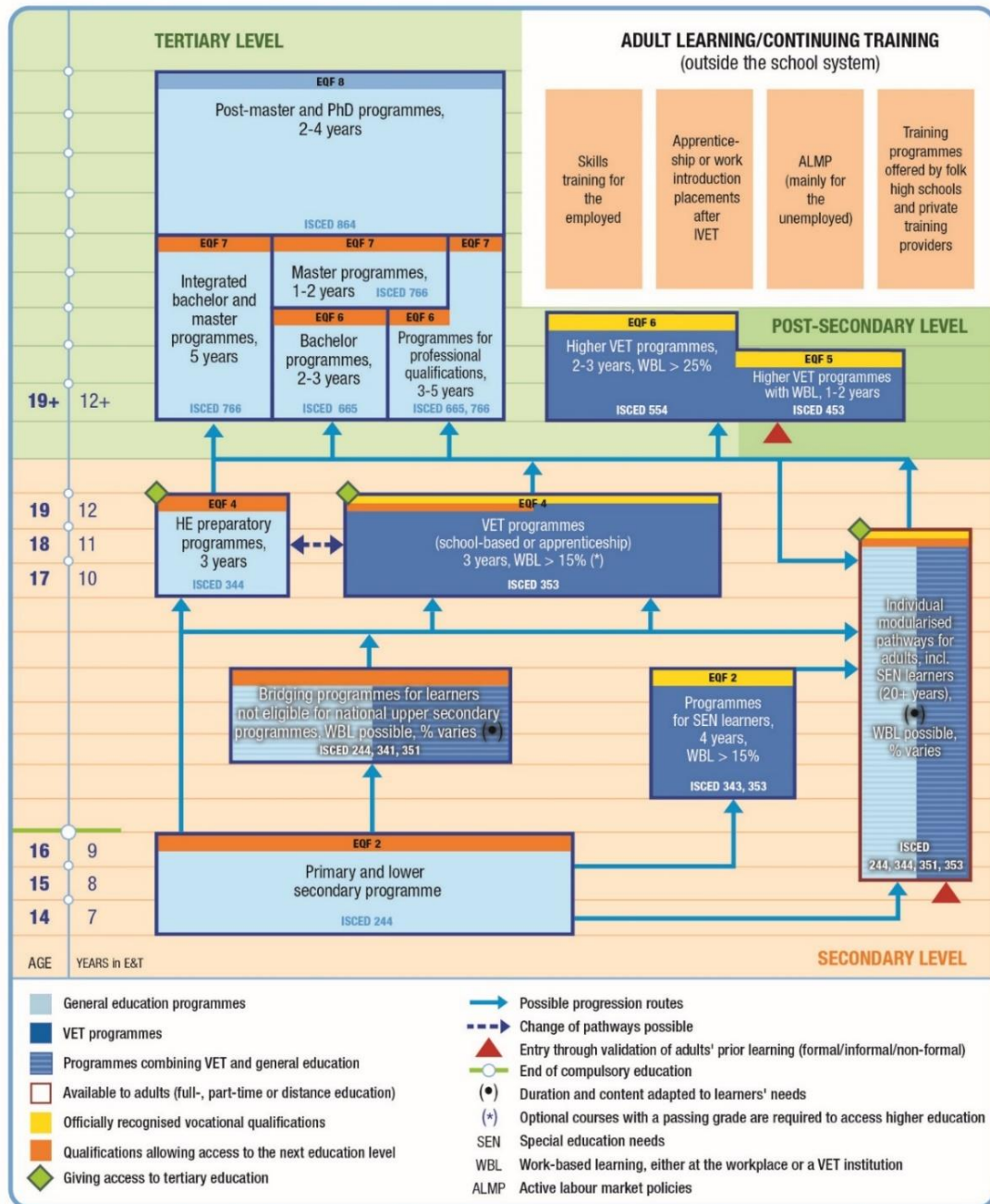
The chart below provides a representation of the Swedish education system as illustrated by Cedefop.²⁰

¹⁸ MYH, *Statistical Yearbook, 2021*.

¹⁹ Source: SCB, Theme: Education, report 2014:3. *Vuxnas deltagande i utbildning 2011/2012*.

²⁰ Cedefop (2023). *Vocational education and training in Sweden: short description*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/800830>. In addition, the qualification Upper secondary engineering degree, levelled on SeQF level 5 (EQF level 5, ISCED 454), that is open for upper secondary graduates of the three-year general higher education preparatory technology programme, is not visible in the chart. See description in section 3.3.5.

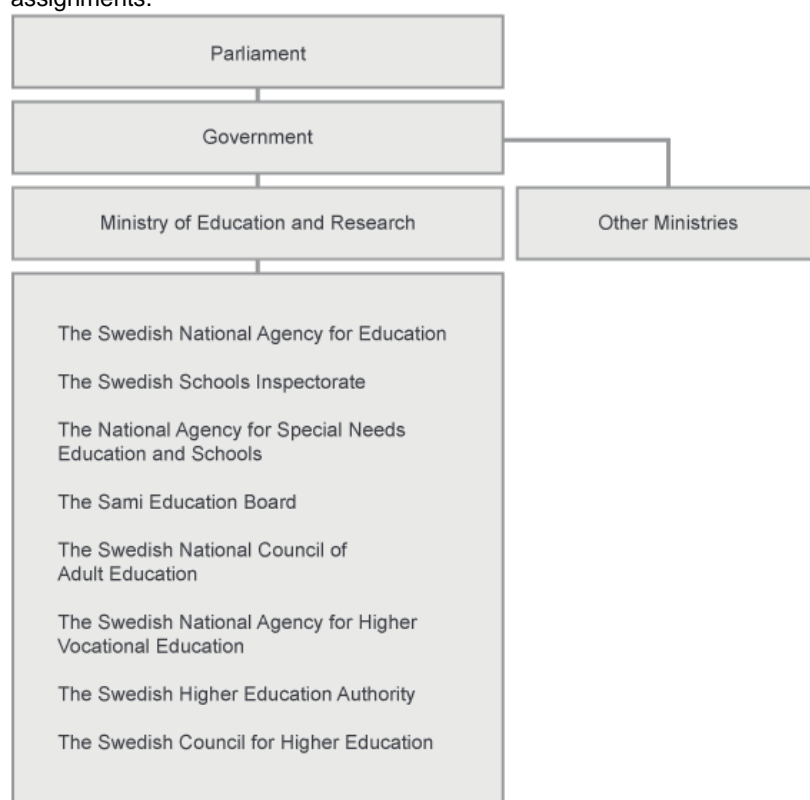
Figure 1. The Swedish Education System.



4 Governance

The governance of the formal education system is regulated by the Parliament (Riksdag) through legislative acts and the government through ordinances. The Ministry of Education and Research prepares matters related to the government's education and research policy. The Ministry of Education and Research tasks, on behalf of the government, national school- and education authorities, universities and university colleges to apply or execute the regulations and carry out the activities which the Parliament and the government has decided on. Other ministries may be involved when it comes to certain universities or in connection to mission statements. The government regulates the tasks of each agency and authority in an ordinance and the yearly appropriation directions which provides guidelines to the respective agency and the higher education institutions.

Figure 2. National school- and education authorities and organisations with some authority assignments.



4.1 Governance of preschool, compulsory and upper secondary education

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Statens skolverk) is responsible for developing the curricula, syllabuses, or equivalent for preschool, primary education, upper secondary school and municipal adult education. The agency is also responsible for national monitoring and evaluation as well as ways of supporting accountable authorities and promoting the quality of education. While the steering principles are nationally determined, supported and monitored, the provision of education is decentralised. It is the municipalities and organisers of independent schools that have the primary responsibility in terms of resource allocation, organisation and implementation of activities in the school system, based on the national objectives and requirements that the government and Parliament have established. Funding is mainly based on municipal tax revenue, but both the municipalities and organisers of independent schools can also

make use of the general indirect government funds and state grants aimed to support specific tasks.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen) audits and inspect the quality in preschools, compulsory school, leisure time centers, upper secondary school and municipal adult education. The Inspectorate also conduct thematic quality reviews and assesses applications from independent education providers to be accepted for education provision.

In addition, there are also two other school authorities with specific tasks, *The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools* (Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten), and the *Sámi Education Board* (Sameskolstyrelsen).

The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools has the task to primarily provide advice and support to accountable authorities of compulsory-, upper secondary- and adult education when it comes to special educational needs and also manages special schools for persons with disabilities of sight and hearing.

The Sámi Education Board has the task of ensuring that children of the indigenous Sámi group have access to education under the Education Act and the curriculum for Sámi school, preschool class and extended school. The agency is also the accountable authority of the five Sámi schools in Sweden. Sámi school is a school type equivalent to primary school grades 1 to 6 and is designed and profiled with regard to the Sámi language and Sámi culture.

4.2 Governance of liberal adult education

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet) is an organisation that has some authority assignments. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education allocates and monitors the use of public funds for liberal adult education, *i.e.* the folk high schools and study associations. Each folk high school decides on programs of education. Learning outcomes and programs are not regulated and thus not included in the formal education system – but as already shown in section 3.4.1, a general course at the folk high school can provide eligibility for access to upper-secondary education or university and higher vocational education and is consequently referenced to the SeQF on equal terms as are compulsory and upper secondary education.²¹

4.3 Governance of post-secondary and higher education

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) is the administrative authority for Higher Vocational Education (HVE). The agency analyses the need for training in higher vocational education, decides which programs to include in the higher vocational education, and distributes government funding to the education providers. The authority also supervises and examines the quality of programs and monitors the results and outcomes. Funding of higher vocational education is done partly with government funding, and partly by the labour market (approximately one fourth). The agency is also responsible for other forms of training like the arts and cultural courses mentioned in section 3.4.5, but also of interpreter training in liberal adult education. The latter two forms of education do not belong to the formal education system.

²¹ Appendix 2 in the ordinance (SFS 2015:545).

Table 6. Governance of post-secondary and higher education

	Providers	Governance and responsible state agency	Legislation	Qualification/s awarded at SeQF levels
Upper secondary engineering	Upper secondary education providers	The National Agency for Education; the Swedish Schools Inspectorate	The Education Act (2010:800); Ordinance (2014:854).	5
Higher vocational education	Higher VET providers (private, municipal, regional, higher education providers)	The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education	The Higher Vocational Education Act (2009:128), the Higher Vocational education Ordinance (2009:130)	5-6
Higher education	Universities and other higher education institutions	The Swedish Council for Higher Education; the Swedish Higher Education Authority	The Higher Education Act (1992:1434), the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)	6-8

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (Universitetskanslersämbetet, UKÄ) and *The Swedish Council for Higher Education* (Universitets- och högskolerådet, UHR) responsibilities relate to higher education. The main tasks of UKÄ are quality assurance of higher education, appraisal of the degree-awarding powers of public-sector higher education institutions, legal supervision of higher education, monitoring efficiency, follow-up as well as responsibility for statistics in the higher education sector. The main tasks of UHR are information about higher education and the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (högskoleprovet), promoting widening participation, admission to Swedish universities and university colleges, recognition of foreign qualifications. The Swedish Council for Higher Education is also the national agency for EU and other international programmes concerning mobility, providing information and support for international exchanges and collaborations across the entire education sector.

5 Introduction to the Swedish Qualifications Framework, SeQF

5.1 Why a Swedish Qualifications Framework?

The number of qualifications awarded within the formal education systems varies across countries. As mentioned earlier (3.2), in Sweden, organised learning encompasses both formal and non-formal learning. Whereas the formal learning delivered by the formal education system is well regulated, education leading to non-formal learning is, to some extent, unregulated and there are many stakeholders providing education and training that are not part of the formal education system. Non-formal education and training may include labour market training, and liberal adult education, provided by e.g. folk high schools, as well as by privately owned education companies. There is also non-formal learning that is agreed upon by collective agreements and takes place in the workplace after completion of vocational training in upper-secondary schools in some sectors.

Limiting the national qualifications framework to only include qualifications provided within the formal education system would thus mean that only some of the qualifications awarded in Sweden would be included in the SeQF. From a Swedish perspective, it is important that a national framework can show a comprehensive map of the different qualifications awarded in Sweden, both formal and non-formal. By linking the SeQF to the EQF, the possibility of comparing qualifications both nationally and internationally, regardless of in which context the qualification is awarded, is promoted.

5.2 Starting points for the development of the Swedish Qualifications Framework

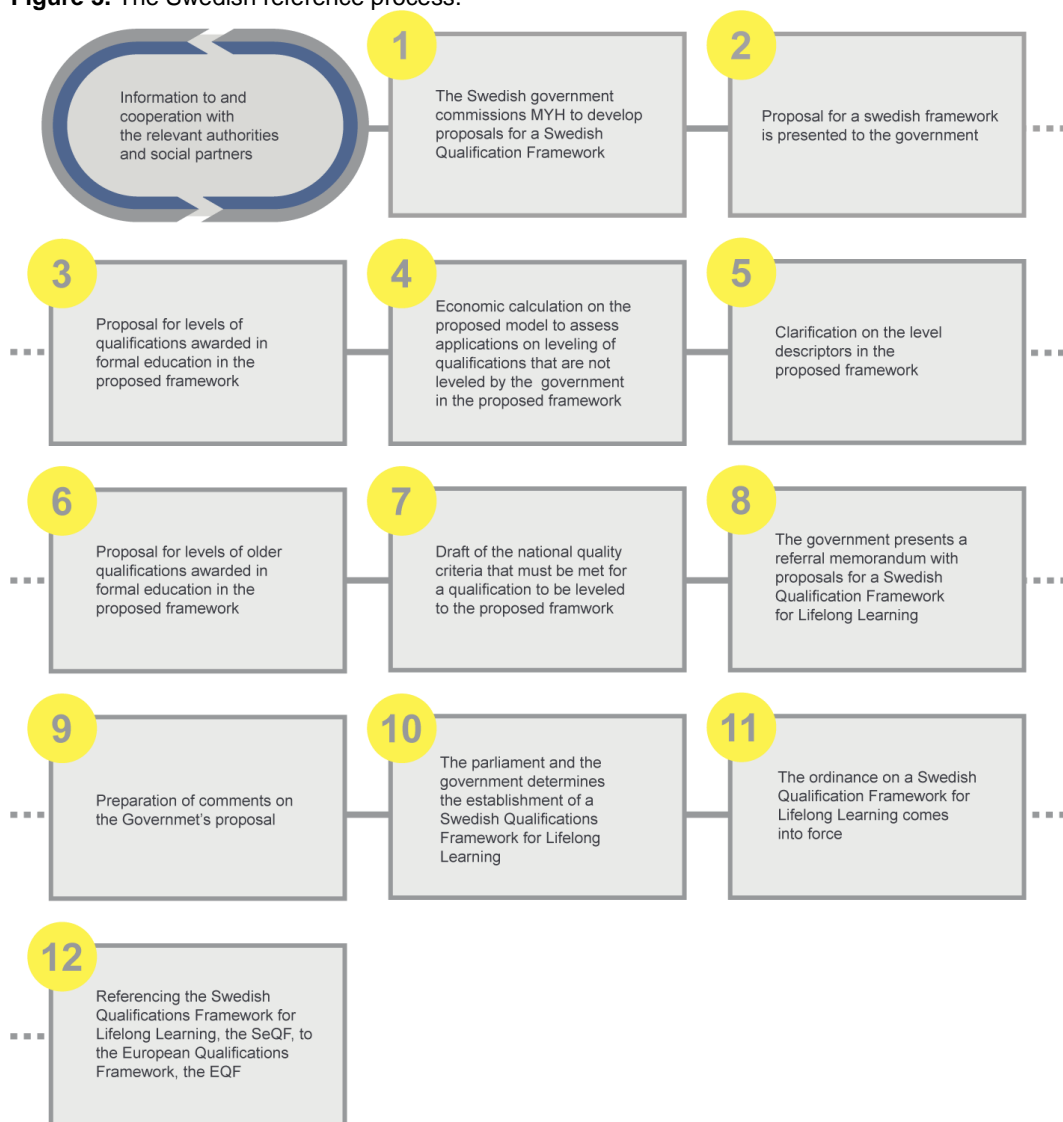
The purpose of the EQF is to promote lifelong learning and improve the employability, mobility, and social inclusion of workers and students within the EU. To achieve this purpose, the European qualifications framework is open for inclusion of different types of qualifications, from both the formal education system, the non-formal education and training in working life. The EQF-recommendation makes it clear that Member States should include qualifications from various actors, i.e. public and private education providers. This has been an important starting point for the development and evolution of the SeQF.

The Government has given the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH), which is Sweden's national coordination (NCP) point for the EQF, several assignments regarding the design of a national qualifications framework. An important starting point for the tasks has been that qualifications in the formal education system, as well as other qualifications, should be able to be formally linked to a national qualifications framework. The qualifications awarded within the formal education system are well known amongst stakeholders in Sweden, but they represent only a fraction of the total number of qualifications awarded, as there are many sectors and private companies that also offers qualifications. A prerequisite for the agency's work has been that the levels and level descriptors should be designed to cover all parts of the formal education system while also including qualifications awarded by private stakeholders and sector alliances. Another important starting point has been to involve relevant stakeholders and authorities in the work of the designing of the SeQF.

5.3 The Referencing Process

MYH's work to develop proposals for a national qualifications framework has been characterised by openness and dialogue with relevant stakeholders and authorities.

Figure 3. The Swedish reference process.



The proposal for the design of a national framework has thus been prepared and established in dialogue with stakeholders, authorities, education providers, employers, workers' organisations and NGOs after being invited to participate in the process from the start. Proposals have also been sent out on a public consultation by the government to relevant stakeholders in July 2014.²²

During the period from winter 2010 until the government decision in August 2015, the national coordination point (NCP), as part of the reference process, participated in numerous conferences and meetings, both at national and international level which all sought to share experiences for the development of the SeQF. Some of the conferences were organised by the NCP or in collaboration with other authorities, and in other cases, the NCP was invited to conferences and meetings organised by other stakeholders.

5.4 The technical levelling of qualifications

The qualifications in the formal education system in Sweden are regulated, quality assured, and has learning outcomes stated in their regulation. These qualifications thus

²² Remisspromemoria (U2014/4373/GV) En nationell referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande, Utbildningsdepartementet.

fulfil the requirements for the use of learning outcomes and for quality assurance laid down in the EQF-recommendation. Because these qualifications are regulated by statutes, the government has decided the level of such qualifications in the SeQF. The technical levelling of the above qualifications has been carried out in cooperation with the relevant authorities, stakeholders, social partners, and education providers within the formal education system. The levelling process of qualifications outside the formal education system is described in detail in Chapter 9.

6 A Swedish Qualifications Framework – SeQF

It has been assessed that the EQF classification and structure works well to describe qualifications issued in Sweden, and that the national framework should be given the same basic structure as the EQF. The national framework has thus been given eight levels with level descriptors expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competence that are relevant to a qualification on each level.

Disclaimer – update

As of January 1, 2023, due to a revision of the ordinance regulating the SeQF to align with the revised EQF-recommendation of 2017, the term competence has been changed to *responsibility and autonomy*.²³

In order to achieve the purpose of the national qualifications framework, the level descriptors are designed so as to create equal conditions for including qualifications in different areas and from different stakeholders. Level descriptors have been adapted to the Swedish context for the framework to be able to reflect the aspects deemed important nationally. The referencing of the Swedish National Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework creates opportunities to compare the Swedish qualifications with qualifications in other member states. The objectives of broadly formulated level descriptors in the SeQF can help to build trust between stakeholders and understanding that qualifications of very different character may correspond to the same level in the national framework.

It should be noted that in the SeQF, it is the level of the qualifications that will be determined. It is not in question to assess or determine the level of individual or personal learning outcomes or merits and refer these to the national framework. The principle of learning outcomes means that individuals may have acquired the knowledge, skills and competences required for a certain qualification in different ways.

In order to avoid a misunderstanding²⁴, that a level of a qualification is equated with a specific formal qualification, Sweden has chosen to present the descriptors and the formal levelled qualifications in annexes to the ordinance.

6.1 Key concepts

Learning outcomes

The concept of *learning outcomes* is defined as the knowledge an individual possesses, what he or she understands and can do after completing a learning process. In the framework learning outcomes are the sum of knowledge, skills and competences (responsibility and autonomy). The national qualifications framework reflects qualifications awarded within and outside the formal education system as well as learning through work experience or in another way.

Qualification

A *qualification* is the documented learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competences (responsibility and autonomy). The intended learning outcomes are documented beforehand, so that the individual's achieved learning outcomes can be assessed against them after completing a learning process.

²³ Förordning (2015:545) om referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande. Svensk författningssamling 2015:545 t.o.m. SFS 2022:1633 - Riksdagen

²⁴ There is no credit system connected to the SeQF, and the framework does not take the expected workload to achieve particular learning outcomes into account.

Level Descriptors

The *level descriptors* in the SeQF are three in number: knowledge, skills and competences (responsibility and autonomy).

Knowledge

Knowledge consists of facts, principles, theories, and practices that are related to a specific field of work or study. Knowledge can be based on experience and/or be theoretical. Knowledge may have been developed in practical situations in everyday life and in working life or through different study situations.

Skills

Skills are the ability to apply knowledge and proven experience to accomplish tasks and solve problems. Skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking and innovative solutions) or practical (involving manual dexterity and use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

Competence (responsibility and autonomy) is the ability to use knowledge and skills, to cooperate and take responsibility in work or study situations as well as in professional and personal development. Responsibility and autonomy are key concepts.

Full Fit and Best Fit

Full Fit means that the learning outcomes for a specific qualification should match completely with the level descriptors at a certain level. If *Full Fit* does not exist, an overall assessment of the qualifications' learning outcomes should be conducted to assess what level the full weight of the qualifications corresponds to, meaning *Best Fit*. Thus, the principle of *Best Fit* should be seen in relation to the concept of *Full Fit*.

6.2 The legislation of the Swedish Qualifications Framework

6.2.1 Law (2015:478)

Law (2015:478) with the authority to issue regulations on the fee for the application for the levelling decision relating to the qualifications for lifelong learning (Lag (2015:478) med bemyndigande att meddela föreskrifter om avgift för ansökan om att få beslut som avser kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande).²⁵

The law came into force on October 1, 2015. The law gives the government, or the authority appointed by the government, the mandate to issue regulations on the obligation to pay a fee for an application for a decision on the level of a qualification of the National Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. The government has regulated the fee in the SeQF ordinance (Förordning (2015:545) om referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande).

6.2.2 Ordinance (2015:545)

The Ordinance (2015:545) on a qualifications framework for lifelong learning (Förordning (2015:545) om referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande) entered into force on October 1, 2015, and contains provisions on the national framework for qualifications for lifelong learning. The regulation defines what constitutes a qualification, the framework with its levels and level descriptors, and a list of the qualifications whose learning

²⁵ <https://www.xn--svenskfrfattningssamling-roc.se/sites/default/files/sfs/2022-06/SFS2022-911.pdf>

outcomes are regulated, in two annexes. The regulation contains provisions on how a provider, awarding a qualification which does not have state regulated learning outcomes, can apply for a decision on level of its qualification in accordance with the SeQF. The regulation also contains provisions on the follow-up and review of such qualifications, information and notification obligations of the provider, how an amendment of a decision shall be managed and the fee for the application. It also contains provisions for the National Agency for Higher VET (MYH) to annually report on their levelling decisions for qualifications, and that MYH may issue more detailed regulations on the enforcement of the ordinance and on specific issues and refer which body a decision can be appealed to.

6.2.3 Ordinance amending the ordinance (2011:1162)

Ordinance amending the Ordinance (2011:1162) with instructions for the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (SFS 2015:546) (Förordning om ändring i förordningen (2011:1162) med instruktion för Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan (SFS 2015:546).

The ordinance entered into force on January 1, 2016. According to the regulation MYH is given the twin tasks of reviewing issues and compiling data on the level of qualifications, according to the Regulation (2015:545) on the qualifications framework for lifelong learning. In addition, the ordinance states that an advisory board, called the Council for the National Qualifications Framework, should be established within the agency.

6.2.4 Ordinance amending the ordinance (2007:991)

Ordinance amending the ordinance (2007:991) which includes instructions for The Higher Education Appeals Board (SFS 2015:547). (Förordning om ändring i förordningen (2007:991) med instruktion för Överklagandenämnden för högskolan (SFS 2015:547).

The ordinance entered into force on January 1, 2016. According to the ordinance on the framework, a decision and amendment of a decision on the level of a qualification may be subject of an appeal to the Higher Education Appeals Board. In accordance with this, the Appeals Board's tasks have been amended to include this. The ordinance amendment means that during the examination of such cases, the number of members of the Board is complemented by two members, for a total of 10 members, and that at least two of them must have particular expertise in education within the private sector or in liberal adult education. For these members, there must be at least one replacement.

6.3 The SeQF level descriptors

Each level's descriptors should be expressed consistently in the sense that the concepts are recognisable and that the levels have a clear progression. Each level builds on the previous and encompasses those learning outcomes. Level descriptors are to be read separately but considered as a whole, and together describe the result of learning at each level.

In the SeQF, the principle of '*Best Fit*' has been the principle for all levelling of qualifications at all eight levels. *Best Fit* means that the three categories of level descriptors do not need to fully be met in order for a qualification to be placed at that level. It can, for example, mean that a qualification has knowledge at level 4, level 3 skills and competence (responsibility and autonomy) on level 4, which means that the principle of *Best Fit* positions this qualification on SeQF level 4. It is the centre of gravity of a qualification that determines the level.

The principle of *Best Fit* should be seen in relation to the concept of '*Full Fit*'. See *Key concepts*, section 6.1.

6.4 Progression

The descriptors in the categories of knowledge, skills and competence (responsibility and autonomy) shall demonstrate the basic qualities which through progression are increasingly deepened. They shall lead both to greater responsibility as well as an increased ability to act with independence and with development responsibility for their own and others' work and learning.

The level descriptors for levels 1-3 can be summarised by concepts such as basic and elementary knowledge and skills with an increased progression. The descriptors for competence can be described as indicating an increasing capacity for autonomy, accountability and assessment of one's own and others' results. Levels 4-6 are characterised by greater depth and specialisation, developed ability for critical thinking and leadership. The level descriptors for levels 7 and 8 can be summarised through the concept of excellence. Qualifications at levels 7 and 8 are characterised by a very advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, a very highly developed ability to accomplish tasks and solve problems of various kinds and in diverse habitats, and a very highly developed ability to act with responsibility and autonomy, make decisions, communicate, and exercise leadership.

Figure 4. Progression in the Swedish Qualifications Framework.

Level SeQF	Knowledge	Skills	Competence (responsibility and autonomy)
1	Basic general knowledge within a field of work or study	Follow simple instructions and descriptions in a field of work or study	Under leadership perform simple tasks,
2	Broadened knowledge in a field of work or study,	Follow instructions and descriptions within a field of work or study	Perform work or studies with some autonomy and take responsibility for simpler tasks
3	Knowledge required to accomplish tasks within a field of work or study	Communicate experiences and knowledge in their own language	Assess their own and common results
4	Depth of knowledge in a field of work or study	Communicate in at least one foreign language within the current field of work or study	Critically review and independently assess a choice of sources
5	Specialised knowledge in a field of work or study	Solve abstract problems in a field of work or study	Independently treat the contents of a field of work or study that leads to further learning and professional development
6	Advanced knowledge in the field of work or study's main area	Identify, formulate, analyse and solve problems and perform complex tasks	Apply specialised knowledge for development in a field of work or study
7	Very advanced knowledge of a field of work or study	Analyse, assess and solve sophisticated and complex tasks	Assess a field of work or study's information, facts and methods with regards to relevant aspects
8	The most sophisticated and systematic knowledge in a field of work, study and research	Analyse, synthesise and critically assess and assess complex phenomena, conceptions and situations	Evaluate the field of work or study's research or development work, create and select your own research/innovation/development tasks

7 Two Qualifications frameworks

The Recommendation on the EQF states that the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning is consistent with, but does *not* replace, the European overarching framework of qualifications in European Higher Education Area, (QF-EHEA) as developed under the Bologna process.

The overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area consists of three cycles (bachelor, master and doctorate) where each level is based on and requires studies on past levels. After completing the program at one level, the student will not only be able to continue to the next level in their own country but also in any other European country. Report 2012:12 R Certification of Sweden's national qualification framework²⁶ clearly shows that degrees in universities and university colleges in Sweden meet the requirements that are consistent with the Bologna framework. According to the recommendation between the EQF and QF-EHEA, the higher education three cycles shall be referenced to the SeQF levels 6, 7 and 8, respectively. The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) represents Sweden in the European network of national correspondents for qualifications frameworks which has been established by the Council of Europe under the Bologna Process.

Legislation for a three-cycle structure of higher education started in July 2007, and is now the only one in use in Swedish higher education. Transitional provisions apply to courses and programmes that started prior to this. An important step in the 2007 change of Swedish higher education was the establishment of the Bologna Process' key concepts with learning outcomes to describe both higher education levels and individual courses. The transition was about a departure from a teacher-centred approach in favour of a student-centred and goal-oriented educational approach. The basic principle is that the planning of courses and education must be based on descriptions of the knowledge that the students are expected to have acquired by the end of the course or training. Conversely, there are also the objectives of each course, which will determine the course's level correspondence.

In Sweden, the levels are imposed by the requirements of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), regulating that higher education should be given on three levels, and through the degree descriptions in the annexes to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), the Ordinance for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (1993: 221) (Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet, SLU) and the Ordinance for the Swedish Defence University (2007:1164) (Försvarshögskolan).

Sweden wants, in this regard, also to stress that the SeQF is in no way intended to replace the steering documents available in the formal education system. Qualifications that have the same level according to the SeQF can be very different in character. A levelling of a qualification to the SeQF provides information only about the level of knowledge, skills, and competences (responsibility and autonomy) that the qualification represents, not the extent or orientation that the qualification has. A levelling of a qualification at a certain level does not mean that an individual who has such a qualification automatically meet eligibility requirements for access to further or higher education.

²⁶ The report is available on UHR's website: www.uhr.se

8 Assessment of fulfilment of the 10 criteria

It is stated below how the Swedish Qualifications Framework, the SeQF, meets the criteria for referencing to the EQF, based on the European Commission's "Criteria and Procedures for referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF".²⁷

8.1 Criterion 1

The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities.

Assessment: In accordance with the description below, it is assessed that criterion 1 has been fulfilled.

8.1.1 Different stakeholders' participation in the referencing process

In working with the government commissions in developing the proposal for a national qualifications framework as well as with the referencing report, The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH) which is appointed by the Government as Sweden's National Coordination Point (NCP) for the EQF, has interacted with many different stakeholders: the affected authorities; working life organisations; student organisations; public and private education providers; and other stakeholders. The work has been characterised by dialogue and openness.

Several working groups consisting of experts, specialists, industry representatives, authorities and interest groups etc. was formed:

Secretariat/ Expert group with the NCP as the project manager, including international experts

- Advisory working group
- Reference group
- Authorities group
- Ministry group

8.1.2 Secretariat

A secretariat was created consisting of four experts who had the task of developing proposals for a national qualifications framework. The experts have been experts in higher education, the formal education system, working life, and vocational education and training. The international experts have met the Secretariat three times during the referencing process.

8.1.3 Advisory working group and Reference group

MYH created an advisory group, on the government's request, which worked with the development of the Swedish Qualifications Framework. The advisory group consisted of the following authorities and organisations: the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket); the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education²⁸; the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv); the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR); the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO);

²⁷ EUROPAPARLAMENTETS OCH RÅDETS REKOMMENDATION av den 23 april 2008 om en europeisk referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande (2008/C 111/01). Annex 6.

²⁸ After 2013, *Högskoleverket*, *Internationella Programkontoret* and *Verket för Högskoleservice* were transformed into two new agencies – UKÄ and UHR.

the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO); the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO); the Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen); and the Swedish Federation of Business Owners (Företagarna). The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has, according to the government remit, been regularly informed of the working group's progress.

A reference group of organisations and authorities involved in the public education sector, or closely related to education, was also formed. Reference group members:

- Swedish Bologna Expert Group (Bolognareferensgruppen)
- The Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF)
- Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers (SULF)
- Swedish Association of Independent Schools (Friskolornas riksförbund)
- Association of Providers for Higher Vocational Education (Yrkeshögskoleförbundet)
- The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet)
- The Swedish National Union of Students (SFS)
- International Program Office²⁹ (Internationella Programkontoret)
- The National Union of Teachers in Sweden (Sveriges Lärare)³⁰
- Teachers' Federation (Sveriges Lärare)
- Swedish Association of School Principals and Directors of Education (Sveriges Skolledare)

8.1.4 Authorities group

The government remit states that MYH shall provide suggestions on how degrees and diplomas awarded by national authorities for various positions in government activity can be linked to the SeQF. To get a basis for how these degrees and diplomas may be linked to the SeQF, MYH formed an authorities group to which Swedish Customs (Tullverket), Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), The Swedish Coast Guard (Kustbevakningen), Swedish National Police Academy (Polisprogrammet), The Swedish Prison and Probation Service (Kriminalvården), CAA (Luftfartsverket), The Swedish Maritime Administration (Sjöfartsverket), The Swedish Transport Administration (Trafikverket), The railway training centre (Trafikverksskolan) and Vehicle Inspection (Transportstyrelsen) were invited to participate. The authorities that eventually participated in the work were: Swedish Customs, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, Swedish Coast Guard, Swedish National Policy Academy, The Swedish Prison and Probation Service, The Swedish Transport Administration and the railway training centre.

8.1.5 The Ministry of Education and Research's reference group

The Ministry of Education and Research appointed a reference group at the Swedish Government Offices which has continuously been informed about the process.

8.1.6 Conferences

Four national conferences were held between 2010 and 2013. The aim of the conferences was to promote the idea behind EQF/SeQF and to provide possibilities of being involved in the development as well as submitting feedback on the Swedish framework. From 2011 until the fall of 2015, the NCP continuously participated in

²⁹ After 2013, *Högskoleverket*, *Internationella Programkontoret* and *Verket för Högskoleservice* were transformed into two new agencies – *UKÄ* and *UHR*.

³⁰ The two major unions for teachers *Lärarnas Riksförbund* and *Läraryrket* merged into *Sveriges Lärare* on January 1, 2023.

numerous meetings and conferences organised by various stakeholders where the issue of developing a Swedish framework, was discussed.

8.1.7 Website: www.seqf.se

The site contains information on the EQF/SeQF and was created in 2010 with the purpose of discussion of different proposals and providing feedback on the development of a Swedish framework. The site has been developed continuously, and is since April 15, 2011, a common site for the EQF/SeQF in Sweden and for Sweden's work with the Bologna process.

Disclaimer – update

The webpage has been transferred to [SeQF – Sveriges referensram för kvalifikationer - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan \(myh.se\)](http://SeQF – Sveriges referensram för kvalifikationer - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan (myh.se))

8.1.8 Newsletters

A newsletter for SeQF was created early on. The newsletter's aim was to inform on the development of SeQF in Sweden and to make subscribers pay attention to government mandates and proposals developed. The newsletter's main purpose in the current situation is to inform about SeQF and should be seen as one of the tools for the implementation of the Swedish qualifications framework.

Disclaimer – update

This is now a joint newsletter for items regarding both qualifications and validation, see [Nyhetsbrev - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan \(myh.se\)](http://Nyhetsbrev - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan (myh.se))

8.2 Criterion 2

There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.

Assessment: In accordance with the comparative description below of the SeQF and EQF it is assessed that criterion 2 has been fulfilled.

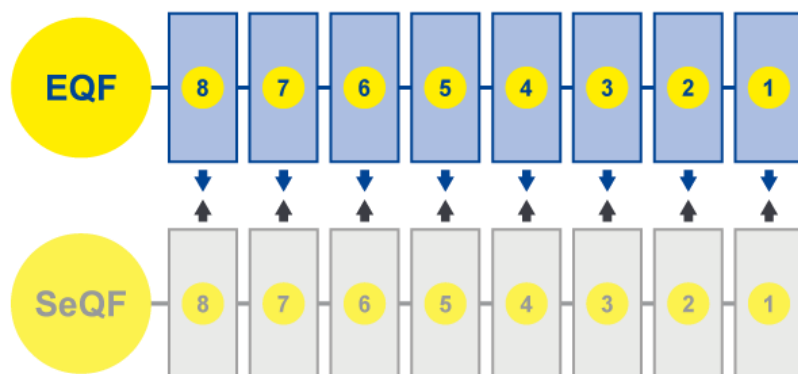
8.2.1 Introduction

The EQF's division and the structure have been deemed to fit well to describe qualifications awarded in Sweden. The EQF has therefore been the starting point for the design of the Swedish framework, being assigned the same basic structure. An important starting point for the Swedish framework has been that the level descriptors are designed to create conditions to include qualifications from various fields and from different stakeholders on equal terms, that is to say qualifications issued within the formal education system as well as by other actors developing and awarding qualifications. There are therefore concepts and definitions in the SeQF which are consistent with the educational system and working life qualifications. The comparison presented here applies to the structure of the framework and content analysis of the level descriptors.

8.2.2 Structure

The Swedish national qualifications framework has been given the same structure as the European Qualifications Framework, *i.e.* eight levels and consists of level descriptors of knowledge, skills and competence (responsibility and autonomy).

Figure 5. The relationship between the SeQF and the EQF.



8.2.3 Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF

In the SeQF, level descriptors take the EQF as the starting point and have then been adapted in order to reflect aspects assessed to be specifically important nationally, both within the formal education system and by other actors awarding qualifications.

Knowledge

Knowledge can be obtained and developed either within the formal education system, or outside (theoretical) or in employment (experience based).

Skills

Skills is about using the acquired knowledge to perform tasks and solve problems. This means practical, theoretical, abstract tasks and problems that can be solved in many different ways and with many different methods.

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

In the competence descriptor, characteristics for the Swedish educational system and working life are emphasised, *i.e.*, accountability, the ability to evaluate, independence and to work in groups or teams.

Figure 6. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF.

SeQF	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Experience and/or theoretical.	To perform tasks and solve problems.	Ability to take responsibility, to assess, to act independently and to cooperate.
EQF	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as <i>theoretical and/or factual</i> .	In the context of EQF, skills are described as <i>cognitive</i> (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking), and <i>practical</i> (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)	In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of <i>responsibility and autonomy</i> .

8.2.4 Comparison between SeQF level 1 and EQF level 1

Knowledge

In level 1 there is an agreement between the EQF and SeQF in the statement "basic general knowledge". "Within a field of work or study" is added in the SeQF. With this addition, the SeQF acknowledges that learning outcomes at this level also can be achieved outside of formal learning. In the SeQF there is an additional section which specifies that knowledge grants "an understanding of the essential in simple instructions and descriptions within a field of work and study."

Skills

The statement "Basic skills" in the EQF is in accordance with the statement "routine tasks" in the SeQF. But the SeQF also makes the addition in the skills field of "a work or study area" emphasizing that the skill also can be achieved outside of formal learning. The SeQF also includes a clarification which states the skill to "follow simple instructions and descriptions within a field of work or study".

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

The EQF chooses the statement "Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context". The SeQF replaces this statement with "Under leadership perform simple tasks,". The quality level is the same, but the SeQF stresses the importance of the process and participation. This view is highlighted in the statement "collaborate with others under supervision."

Figure 7. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF at level 1.

SeQF level 1	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Can demonstrate: Basic general knowledge within a field of work or study, an understanding of the essential in simple instructions and descriptions within a field of work or study.	Can: Carry out routine tasks within a field of work or study, follow simple instructions and descriptions within a field of work or study.	Can: Under leadership perform simple tasks, collaborate with others under supervision.
EQF level 1	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context

8.2.5 Comparison between SeQF level 2 and EQF level 2

Knowledge

There is progression in the EQF in the statement "Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study". This progression is highlighted in the SeQF in the statement "Broadened knowledge" and "how facts can be gathered, compiled and reported". The SeQF thereby includes knowledge about facts as well as the information that the knowledge can be obtained both within a field work or study.

Skills

In the EQF, the level is described as "Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools". The SeQF is more specified through the statement "Apply... follow instructions... search and process... in several fields of work or study".

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

In the EQF the statement which is used is "Work or study under supervision". In the SeQF a statement reoccurs which highlights a quality to "take responsibility for simpler tasks... cooperate under leadership and contribute to...assess how their own tasks have been performed". In the SeQF there is a strong emphasis on terms which reflect leadership, responsibility, participation, evaluating and cooperation.

Figure 8. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF at level 2.

SeQF Level 2	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Can demonstrate: Broadened knowledge in a field of work or study, knowledge of how facts can be gathered, compiled and reported.	Can: Apply the specified rules, methods and tools to perform assigned tasks, follow instructions and descriptions within a field of work or study search and process facts in several fields of work or study.	Can: Perform work or studies with some autonomy and take responsibility for simpler tasks, cooperate under leadership and contribute to common results, assess how their own tasks have been performed
EQF Level 2	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy

8.2.6 Comparison between SeQF level 3 with EQF level 3

Knowledge

The description of the EQF and the SeQF on this level are compatible; with further clarification in the SeQF with the statement "knowledge of different methods used for gathering, methodising and accounting for information."

Skills

In the EQF and SeQF expressions such as "to accomplish tasks, select and apply" are used. The SeQF makes a further precision in the expressions "accomplish tasks both on their own and in groups within given timeframes" and "on their own search and process information, communicate experiences and knowledge in their own language". The additional descriptors indicate the importance of personal responsibility, communication, etc.

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

Responsibility for the completion of tasks is expressed equally in the EQF and SeQF. The SeQF descriptor also include "assess their own and common result, assess information from different sources".

Figure 9. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF at level 3.

SeQF Level 3	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>knowledge required to accomplish tasks within a field of work or study,</p> <p>knowledge of different methods of work used for gathering, methodising and accounting for information.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Select and apply information with the help of the designated methods, tools and materials,</p> <p>accomplish tasks both on their own and in groups within given time frames,</p> <p>on their own search and process information,</p> <p>communicate experiences and knowledge in their own language.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Take responsibility for their learning and for completion of assigned tasks,</p> <p>assess their own and common result,</p> <p>assess information from different sources.</p>
EQF level 3	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	<p>Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study</p>	<p>A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information</p>	<p>Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study; adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems</p>

8.2.7 Comparison between SeQF level 4 and EQF level 4

Knowledge

The EQF and SeQF are comparable in the description of “Factual and theoretical knowledge”. The EQF states “in broad contexts within a field of work or study” whilst the SeQF states “Depth of knowledge in a field of work or study”. The SeQF also adds the statement: “knowledge of models and methods” to clarify that the quality is about facts and method.

Skills

The EQF has a general description in the statement: “A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems” in comparison to the SeQF where the descriptor is more detailed: “Select and apply relevant concepts, theories, models, materials, tools and methods... follow instructions and perform defined practical and theoretical tasks within given time frames... communicate in at least one foreign language”. In comparison with the EQF, the SeQF more explicitly highlights responsibility, independence, initiative, leadership etc.

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

The statement in the EQF reads: “Exercise self-management within the guidelines... that are usually predictable... supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement”. In the same level descriptor, the SeQF expresses the competence more detailed in statements such as “Take the initiative, reflect, organise and carry out work and studies independently... critically assess and keep an independent approach to the choice of sources... evaluate and draw conclusions from their own and common results... take responsibility in cooperation with others, and to a limited extent lead and evaluate the work of others”.

Figure 10. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF at level 4.

SeQF Level 4	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Can demonstrate: Depth of knowledge in a field of work or study, knowledge of models and methods within a field of work or study.	Can: Select and apply relevant concepts, theories, models, materials, tools and methods within a field of work or study, follow instructions and perform defined practical and theoretical tasks within given time frames, communicate in at least one foreign language within the current field of work or study.	Can: Take the initiative, reflect, organise and carry out work and studies independently, independently treat the contents of a field of work or study that can lead to further learning and professional development, critically assess and keep an independent approach to the choice of sources, evaluate and draw conclusions from their own and common results, take responsibility in cooperation with others, and to a limited extent lead and evaluate the work of others.
EQF Level 4	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities

8.2.8 Comparison between SeQF level 5 and EQF level 5

Knowledge

There is a clear connection between the two frameworks. Both the SeQF and EQF uses the term specialised knowledge within a field of work or study. Knowledge in the SeQF is described to be gained through education (theoretical knowledge) or through working life experience (experience-based knowledge). The EQF stresses the same through the statements factual or theoretical knowledge. The formulation in SeQF: “knowledge and overview of the areas adjacent to their own field of work or study area can be compared to the EQF formulation “an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge”.

Skills

The EQF describes skills as “A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills.” The SeQF states skills in a more detailed manner: “Plan, execute and identify resources needed to perform specialised tasks... solve complex problems in a field of work or study”.

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

The SeQF emphasises what is a characteristic of Sweden in education and employment *i.e.* the ability to take responsibility, to evaluate and to act independently and to cooperate. Both of the frameworks highlight these aspects but in somewhat different ways. SeQF: independently treat the contents of a field of work or study that leads to further learning and professional development, supervise the work or study activities and

complete the prescribed projects. EQF: Exercise management and supervision of work or study activities, review and develop the performance of self and others.

Figure 11. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF at level 5.

SeQF Level 5	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Can demonstrate: Specialised knowledge within a field of work or study, knowledge and overview of the areas adjacent to their own field of work or study area, knowledge of work processes and the quality criteria within a field of work or study	Can: Plan, execute and identify resources needed to perform specialized tasks, solve complex problems within a field of work or study, communicate commitments and solutions within a field of work or study at least one foreign language.	Can: Independently treat the contents of a field of work or study that leads to further learning and professional development, supervise work or study activities and complete the prescribed projects.
EQF Level 5	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others

8.2.9 Levels 6, 7 and 8

In referencing the levels 6, 7 and 8, both frameworks SeQF and NQF-EHEA have been handled. More information is available in 8.4.7 and in annex 6, section 2.3

The Bologna framework (NQF-EHEA) was developed (2008) exclusively to describe the higher education qualifications in terms of learning outcomes. This means that its most concrete correspondence is available in the Higher Education Ordinance, annex 2 - Qualifications (*Utbildningsväsendets* statute books in 2010/11, part 3).

The Swedish qualifications that are linked to the NQF-EHEA are inserted and levelled to the SeQF by a government decision, see Annex 3.

8.2.10 Comparison between SeQF level 6 with EQF level 6

Knowledge

Both frameworks define knowledge on this level as advanced knowledge in the field of work or study. In the SeQF “critical understanding of theories and principles” has been refined to “insight into the area's established methods for knowledge... profound knowledge of some part of the field and orientation of the area's current research and development issues.”

Skills

“Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study” in the EQF is expressed as “identify, formulate, analyse and solve problems and perform complex tasks” in the SeQF.

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

There is some difference in the two frameworks. In SeQF, it is stated "Evaluate information and methods ... apply specialised knowledge." While in the EQF it is stated

"Managing complex ... taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable... contexts ". When it comes to leadership skills" the "development work" is cited in SeQF while in the EQF reference is made to "professional development".

Figure 12. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF at level 6.

SeQF Level 6	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Can demonstrate: Advanced knowledge in a field of work or study insight into the area's established methods for knowledge, profound knowledge of some part of the field and orientation of the area's current research and development issues.	Can: Identify, formulate, analyse and solve problems and perform complex tasks, communicate commitments and solutions in the field of work or study in both national and international contexts	Can: Evaluate information and methods in a field of work or study area with respect to relevant social, ethical and scientific aspects, apply specialised knowledge for development in a field of work or study, take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals' and groups' work
EQF Level 6	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups

8.2.11 Comparison between SeQF level 7 and EQF level 7

Knowledge

The SeQF's descriptor of knowledge on this level is described as "highly advanced knowledge... profound knowledge into the area's research and development methods". The EQF descriptor "Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research" has been assessed as equivalent.

Skills

To "Participate in research or development work, identify and formulate issues, analyse, evaluate and solve sophisticated and complex tasks (SeQF)" is equivalent to "Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields (EQF)".

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

The EQF: "Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches." The SeQF: "Evaluate a field of work or study's information, facts and methods with regards to relevant aspects... identify the needs for further knowledge... evaluate an area's potentials and limitations."

Figure 13. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF at level 7.

SeQF Level 7	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Highly advanced knowledge within a field of work or study,</p> <p>profound knowledge into the area's research and development methods;</p> <p>profound insight into the area's current research and development.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Participate in research or development work,</p> <p>identify and formulate issues,</p> <p>analyse, evaluate and solve sophisticated and complex tasks,</p> <p>communicate the research or the areas knowledge base and findings in both national and international contexts</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Evaluate a field of work or study's information, facts and methods with regards to relevant aspects,</p> <p>identify the needs for further knowledge,</p> <p>assess an area's potentials and limitations,</p> <p>take responsibility for and manage their own area of work or study,</p> <p>take responsibility for the results of their own research or development work</p>
EQF Level 7	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	<p>Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research</p> <p>Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields</p>	<p>Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields</p>	<p>Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams</p>

8.2.12 Comparison between SeQF level 8 and EQF level 8

Knowledge

EQF – “Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields”. SeQF – “The most sophisticated and systematic knowledge in a field of work, study and research, current specialist knowledge in a well-defined sub-area and an overview of adjacent areas.”

Skills

EQF – “The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice.” SeQF – “Analyse, synthesise and critically review and assess complex phenomena, questions at issue and situations; plan and implement development or research work and other qualified tasks.”

Competence (responsibility and autonomy)

EQF – “Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research.” SeQF – “create and select your own research, innovation or development tasks, evaluate the qualified development work or the scientific possibilities and limitations.

Figure 14. Comparison between the level descriptors of the SeQF and the EQF at level 8.

SeQF Level 8	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>The most sophisticated and systematic knowledge within a field of work, study and research,</p> <p>current specialist knowledge within a well-defined sub-area and an overview of adjacent areas,</p> <p>mastering the methods of knowledge development in general and to the specific field of work, study or research in particular.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Analyse, synthesise and critically review and assess complex phenomena, questions at issue and situations;</p> <p>plan and implement development or research work and other qualified tasks,</p> <p>communicate results of development and research in both national and international contexts</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Evaluate the field of work or study's research or development work,</p> <p>create and select your own research, innovation or development tasks,</p> <p>evaluate the qualified development work or the scientific possibilities and limitations,</p> <p>take responsibility for how the results of development or research are used,</p> <p>take responsibility for or lead the development of the profession and area of operation.</p>
EQF Level 8	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	<p>Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields</p>	<p>The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice</p>	<p>Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research</p>

8.3 Criterion 3

The national qualifications framework or system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems.

Assessment: In accordance with the description below, it is assessed that criterion 3 has been fulfilled.

8.3.1 Assessment

Sweden has a long tradition of working with learning outcomes within the formal education system and the principle of learning outcomes is well established. It is an accepted view that it is the result of learning that is important and not the length of the education or training. The learning outcomes are defined as what a learner knows, understands and can do at the end of a learning period. The formal education system's steering documents in Sweden, which has been reformed in recent years, are all based on the principle of learning outcomes, which are described below.

The reforms that have been implemented in compulsory school and upper secondary schools aimed to clarify the objectives of the steering documents. The reform process was completed before Sweden endorsed the recommendation of the EQF. Nevertheless, the new objectives in the steering documents correspond to what is now called learning outcomes. Higher education has, through the Dublin descriptors, which are also defined by law, explicit learning outcomes. Chapter 10 presents the requirements on learning

outcomes set for the qualifications that are outside the formal education system and can be levelled in the Swedish framework after application.

8.3.2 Learning outcomes in the SeQF

Compulsory School

In 1994, a goal oriented compulsory school was implemented in Sweden. This meant that the compulsory school had clear goals in all subjects and each subject was coupled to a grade criteria starting from year 8. After each school year, the teacher would first assess whether the student had attained the goals of the subject and then judge by the quality of with which the student reached the goals. The compulsory school has since been reformed, in year 2000 and year 2011. Both reforms were aimed at tightening the targets and creating clearer knowledge requirements. The new compulsory school, introduced in the autumn of 2011, has a clear focus on student learning outcomes, on follow up by national tests in several subjects, and to strengthen the school inspection. The new curriculum has clear goals that align well with the learning outcomes set out in the national framework.

Some examples of the compulsory school curriculum:

“The school will be responsible for that all pupils who have completed compulsory school:

- Can use the Swedish language, orally and written, in a rich and nuanced manner,
- Can communicate in English, orally and written, as well as been given the possibility to communicate in one additional foreign language in a functional manner,
- Can use a mathematical thinking for further studies and in the everyday life,
- Can use the obtained knowledge in the areas of scientific, technical, social, humanistic and aesthetic studies for further study, in society and everyday life,
- Can solve problems and translate ideas into action in a creative way,
- Can learn, explore and work both independently and together with others and feel confident in their own ability,
- Can use critical thinking and independently formulate viewpoints based on knowledge and ethical considerations.”

The syllabus for the subjects in compulsory school has, since the reform in 2011, core content and clear knowledge requirements starting from year 6.

Upper Secondary School

The upper secondary school has gone through the same reforms as the compulsory school, namely in 1994, 2000 and 2011 when it comes to clearer goals and knowledge requirements. The new upper secondary school also has a strong focus on learning outcomes. The reform in 2011 meant that the former preparatory vocational programmes were restructured to more clear-cut vocational programs. The ambition of the new vocational programmes is for the students to be employable immediately after upper secondary school. The reforms implemented in upper secondary school have always been carried out in consultation with working life organisations so that the learning outcomes are as closely related as possible to the professional skills demands of the labour market. The vocational programmes are connected to a national council for each program with a representation of experts from the professional fields that the program intends to educate for. The Council's tasks are to verify that the programmes lead to learning outcomes of the demands of the respective field of work. Here is an example of parts of a learning outcome from one of the vocational programmes, the industrial engineering programme:

In the field of industrial technology, the education should provide knowledge about the contexts of production steps and production equipment operation, use and maintenance, and on how the production and technology affects people and the environment. In the area of industrial technical production, education should provide knowledge about the organisation of work, production economics, resource use and systematic work.

The training will lead to students gaining insights into how their and their businesses' choice of materials, methods and techniques will affect the consumption of raw materials and energy.

In the syllabus it is stated, since 2011, a central content and clear knowledge requirements of each course.

Adult municipal education: compulsory and upper secondary levels

Adults in adult municipal education study according to the same subject syllabuses and courses as pupils in compulsory school or in upper secondary school. Therefore, the same learning outcomes as in compulsory school and in upper secondary school are applicable.

Higher Vocational Education (HVE)

Each programme within the HVE-system should have a programme curriculum that describes the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. Below are examples of such learning outcomes in a curricula from an HVE-programme, Application Programmer 300 YHP:

After completing the program, students should have knowledge of

- programming in C++, Java and Objective C
- applications for smartphones
- web and database applications

After completing the program, students should have the skills for

- application programming / development
- needs analysis; To identify the technical as well as commercial market opportunities

After completing the program, students should have the competence to

- develop applications and create commercial applications for smartphones and social media,
- create web tools and web design for effective marketing

The ordinance for Higher Vocational Education has been altered and programmes leading to a Higher Vocational Education Diploma, or an Advanced Higher Vocational Education Diploma needs to fulfil learning outcomes equivalent to the learning descriptors for SeQF at level 5 and 6 respectively.

Higher Education

The Swedish higher education is consistent with "The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, thus satisfying the demands of the learning outcomes set by the EQF.³¹

8.3.3 Validation

Validation of prior learning

In Sweden, as in other Nordic countries, validation includes formal, non-formal and informal learning, and therefore the term normally used is validation of prior learning.

Validation in municipal adult education

The ability to validate both basic adult education (corresponding to compulsory school) and adult upper-secondary education is regulated by the Education Act and the ordinance on municipal adult education. Validation can be implemented within the

³¹ Certification of Sweden's national qualification framework, Report 2012:12 R

framework of all courses, including introductory courses. In adult education, there is a distinction between the concepts of validation and examination through testing. If a course or parts of a course in municipal adult education is validated, the head teacher should provide the learner with a certificate attesting that his or her prior learning has been assessed against the state regulated learning outcomes of that particular course. If the learner wishes to receive grades³², the learner has to take part in an examination. Grades after an examination are awarded by usage of the full scale, from F (fail) to A (highest grade).

Municipalities have an obligation to offer municipal adult education up to the basic qualification level of higher education for individuals who lack the equivalent knowledge and competence, but other individuals can only be accommodated if resources allow.

Validation in Higher Vocational Education

Admission to specific training in HVE can be obtained if the individual can demonstrate that it has the potential to benefit from the education and thereafter practice the profession that the education prepares the individual for. Eligibility rules are generous and give a great scope for the use of validation of prior learning. The right of students to receive credits (exemption) for previous training and experience that are similar to courses in vocational education is regulated and even here there is a great scope to utilise validation of prior learning.

Validation in Higher Education

Within higher education, the students' right to have prior learning assessed is regulated by statute. The higher education institution shall assess whether credits can be awarded for the prior course or study programme, or corresponding knowledge and skills acquired in a vocational or professional capacity. It is up to the individual institution to decide how to utilise validation of prior learning in relation to eligibility and credit transfers (exemptions). The degree, to how different institutions apply the validation of prior learning, varies.

Validation in Liberal adult education

Liberal adult education has a long tradition of use of formative validation of prior learning to individually design education. In more formal sense however, validation is not as prevalent. Folk high schools have a large degree of freedom to design their admissions requirements and training. Cooperation with the Swedish Public Employment Service through various missions has increased, which means that validation can become a more frequent element if the needs increase.

Validation by the Swedish Public Employment Service

The Employment Services mission is to match employers with employees, with a special focus on the groups that are usually far away from the labour market. At its disposal it has a number of tools, which are often nationally procured services, including validation. There are more formative services such as the Qualifications portfolio that is used to identify the individual's competence, in order to determine what other actions that may be needed before a match with an employer can be made. Secondly, there is procured validation models which are based on national industry models where validation can result in a certification.

³² For admission to higher education, students have to meet general or specific entry requirements. Eligibility can be shown by a validated course from municipal adult education. If there are more students that have applied for a higher education course or programme than the number of places available, there is a selection process in which students are ranked *i.a.* according to their grades.

The Employment Services has since 2013 had more pronounced assignments for validation, often focusing on immigrants.

Validation in industries and sectors

Industries and sectors have developed specific professional competence criteria and models to validate prior learning. Validation models can be used to make visible and confirm the professional competence and each industry model may include several different professional roles. The models can differ between industries but are based on the same basic process description. If validation leads to a vocational certificate is the industries' evidence which equals the final document, such as a certificate, journeyman's certificate, license or permission. To support this purpose, the government has provided funding for industries and sectors to develop and build up capacity for validation in non-formal learning.

The industry models that have national legitimacy are used by the Employment Service through the procurement of validation services. The recent increase of immigrants has meant that the demands on language support within the industry validation have increased as well as the need to assess more general professional competences. This is an ongoing development.

Disclaimer – update

An ordinance on validation (2022:1549) came in to force on January 1, 2023, which links validation to the SeQF. It states that prior learning must be mapped and assessed against the learning outcomes of a qualification, or part of a qualification, that is included in the SeQF; or that it should be assessed against the criteria for eligibility for an education that leads to a qualification, or part of a qualification, that is included in the SeQF.

MYH, as mentioned above, is the authority in Sweden that has the task of coordinating and supporting a national structure for validation.

8.4 Criterion 4

The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent.

Assessment: In accordance with the description below, it is assessed that criterion 4 has been fulfilled

8.4.1 The process for the development of a national framework and mapping of the formal education system's degrees

The proposal of a national framework has been prepared and anchored by the stakeholders deemed concerned; authorities, education providers, employers and workers' organisations, and NGOs were invited early to participate in the process. The proposal has been referred by the government through a ministry memorandum that the government published in July 2014³³ and sent to relevant stakeholders. The reference process is further described in Chapter 5.3.

MYH has been commissioned by the Government to propose how the formal education system's qualifications can be connected to SeQF. The task was carried out in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the authorities responsible for

³³ promemoria En nationell referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande, Utbildningsdepartementet

the public education programs. These authorities were instructed to level their qualifications to the framework. The principle that the authorities used during the placement was *'Best Fit'*.

The government has, in ordinance (SFS 2015:545) on the basis of MYH's proposals, levelled qualifications that are quality-assured and whose learning outcomes are regulated by statute.

Below are how and which aspects form the basis for levelling of formal education qualifications to the SeQF described. It also describes how qualifications outside the formal education system may be linked to the framework. The procedure on how qualifications outside the formal education system can be connected to the framework is described in Chapter 9.

8.4.2 School for pupils with intellectual disabilities on primary and upper-secondary level

The Swedish National Agency for Education, which is the responsible authority for school for pupils with intellectual disabilities and its curriculum, subject syllabus and for its steering documents, highlights the value of placing these qualifications in the SeQF.

It can have an added value to be participatory in an EU-related system, for some students that are active on the labour market. Although the student group is heterogeneous, its SeQF level placement can be justified by its aim and ambition, as they are working towards level one – and that many students reach it.

The steering documents, such as the curriculum for compulsory education for pupils with intellectual disabilities and goals of the education, have clear learning outcomes.

Example below:

Parts of the curricula for *the compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities*:

"The School shall be responsible that every student, after completed education:

- can use the Swedish language, orally and written, in a nuanced manner,
- can communicate in English
- can use mathematical thinking for further studies and in the everyday life."

Parts of the programme objectives for Vehicle Care and Cargo Management, within the *upper secondary education for pupils with intellectual disabilities*

"After completing the program, students should have knowledge of working with, for example, vehicle care, warehousing and handling of cargo."

"The education shall development the students' knowledge about vehicles, logistics and service. Furthermore, the education shall teach the students ability to choose and use the right tools, materials and methods for the assigned tasks with regards to quality, safety, environment and economics."

The placement of the qualifications from education for pupils with intellectual disabilities in the SeQF is on level 1 and 2. The basis for levelling has been the learning outcomes of the steering documents.

8.4.3 Compulsory School

The compulsory school has, as mentioned above, reformed and has since autumn 2011 new steering documents, which contains a new curriculum and new syllabus. The National Agency for Education, as the responsible authority for the compulsory school, considers that this qualification is best suited for the framework's second level. The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, and The National Union of Teachers in Sweden argue that the compulsory

school should be placed on level 3. The Government's assessment is, however, that qualifications from compulsory school as well as from Adult Education on compulsory level should be placed on level 2.

The curriculum for compulsory school shows a clear result of learning which is equivalent to the demands set on SeQF level 2. Below are a few examples.

Figure 15. Examples of curricula from compulsory school

Knowledge SeQF level 2	Knowledge requirements set forth in the compulsory school's curricula
<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Broadened knowledge in a field of work or study,</p> <p>knowledge of how facts can be gathered, compiled and reported.</p>	<p>"The school will be responsible for that all pupils who have completed compulsory school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can use the Swedish language, orally and written, in a rich and nuanced manner, • can communicate in English, orally and written, as well as been given the possibility to communicate in one additional foreign language in a functional manner, • can use a mathematical thinking for further studies and in the everyday life, • can use the obtained knowledge in the areas of scientific, technical, social, humanistic and aesthetic studies for further studies, in society and everyday life,
Competence SeQF level 2	Knowledge requirements from the compulsory school's curricula
<p>Can:</p> <p>Perform work or studies with some autonomy and take responsibility for simpler tasks,</p> <p>cooperate under leadership and contribute to common results,</p> <p>assess how their own tasks have been performed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can solve problems and translate ideas into action in a creative way, • can learn, explore and work both independently and together with others and feel confident in their own ability, • can use critical thinking and independently formulate viewpoints based on knowledge and ethical considerations. "

8.4.4 Upper secondary school

There is consensus when it comes to the levelling of upper secondary school and upper secondary diploma. The Government, authorities and interested parties that have been involved in the development of the Swedish framework, all consider that the correct qualification level is level 4. The upper secondary school has two types of programmes: vocational programme and the higher education preparatory programme. Both types of programmes are placed on level 4 in the framework.

The quotes below are from several programme's degree objectives and descriptors from level 4 which shows how the degree objectives correlate to level 4 in the SeQF.

Figure 16. Examples of learning objectives from upper secondary school.

Knowledge SeQF level 4	Degree objectives from various upper secondary school programmes
<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Depth of knowledge in a field of work or study,</p> <p>knowledge of models and methods within a field of work or study.</p>	<p>The programme shall provide opportunities for pupils to develop the foundations of a scientific approach, as well as be trained to search, sift, analyse and evaluate information based on economic, business and judicial issues</p> <p>Central to technological advancement is to analyse, model, simulate, plausibility assess, develop, make connections, draw conclusions and argue from results</p> <p>It shall also give the pupil knowledge in control engineering and energy optimisation of installations, as well as develop their knowledge in systems theory.</p>
Skills SeQF level 4	Degree objectives from various upper secondary school programmes
<p>Can:</p> <p>Select and apply relevant concepts, theories, models, materials, tools and methods within a field of work or study,</p> <p>follow instructions and perform defined practical and theoretical tasks within given time frames,</p> <p>communicate in at least one foreign language within the current field of work or study.</p>	<p>Pupils should be able to choose, use and care for materials, tools and machinery with regard to safety, the environment, quality and economy, both in terms of production and life cycle costs.</p> <p>After graduating, from the programme, the pupils shall have the skills needed to work in the hotel, conference and tourism business. It shall also develop students' skills in communication, marketing, sales and entrepreneurship. Students should be able to plan and carry out tasks and assess job performance in terms of quality, efficiency and the environment, and develop practical skills linked to understanding and reflection.</p> <p>The program shall provide students with knowledge and skills in English in a technical context, so that they can develop their communication skills and thereby take advantage of technology and technological development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many industries have international contacts with manuals and descriptions written in English. English is also, in many cases, the corporate language. The education shall therefore give students the opportunity for in-depth studies in English • The program shall give students tools to analyse and interpret different types of texts and spoken language in Swedish and English in the various programme areas of knowledge.

8.4.5 Upper secondary engineering qualification

The education leading to an upper secondary engineering qualification is based on the upper secondary school technology programme and its purpose is for the student to deepen and specialise in their choice of technology orientation. A fourth year means an increase in the qualification level in relation to a three-year upper-secondary school diploma. The education is open to anyone under the age of 22 who has an approved upper-secondary school diploma from the technology programme, or equivalent knowledge. A student who has completed a full training will be issued an upper secondary engineering qualification.

The quotes below are from the degree objectives of the Qualified graduate and descriptors from level 5 which shows how the degree objectives correlate to level 5 in the SeQF.

Figure 17. Examples of learning objectives from upper secondary engineering courses.

Knowledge SeQF level 5	Degree objectives from Qualification graduate from upper secondary engineering courses
<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Specialised knowledge within a field of work or study,</p> <p>knowledge and overview of the areas adjacent to their own field of work or study area,</p> <p>knowledge of work processes and the quality criteria within a field of work or study</p>	<p>The education shall deepen students' knowledge of technology within the selected profile. It shall also deepen students' understanding of technology's role in the interaction between humans and nature. In addition, the education should make clear how the development of products and services locally and globally can take place in an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable manner. This education shall be based on an ethical and responsible approach to technology and a critical, creative and constructive thinking shall be encouraged.</p>
Skills SeQF level 5	Degree objectives from Qualification graduate from upper secondary engineering courses
<p>Can:</p> <p>Plan, execute and identify resources needed to perform specialized tasks,</p> <p>solve complex problems within a field of work or study,</p> <p>communicate commitments and solutions within a field of work or study at least one foreign language.</p>	<p>The program shall give students the opportunity to develop engineering skills, which means the ability to define and analyse problems, develop solutions, design and produce products and services, and reflect on the work process. Students shall also be given the opportunity to develop knowledge about entrepreneurship and enterprise, and how work is carried out in technology-intensive workplaces. Working methods and techniques from the working life shall be included.</p> <p>It shall also help students deepen their ability to present and communicate technologies and technical solutions, even in English.</p>

8.4.6 Higher Vocational Education (HVE)

Below are two examples of how HVE-programmes can be placed on SeQF level 5 and 6 and its relation to SeQF.

Figure 18. Examples of learning outcomes from an HVE-programme.

Knowledge SeQF level 5	Learning outcomes for HVE programme “Applications programmer” (SeQF level 5) – HVE Diploma (300 YHP)
<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Specialised knowledge within a field of work or study,</p> <p>knowledge and overview of the areas adjacent to their own field of work or study area,</p> <p>knowledge of work processes and the quality criteria within a field of work or study</p>	<p>The student shall, after completed studies, have knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programming in C++, Java and Objective-C, • application development for smartphones • web and database programming (HTML, Java, PHP, Facebook). • tools for administration, accounting, integration and communication between businesses, organisations and customers • how to identify business opportunities and develop applications that take advantage of these opportunities • how to create and successfully implement communications and marketing strategies in the field
Skills SeQF level 5	Learning outcomes for HVE programme “Applications programmer” (SeQF level 5) – HVE Diploma (300 YHP)
<p>Can:</p>	<p>The student shall, after completed studies, have skills in:</p>

<p>Plan, execute and identify resources needed to perform specialized tasks,</p> <p>solve complex problems within a field of work or study,</p> <p>communicate commitments and solutions within a field of work or study at least one foreign language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application programming/development • needs analysis – identifying technical as well as commercial market opportunities • basic product and service design. • project management, planning • social marketing/social media
Competence SeQF level 5	Learning outcomes for HVE programme “Applications programmer” (SeQF level 5) – HVE Diploma (300 YHP)
<p>Can:</p> <p>Independently treat the contents of a field of work or study that leads to further learning and professional development,</p> <p>supervise work or study activities and complete the prescribed projects.</p>	<p>The student shall, after completed studies, have competence in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing applications and creating commercial applications for smartphones and social media • creating web tools and web design for effective marketing communications • adopting professional roles and working individually or in teams at a company in the industry • starting and operating their own business within the field of mobile applications • managing projects within the field of mobile applications

Figure 19. Examples of learning outcomes from an Advanced HVE-programme.

Knowledge SeQF level 6	Learning outcomes for HVE programme “Qualified automation engineer (SeQF Level 6) – Advanced HVE Diploma (400 YHP)
<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Advanced knowledge in a field of work or study,</p> <p>insight into the area's established methods for knowledge,</p> <p>profound knowledge of some part of the field and orientation of the area's current research and development issues.</p>	<p>The student shall, after completed studies, have knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and understanding of the human aspect in a computerised and highly technological environment • the development and construction of flexible, innovative and user-friendly products, machines and systems. • work routines in a modern work organisation • the need for competence development for the self, colleagues and the company's employees and clients • working with automation on an international level • new technological solutions for the improvement of current equipment, or the development of new equipment which increases the company's competitiveness • the economic consequences for a company undergoing a modernisation of current equipment • the environmental demands that the company and society demands from the production • the quality and security demands that affects an automation project • the demands that the Machine Safety Directive have on an automation project
Skills SeQF level 6	Learning outcomes for HVE programme “Qualified automation engineer (SeQF Level 6) – Advanced HVE Diploma (400 YHP)
<p>Can:</p> <p>Identify, formulate, analyse and solve problems and perform complex tasks,</p> <p>communicate commitments</p>	<p>The student shall, after completed studies, have skills in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • installations, troubleshooting and service of automated production systems • solving qualified production problems • using IT as a tool in qualified applications

and solutions in the field of work or study in both national and international contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to communicate, orally and in written form, as well as planning and implementing projects with regards to quality and environmental aspects, economy and ergonomics documenting technological systems for technicians, users and operators conveying technical solutions, both internally and externally utilising English documentation programming a robot cell in cooperation with a Vision system analysing the security aspects/risks surrounding a robot cell to replace obsolete I/O communication with modern IT communication, controlling and programming the PLC using iPad / iPhone equipment to guide and supervise modern equipment through modem communication or via the Internet
Competence SeQF level 6	Learning outcomes for HVE programme “Qualified automation engineer (SeQF Level 6) – Advanced HVE Diploma (400 YHP)”
<p>Can:</p> <p>Evaluate information and methods in a field of work or study area with respect to relevant social, ethical and scientific aspects,</p> <p>apply specialised knowledge for development in a field of work or study,</p> <p>take responsibility for managing individual and team performance at work</p>	<p>The student shall, after completed studies, have competence in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> embracing future technological advancement working independently at the company's clients managing and being responsible for qualified tasks within the area of automation and industrial IT participating in the work of steering, adjusting, modernising and developing present and future production systems identifying bottlenecks in the production and fixing these handling and programming different manufacturers' PLC systems implementing automation project with help of the five different programming languages according to the IEC-61131 standard: Ladder Diagram, Function Block Diagram, Structured Text, Instruction List and Sequence diagrams programming and implementing project according to the general CODESYS-standard offering a high level of service to clients and colleagues participate in training projects for employees and customers.

In the new regulation of HVE, the government will determine that the level of the HVE diploma should be SeQF level 5 and the level for the Advanced HVE diploma should be SeQF level 6. Thus, learning outcomes will have a major role for a degree within HVE.

8.4.7 Higher Education

All higher education in Sweden is conducted at state-owned universities and university colleges or by separate education providers with the right to grant degrees. Education on postgraduate level is conducted at the universities and the university colleges which have been awarded the right to award degrees for postgraduate level.

There are 14 state-owned universities and 20 state-owned university colleges in Sweden. There are also three separate higher education institutes with an independent education provider with right to award degrees on postgraduate level: *Chalmers University of Technology*; *Stockholm School of Economics*; and *Jönköping University*. There are also eleven separate education providers with the right to award degrees on the undergraduate level, and in some cases advanced level, as well as five education providers with the right to award degrees in psychotherapy. It is the Parliament (Riksdag) which decides on which state higher education institutes should operate whilst the government decides on the right to award degrees.

The report, Report 2012:12 R Certification of Sweden's national qualification framework³⁴ clearly shows that degrees in universities and university colleges in Sweden meet the requirements that are consistent with the Bologna framework. According to the recommendation between the EQF and QF-EHEA, the higher education three cycles shall be referenced to the SeQF levels 6, 7 and 8, respectively.

Below are examples from the certification report relating to the basic level / First Cycle and the Swedish Bachelor's degree 180 ECTS.

Figure 20. Relation between first cycle and a Bachelor's degree

First Cycle	Bachelor's Degree, 180 ECTS Bachelor of Arts/Science
have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced text- books, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;	demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including knowledge of the disciplinary foundation of the field, understanding of applicable methodologies in the field, specialised study in some aspect of the field as well as awareness of current research issues.
can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study;	demonstrate the ability to identify, formulate and solve problems autonomously and to complete tasks within predetermined time frames demonstrate the skills required to work autonomously in the main field of study
have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;	demonstrate the ability to search for, gather, evaluate and critically interpret the relevant information for a formulated problem and also discuss phenomena, issues and situations critically demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues demonstrate insight into the role of knowledge in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;	demonstrate the ability to present and discuss information, problems and solutions in speech and writing and in dialogue with different audiences,
have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.	demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge and ongoing learning.

³⁴ The report is available on UHR's website: www.uhr.se

8.5 Criterion 5

The national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in annex 3 of the Recommendation).

Assessment: In accordance with the description below, it is assessed that criterion 5 has been fulfilled.

8.5.1 Assessment

The Swedish quality assurance system for the formal education system is in line with European principles and guidelines, which are described below. For qualifications awarded by other stakeholders to be levelled in the Swedish Qualifications Framework, it is the requirement that the issuer conducts systematic quality work where the quality assurance of the qualification is included. This is regulated by Ordinance (SFS 2015:545) on Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and will be reviewed by MYH. The requirements of criterion 5 are thus expected to be fully met.

8.5.2 Common principles for Quality Assurance

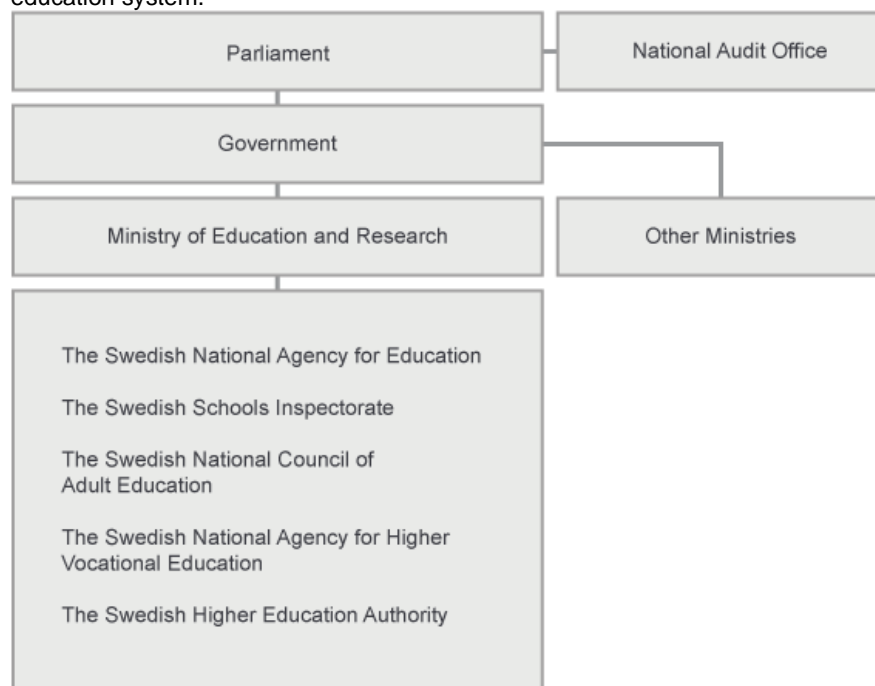
It is stated, in Common principles for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training (annex III to the recommendation on EQF) that “When implementing the European Qualifications Framework, quality assurance – which is necessary to ensure accountability and the improvement of higher education and vocational education and training – should be carried out in accordance with the following principles:

- Quality assurance policies and procedures should underpin all levels of the European Qualifications Framework.
- Quality assurance should be an integral part of the internal management of education and training institutions.
- Quality assurance should include regular evaluation of institutions, their programs or their quality assurance systems by external monitoring bodies or agencies.
- External monitoring bodies or agencies, carrying out quality assurance should be subject to regular review.
- Quality assurance should include context, input, process and output dimensions, while giving emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes.
- Quality assurance systems should include the following elements:
 - clear and measurable objectives and standards.
 - guidelines for implementation, including stakeholder involvement.
 - appropriate resources
 - consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review
 - feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement
 - widely accessible evaluation results
- Quality assurance initiatives at international, national and regional level should be coordinated in order to ensure overview, coherence, synergy and system-wide analysis.
- Quality assurance should be a cooperative process across education and training levels and systems, involving all relevant stakeholders, within Member States and across the Community.
- Quality assurance orientations at Community level may provide reference points for evaluations and peer learning.

8.5.3 Quality assurance of the qualifications provided within the formal education system

Quality assurance of education within the Swedish formal education system is carried out both by national government authorities and the education provider itself. The quality assurance activities are governed by the various authorities' steering documents and the different types of education's regulatory frameworks, which also clarifies the education provider's obligations. Common to all types of education is that the obligations of a responsible education provider, in relation to quality assuring education, is clearly stated in statutes.

Figure 21. State authorities in charge of quality assurance for education provided within the formal education system.



All government authorities are reviewed; partly by an independent auditor directly linked to the Parliament, partly by an independent staff agency connected to the Government, The Swedish Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret).

The authorities responsible for national/state quality assurance of education within the formal education system and their tasks are displayed in the following table. The authorities also have other duties as evidenced by their instructions. The information in the table below is restricted to the relevant data on the basis of criterion 5. The figure also includes examples of related education, however which is not included in the formal education system and is therefore not been placed in the national qualifications framework.

Figure 22. National authorities within formal education and respective tasks.

Authorities and types of education	Tasks
National Agency for Education Responsible agency for the formal education regulated by the Education Act (2010:800).	National monitoring and evaluation, support municipalities and other organisers in their education activities, reviewing curricula, syllabuses, grading criteria and knowledge requirements and responsibility for national exams and final exams. The National Agency shall stimulate apprenticeship training at upper secondary level and support relevant actors in quality development for upper secondary vocational education and training. The Agency is responsible for the National Programme Councils, appointed for each of the 12

	<p>vocational programmes and the fourth vocational year leading to an upper secondary engineering qualification, which play an important part when it comes to quality assurance of vocational education and training at upper secondary level.</p> <p>The National Agency serve as a national reference centre on information about vocational education and training in Sweden and in other EU countries, as well as countries within the EEA, and to be a national reference point for quality assurance in VET which the Member States recommends being appointed by the European Parliament and Council Recommendation 2009/C of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European frame of reference for quality assurance for VET education. The National Agency is responsible for official statistics surrounding public schools and childcare.</p>
<p>The Swedish Schools Inspectorate Inspectorate for the formal education regulated by the Education Act (2010:800).</p>	<p>Review of organisers and organisations through supervision and quality audit, consider applications from individuals to the posts as the heads of preschool class, compulsory school, compulsory special school, compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, upper secondary school, upper secondary special school and leisure-time centres for approval, and the right to grant and withdrawal of authorisation and the right to a refund in some cases.</p>
<p>The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (HVE). Responsible agency for the formal education regulated by the Higher Vocational Education Act (2009:128).</p>	<p>Decide, after the application, if the courses should be included in HVE and rule on government funding for courses in HVE, analyse labour market needs for training in HVE, supervision and quality assurance as well as promote the development and quality in the above courses. Be the National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), coordinating and supporting a national structure for validation, producing statistics in its area of responsibility.</p> <p>From 2016-01-01, it is the responsible authority also to administer applications from organisations responsible for qualifications not levelled by the government and to rule on levelling of such qualifications in the SeQF. The agency shall also compile data on the level of qualifications which are not obtained in the public education.</p>
<p>The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) Responsible agency for the formal education regulated by the Higher Education Act (1992:1434).</p>	<p>Quality assurance of higher education through evaluation of education in the first, second and third cycle and questions regarding the degree-awarding powers, reviewing university colleges and universities' efficiency, follow-up, supervision. The authority is responsible for official statistics in the higher education sector.</p>

The former Swedish quality assurance system did, according to ENQA, not measure up to the European principles and guidelines for quality assurance and, therefore, ENQA did not renew the membership of the Swedish Higher Education Authority. This system was however completed in October 2014 and the Swedish University Chancellor was commissioned by the Government to propose a future quality assurance system to evaluate higher education in Sweden. On March 2, 2016, The Swedish parliament decided on such a new framework for a quality assurance system for higher education. This new quality assurance system will combine the elements of an enhancement-led approach and a focus on control. The aim is that the new system will be developed and implemented by the quality assurance agency in accordance with international criteria, such as European Standard and Guidelines, ESG.

Disclaimer – update

In 2020, UKÄ was reviewed against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). The external review panel appointed by ENQA found that UKÄ was fully compliant with most of the areas in the ESG. In December 2020, the Board of ENQA took the decision to grant UKÄ membership of ENQA.³⁵

The different authorities which are responsible for the quality of the formal education system's qualifications linked to the Swedish framework different levels is illustrated below. Quality assurance here, refers to a single concept where both the preparation of the statutory qualifications supervision as well as quality control, monitoring and evaluation of these can be included. In certain cases, the statutory qualifications are determined by the government, but it is the authorities in the government which are responsible for quality assurance.

Since the levelling of the qualifications are determined by the learning outcomes, different types of educations can be placed on the same level of qualification. This means that there are several national actors involved in assuring the quality of education programmes that provide similar qualifications.

In conclusion, the Swedish quality assurance system for the formal education system is in line with the European principles and guidelines, as described above.

8.5.4 Quality assurance of the qualifications provided within the non-formal education system

Adult liberal education is provided by Folk High Schools and Study Associations. Courses in liberal adult education are quality assured by the board/management for each folk high school and The Swedish National Council of Adult Education, the organisation that has a government mandate to allocate government grants and to examine that the conditions for the grants are fulfilled. A systematic quality assurance at school level is a precondition for being awarded state grants. The management of the Folk High Schools must annually report how the systematic quality work was performed and the result to the Swedish National Council of Adult Education.

Figure 23. National authorities within non-formal learning and respective tasks.

Authorities and types of education	Tasks
<p>Swedish National Council of Adult Education (education in Folk High Schools, study associations).</p> <p>Council responsible for grants allocation and evaluation of the non-formal liberal adult education in accordance with the yearly appropriation directions for government allocation of state grants.</p>	<p>Decide which study associations, folk high schools and student organisations within the Folk High School will receive state grants, as well as distributor of the state grants, monitor and evaluate the liberal adult education activities to check if conditions for a government grant is met. Systematic quality work at the school level is a precondition for state grants. The management of schools must annually report to council how the systematic quality work has been conducted and its results.</p>
<p>The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (HVE).</p> <p>Responsible agency for quality audits and allocation of state grants to the non-formal</p>	<p>The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education consider matters relating to support for arts and culture programmes delivered by private education providers and issues regarding government support for some interpretation training in the liberal adult education. These matters include quality audits.</p>

³⁵ Source: <https://www.uka.se/swedish-higher-education-authority>

education for arts and culture programmes and for interpreters.	
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Other non-formal education provided by sectors or industries are quality assured by the sectors or industries, often in cooperation between the social partners. Quality assurance of education programs given by the labour market organisations, is conducted by the organisation or provider and is therefore not guaranteed by the state. Several industries such as The Swedish Construction Federation, has a system to ensure that the approved education and training providers, which operate within the formal municipal adult vocational education and training and labour market training, can meet the sectorial standards to carry out education and training. The training is an alternative path to a vocation but does not have to be in accordance with the formal educational curriculum. An education provider will have to show that the relevant teacher competence and resources and facilities are available at their respective training programme. The individual's education and training performance is reported to The Swedish Construction Federation, which keeps student and apprentice records. There are also demands on internal quality assurance of the education provider in the form of follow-up actions and more. The Swedish Construction Federation also conducts quality assurance visits to education and training providers, where warranted, or randomly chosen.

Quality assurance of a qualification obtained through validation is done by the responsible sector or industry.

8.5.6. Overview of the defined qualification levels of qualifications awarded within the formal education system and the responsible national authority

Figure 24. Qualifications within formal education and responsible national authorities.

Level	Quality assurance agency
SeQF - Level 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final certificate from Compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities Final certificate from basic education for adults with intellectual disabilities 	National Agency for Education, Swedish Schools Inspectorate
SeQF - Level 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final certificate from Compulsory school Final certificate from Special needs school at compulsory level Final certificate from basic Municipal adult education Upper secondary school certificate for pupils with intellectual disabilities Certificate from municipal upper secondary education for adults with intellectual disabilities Study Assessment from Swedish tuition for Immigrants course D, in municipal adult education or equivalent awarded by a Folk high school Study assessment of passing results in general courses at Folk high school at basic level 	The National Agency for Education, The Swedish Schools Inspectorate
SeQF - Level 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma from a national programme in Upper secondary school Final certificate from a completed national or specially designed upper secondary school programme Diploma from Municipal adult upper secondary education Study assessment of passing results in general courses at Folk high school at upper secondary level 	The National Agency for Education, Swedish Schools Inspectorate

SeQF - Level 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper secondary engineering qualification • Higher Vocational Education Diploma 	The National Agency for Education, The Swedish Schools Inspectorate Swedish The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education
SeQF - Level 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degrees, first cycle, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) • Degrees, first cycle, Annex to the Regulation (1993: 221) Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences • Degrees at first cycle, in the Annex to Regulation (2007: 1164) Swedish Defence University • Advanced Higher Vocational Education Diploma 	The Swedish Higher Education Authority The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education
Level 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degrees, second cycle, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) • Degrees, second cycle, Annex to the Regulation (1993: 221) Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences • Degrees, second cycle, in the Annex to Regulation (2007: 1164) Swedish Defence University 	The Swedish Higher Education Authority
Level 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degrees, third cycle, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) • Degrees, third cycle, Annex to the Regulation (1993: 221) Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences 	The Swedish Higher Education Authority

8.5.7 Quality assurance of qualifications that are levelled after application

Disclaimer – update

As of 1 January 2023 the SeQF ordinance have been revised and it is no longer the issuer of a qualification that can apply to MYH for a level decision according to the SeQF. The revised ordinance states that it is the body who is responsible for determining the intended learning outcomes for the specific qualification that can apply.

The issuer of a qualification not levelled by the government may apply to have a decision on what level the qualification is equivalent to in the SeQF. A prerequisite for a qualification to be considered equivalent to a level of the SeQF is that the provider has a quality management system in which quality assurance of the qualification is included. The application is assessed by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, MYH, and the decision is valid for ten years.

Qualifications not levelled by the government, *i.e.* within the labour market or liberal adult education are quality assured by the responsible education provider. In cases where providers responsible for such qualifications apply for and their qualifications are levelled in the SeQF, these will also be covered by the quality audit conducted by MYH.

MYH's quality audit consists, among other things, of a review of how the provider describes its quality management system, including quality assurance of the qualification, in the application for levelling to the SeQF. MYH will, whenever necessary or at least once during the 10-year period that a levelling decision is valid, review that the issuer maintains the level of the qualification set out in the decision and that the requirements for the quality management system are met. In the case that MYH receive signals that the

issuer, or the qualification, does not meet the requirements which was a prerequisite for the decision on levelling of the qualification, the authority can conduct a review where warranted and make a possible reconsideration of the previous decision.

MYH may issue further regulations, regarding the quality management system and enforcement of the regulation on the framework, among other things. This means that MYH will be able to regulate the application and decision procedure. The design of the application procedure, and requirements for the issuer to get their qualification levelled to the framework, has not yet been designed in detail, at the time of writing this report. A proposal has been developed, and this states that qualifications outside the formal education system should have a responsible "owner", an owner which is responsible for quality assurance, content, implementation and monitoring. The quality assurance should include a system for examination as well as internal evaluation.

The government office has, in a memorandum in August 2015³⁶, submitted proposals that education run by other governmental authorities than universities shall be able to be part of HVE. If the proposal goes through, such programmes are given the opportunity to be part of Higher Vocational Education and then they will be subject to the rules that regulate education within the HVE.

8.6 Criterion 6

The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.

Assessment: In accordance with the description below it is assessed that criterion 6 has been fulfilled.

This reference report has been drafted in consultation with the following relevant authorities:

- The Swedish National Agency for Education (Statens Skolverk)
- The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen)
- The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ)
- The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet)

The authorities signed attestation can be viewed in annex 7 – 10.

8.7 Criterion 7

The referencing process shall involve international experts.

Assessment: In accordance with the description below, it is assessed that criterion 7 has been fulfilled.

Volker Gemlich, professor, Fachhochschule, Osnabrück, Germany, and Kim Faurschou, international expert on the Copenhagen process, Odense, Denmark, have been involved in the Swedish referencing report as international experts.

The experts have met on three occasions with the Secretariat and expressed their views on the SeQF and the referencing report. Their comments and views has been expressed in the structure of the report and the clarification regarding the Swedish framework's

³⁶ En stärkt yrkeshögskola – ett lyft för kunskap, Ds 2015:41

description of the qualification levels. The international expert's opinions are presented in Annex 5.

8.8 Criterion 8

The competent national body or bodies shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national bodies, including the National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria.

Assessment: In accordance with the description below, it is assessed that criterion 8 has been fulfilled.

The present referencing report is the official Swedish report on the referencing of the SeQF to the EQF. The report has followed the criteria and procedures set out in the EU's recommendation for referencing to EQF: Criteria and Procedures for referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF.

The report has been reviewed by the Government Offices of Sweden and will be published on MYHs website – [Publikationer - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan \(myh.se\)](https://publikationer.myh.se/)

8.9 Criterion 9

The official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports.

Assessment: In accordance with the description below, it is assessed that criterion 9 has been fulfilled.

When the reference report is finalised and has been presented to the EQF Advisory Group, it will be published on [Publikationer - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan \(myh.se\)](https://publikationer.myh.se/). The report will also be linked to the Europass-platform.

8.10 Criterion 10

Following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level

Assessment: In accordance with the description below, it is assessed that the process to fulfil criteria 10 has started but that it is not yet fulfilled. This criterion will be addressed in a second step.

8.10.1 How the levels on the national qualifications framework can be presented in the relevant qualification documents

The qualifications that can potentially be placed in the Swedish framework can be issued by stakeholders outside or within the formal education system. Below are proposals from the Swedish Agency for Higher Vocational Education, MYH, presented to the Ministry of Education and Research, on how the levels of the SeQF can be introduced in these documents.

8.10.2 Qualifications within the formal education system

The proposal is that the government establishes that it is mandatory to refer to the Swedish qualifications framework regarding diploma or equivalent documents within the formal education system. The Agency proposes that this reference also should be included in the Europass diploma and certificate supplements to these qualification documents. The designation of the Swedish Framework is SeQF, and qualification documents should make use of the mention of both SeQF and the EQF.

It is further proposed that the government gives the responsible authorities the right to regulate the references to the SeQF in the education forms that they are respectively responsible for.

8.10.3 Qualifications awarded outside the formal education system

The qualifications provided outside of the formal education system, that are levelled to the SeQF by MYH shall also have a qualifications supplement with the given SeQF and EQF levels. The qualifications supplement will have a nationally standardised format, where it is shown what knowledge, skills and competences the qualification relates to. The qualification supplement shall be seen as an appendix to the qualification document, for example, a certificate, diploma or certificate.

Disclaimer – update

In 2023, the Europass certificate supplement for the vocational upper secondary programmes indicates SeQF and EQF levels. The documents are produced by the National Agency for Education³⁷ (Skolverket). The Europass certificate supplement for higher vocational education indicates SeQF and EQF levels. It is produced by each education provider after guidelines from the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education³⁸. The Europass Diploma Supplement indicates QF-EHEA, SeQF and EQF levels. The documents are produced by each university awarding a degree in accordance with guidelines set by the Swedish Council for Higher Education.³⁹

In 2023 it was decided that final certificates from compulsory school and upper secondary education diplomas will include SeQF level and the National Agency for Education has provided guidelines for how to indicate SeQF level⁴⁰ in the documents.

All qualifications outside of the formal education system, levelled by the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, contain a clear reference to the SeQF. The qualifications are also published in a database.⁴¹

³⁷ <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/anordna-och-administrera-utbildning/administrera-utbildning/europass---ett-tillagg-till-yrkesexamen-pa-gymnasial-niva#container-36f5fd06-9b6a-4fdb-a06a-34abc163b0f7>

³⁸ Europass - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan (myh.se)

³⁹ allmanna-rad-med-kommentarer-om-bilagan-till-examensbeviset-fran-och-med-1-juni-2023.pdf (uhr.se)

⁴⁰ SKOLFS 2023:118 (skolverket.se); SKOLFS 2023:117 (skolverket.se)

⁴¹ Sök kvalifikationer i vår databas - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan (myh.se)

9 The levelling of qualifications in the framework

The Swedish framework should, as mentioned above, include qualifications from both outside and within the formal education system. The government has established the levelling of the formal education system's qualifications, see Annex 3.

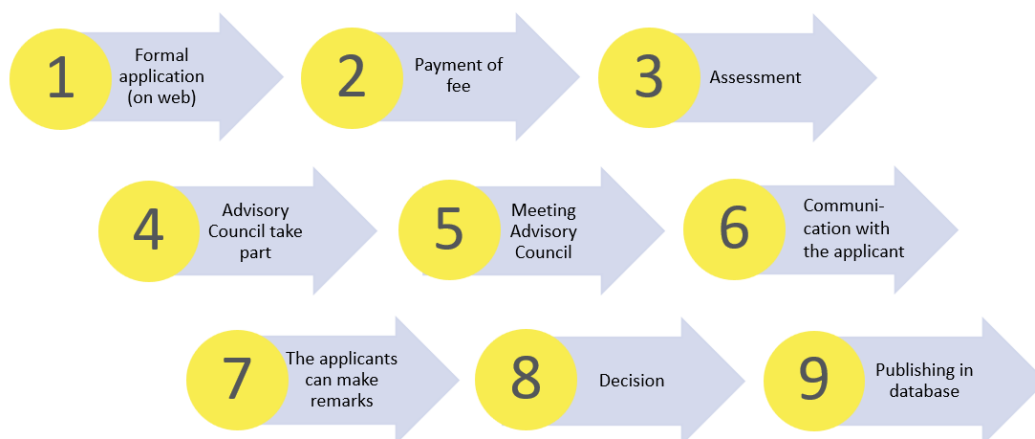
A model for the levelling of qualifications outside the formal education system has been developed in consultation with the relevant authorities, working life organisations, student organisations and the Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF). The model has also been anchored in a consultation round in which most stakeholders supported the process. Organisation, application procedures, preparation of the application and quality assurance in the SeQF is regulated by the ordinance on the qualifications framework for lifelong learning. In §12 of the mentioned ordinance, it is stated that MYH may issue further regulations on the learning outcomes that are relevant to level 1-8 in the framework, the issuer's (of a qualification) quality management system, the issuer's information and notification requirements, as well as the enforcement of the regulation that governs the Swedish framework.

Disclaimer – update

As of 1 January 2023 the SeQF ordinance have been revised and it is no longer the issuer of a qualification that can apply to MYH for a level decision according to the SeQF. The revised ordinance states that it is the body who is responsible for determining the intended learning outcomes for the specific qualification that can apply.

Figure 25 gives an overall description of the assessment and levelling process from application to publication of qualifications in the national database.

Figure 25. Assessment and levelling process for “non-formal” qualifications.



9.1 The Council for the National Qualifications Framework

It is stated in §13 of the ordinance (2011:1162), with instructions for MYH, that within the agency there shall be an advisory body called the Council for the National Qualifications Framework. This provision shall enter into force on January 1, 2016. The advisory body shall assist the agency with a basis for decisions about the levelling of a qualification according to §4 and §9 of the ordinance (2015: 545) on qualifications framework for lifelong learning. The Council shall consist of a chairperson and no more than 14 other

members. The chairman shall be the Director General who is the head of the agency (currently MYH) or the person the authority head determines. The members of the Council for the National Qualifications Framework shall be appointed by MYH after consultation with relevant authorities and organisations. Members are appointed for a term of six years. The council will consist of members from the labour market, education area, liberal adult education and relevant authorities. It is the director general of the agency who determines the levelling decisions of a qualification outside the formal education system.

9.2 The application procedure

The actors who award a qualification outside the formal education system may apply to have a decision on what level a qualification corresponds to the SeQF §4 of the ordinance (2015: 545) on the qualifications framework for lifelong learning it is stated that MYH is responsible for reviewing the application.

The organisation responsible for the qualification applies to MYH via a web-based platform. The issuer will have to pay MYH a fee for the application. MYH will not consider the application until the fee is paid. The application procedure consists of an assessment of the levelling of a qualification. §4 in above mentioned ordinance states that a qualification, in order to be included in the framework, must meet the necessary condition, *i.e.* that the issuer has a quality management system where quality assurance of the specific qualification is included. MYH has been authorised by the government to issue further regulations on how a quality management system, including quality assurance of qualification, must be expressed. The regulations will describe the criteria that must be met for an application to be granted. The regulations are valid from January 1, 2016. If the provider does not meet these criteria, or if the application is otherwise deemed inadequate or incomplete, the authority will request additional information. When the application is complete, the authority collects opinions from the Council for the National Qualifications Framework, in compliance with §5 of mentioned ordinance. The Council shall assist the agency (MYH) with a basis for decision. The basis for decision will also include a recommendation to MYH whether the application should be approved or rejected.

9.3 Decision

Before the decision, the issuer of a qualification shall have been given the opportunity to comment on the information that the Council will present and be given the opportunity to withdraw the application. This is shown in §9 in the mentioned ordinance. With the support of the Council's backing, the agency will make a decision to approve or reject the application. The decision can be appealed. A decision for a level placement of a qualification in the framework is valid for ten years.

9.4 Appeal

An issuer who has applied for a levelling of its qualification has the right, according to §13 in the mentioned ordinance, to appeal to the Higher Education Appeals Board. This applies if the decision has gone completely or partially against the issuer. The Board of Appeal's decision cannot be appealed.

9.5 Publication of the qualifications levelling in the Swedish Qualifications framework

When the authority has decided on the level of a qualification outside the formal education system, information on the decision and the issuer of the qualification will be published on the website of the Swedish Qualifications Framework, [Sök kvalifikationer i vår databas - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan \(myh.se\)](https://www.myh.se/sok-kvalifikationer-i-var-databas).

9.6 Review of qualifications

MYH should, when necessary, but at least on one occasion during the decision's validity period, review that the issuer of a qualification maintains the level corresponding to its levelling to the framework set out in the decision, and that the requirements for a quality management system are met. MYH should also, within the scope of its review responsibility, provide advice and guidance to the issuer.

9.7 IT systems for applications

A simple and user-friendly IT system for handling applications for a decision has been developed and is in place. The IT system was opened for users March 1st, 2016. The system will also be used to make relevant compilations of qualifications, according to different stakeholders' needs. A plan of the second phase of the IT system for the Swedish framework is to develop and establish a national database for qualifications that can be linked to the European framework. A feasibility study on how a national database can be designed and linked to European framework was developed in 2013 and will form the basis for the creation of a national database for qualifications.

Disclaimer – update

The IT system for level applications have been updated and simplified in 2020-2021.⁴²

A database⁴³ of all qualifications outside the formal education system that has been levelled to the SeQF and all higher VET qualifications, with links to the Europass web page, is available since 2022: [Sök kvalifikationer i vår databas - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan \(myh.se\)](https://www.myh.se/sok-kvalifikationer-i-var-databas)

⁴² Ansökan om beslut om nivå enligt SeQF | Portal (myh.se)

⁴³ Sök kvalifikationer i vår databas - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan (myh.se)

10 Plan for information about and implementation of the SeQF

10.1 Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to increase awareness of SeQF/EQF and present the framework's possibilities for different target groups. The goal is also to get different stakeholders to engage in information and implementation of SeQF/EQF.

10.2 Target groups

The different interested parties who will be affected by SeQF / NQF's are working life organisations, government authorities, colleges and universities, education providers, school heads, various student organisations and the public. It is important that those with overall responsibility for information in the above organisations/authorities have good knowledge of the framework, and access to information about SeQF that can be spread within the organisation/authority. Therefore, general accessible informational materials and more targeted materials will be developed for the different target groups.

In 2016, an "ambassador network" among interested parties will be created. The ambassadors will be those who distribute the information and are in charge of the implementation within their own organisations/authorities. NCP's mission is to keep the ambassadors updated on developments in SeQF/EQF for example via conferences, meetings and targeted information.

Primary external target groups:

- Employers' organisations,
- Trade Unions,
- Trade associations
- Liberal adult education,
- Students' Organisations,
- School and education authorities,
- National education agencies,
- Private education providers and owners of qualifications,
- Guidance counsellors and communicators and,
- The end-user, the individual

10.2.1 Employers' Organisations

The major employers' organisations, at the central level, have seen the benefits of a Swedish qualifications framework. That which has been mentioned from these organisations is that a Swedish framework for qualifications, in a good way, exposes all the qualifications that can occur in the workplace.

The ability to level the working life's qualifications in the SeQF would also enhance the quality of the working life's internal training. Regionally and further branched out in the working life organisations, knowledge of the framework is variable and likely flawed. One challenge is to inform and implement the EQF and SeQF among local and regional employers' organisations and also demonstrate the direct benefits of the framework.

10.2.2 Trade Unions

The unions see the benefits of SeQF/EQF, which will be used for mapping and reviewing what qualifications their members have. Especially for those who have no formal

education or those who acquired their skills through internal training. SeQF reveals profession proficiency for those who are about to change jobs or, for various reasons, risk being out of a job and end up in some kind of conversion measures.

10.2.3 Trade associations

In Sweden, it is common to establish umbrella organisations to which unions, employers or smaller industries are affiliated. The construction Industry, the transport sector and craftsmen are examples of such organisations. Interest in the framework and how the information will be disseminated on SeQF in the trade associations is very similar to the way information activities will be conducted against the employers and the trade unions.

10.2.4 Liberal Adult Education

Liberal adult education in Sweden has extensive activities through educational associations and folk high schools. Some folk high schools have shown interest in applying to and having their qualifications levelled in the SeQF. Swedish National Council of Adult Education will be the main stakeholder within liberal adult education with which the NCP will have contact.

10.2.5 Students' Organisations

The student organisation involved in the development of the Swedish framework is the SFS, The Swedish National Union of Students, which organises students in higher education. There is not yet an established organisation within HVE that organises students in the way that characterises the SFS. Nevertheless, information and implementation of SeQF must reach all students in the formal education system and it will be a challenge to find the channels for this.

10.2.6 School and Education authorities

The Swedish National Agency for Education, the Swedish Higher Education Authority and the Swedish National Agency for Higher VET are three education authorities that NCP has close cooperation with concerning the European tools such as EQAVET, Validation, EQF, Euroguidance and Europass.

10.2.7 Training conducted by authorities

There are a number of authorities engaged in and responsible for their own education programs which leads to various positions related to the agency's remit. In the development and emergence of the Swedish framework, several authorities showed interest for their qualifications be levelled to the framework. Examples of such authorities are:

- Swedish Customs (Tullverket),
- Swedish Prison and Probation Service (Kriminalvården),
- Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och bevakning) and
- Swedish Coast Guard (Kustbevakningen).

10.2.8 Private education providers and owners of qualifications

Those who are engaged in education, or issue qualifications, outside the formal education system, are a key target group. This target group is very diverse, and the

challenge is to develop information that suits the different stakeholders in this target group.

10.2.9 Guidance counsellors and communicators

Counsellors are the most important target when it comes to spreading information about the Swedish framework to the individual. To develop information materials tailored to this target group, materials that help counsellors to, pedagogically, explain what the framework concretely could mean for the individual, will be an important work.

10.2.10 End-users, the individuals

Finally, the end-users, the individuals, are an important group and NCP will reach them through different stake holders, for example guidance counsellors.

10.3 National conference

A national starting conference was carried out on November 11, 2015, which was targeted to all possible stakeholders. The conference should be seen as the starting point for the implementation of the Swedish framework. The conference was organised jointly with other authorities that all have government tasks which are similar to MYH's and that focuses on EU tools and the education system's ability to match the labour markets competence demand to an individual's qualifications. The authorities which cooperated with MYH in the conference were the Swedish National Agency for Education, the Swedish Higher Education Authority and Swedish Public Employment Service.

Nearly 400 representatives from working life organisations, regional bodies with responsibility for regional competence platforms, employment agencies, staffing- and recruitment companies, as well as policy makers and those responsible for education in government authorities, municipalities, universities, liberal adult education, businesses and others, participated in the conference.

Annex 1 – Law and regulations

Lag (2015:478) med bemyndigande att meddela föreskrifter om avgift för ansökan om att få beslut som avser kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande

http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Lag-2015478-med-bemyndigand_sfs-2015-478/?bet=2015:478

SFS 2015:545 Förordning om referensram för kvalifikationer för livslångt lärande

https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Forordning-2015545-om-refer_sfs-2015-545/?bet=2015:545

SFS 2015:546 Förordning om ändring i förordningen (2011:1162) med instruktion för Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan

http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Forordning-20111162-med-ins_sfs-2011-1162/

SFS 2015:547 Förordning om ändring i förordningen (2007:991) med instruktion för Överklagandenämnden för högskolan

http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Forordning-2007991-med-inst_sfs-2007-991/

Annex 2 – Levels and level descriptors of the Swedish Qualifications Framework

Level	Knowledge (experience and/or theoretical)	Skills (to perform tasks and solve problems)	Competence (ability to take responsibility, to assess, to act independently and to cooperate)
1	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Basic general knowledge within a field of work or study,</p> <p>an understanding of the essential in simple instructions and descriptions within a field of work or study.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Carry out routine tasks within a field of work or study,</p> <p>follow simple instructions and descriptions within a field of work or study.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Under leadership perform simple tasks,</p> <p>collaborate with others in management.</p>
2	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Broadened knowledge in a field of work or study,</p> <p>knowledge of how facts can be gathered, compiled and reported.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Apply the specified rules, methods and tools to perform assigned tasks,</p> <p>follow instructions and descriptions within a field of work or study</p> <p>search and process facts in several fields of work or study.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Perform work or studies with some autonomy and take responsibility for simpler tasks,</p> <p>cooperate under leadership and contribute to common results,</p> <p>assess how their own tasks have been performed</p>
3	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Skills required to accomplish tasks within a field of work or study,</p> <p>knowledge of different methods of work used for gathering, methodising and accounting for information.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Select and apply information with the help of the designated methods, tools and materials,</p> <p>accomplish tasks both on their own and in groups within given time frames,</p> <p>on their own search and process information,</p> <p>communicate experiences and knowledge in their own language.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Take responsibility for their learning and for completion of assigned tasks,</p> <p>assess their own and common result,</p> <p>assess information from different sources.</p>
4	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Depth of knowledge in a field of work or study,</p> <p>knowledge of models and methods within a field of work or study.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Select and apply relevant concepts, theories, models, materials, tools and methods within a field of work or study,</p> <p>follow instructions and perform defined practical and theoretical tasks within given time frames,</p> <p>communicate in at least one foreign language within the current field of work or study.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Take the initiative, reflect, organize and carry out work and studies independently,</p> <p>independently treat the contents of a field of work or study that can lead to further learning and professional development,</p> <p>critically assess and keep an independent approach to the choice of sources,</p> <p>evaluate and draw conclusions from their own and common results,</p> <p>take responsibility in cooperation with others, and to a limited extent lead and evaluate the work of others.</p>

5	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Specialised knowledge within a field of work or study, knowledge and overview of the areas adjacent to their own field of work or study area,</p> <p>knowledge of work processes and the quality criteria within a field of work or study</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Plan, execute and identify resources needed to perform specialized tasks,</p> <p>solve complex problems within a field of work or study,</p> <p>communicate commitments and solutions within a field of work or study at least one foreign language.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Independently treat the contents of a field of work or study that leads to further learning and professional development,</p> <p>supervise work or study activities and complete the prescribed projects.</p>
6	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Advanced knowledge in a field of work or study,</p> <p>insight into the area's established methods for knowledge,</p> <p>profound knowledge of some part of the field and orientation of the area's current research and development issues.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Identify, formulate, analyse and solve problems and perform complex tasks,</p> <p>communicate commitments and solutions in the field of work or study in both national and international contexts</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Evaluate information and methods in a field of work or study area with respect to relevant social, ethical and scientific aspects,</p> <p>apply specialised knowledge for development in a field of work or study,</p> <p>take responsibility for managing individual and team performance at work</p>
7	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>Very advanced knowledge within a field of work or study,</p> <p>profound knowledge into the area's research and development methods;</p> <p>profound insight into the area's current research and development.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Participate in research or development work,</p> <p>identify and formulate issues,</p> <p>analyse, evaluate and solve sophisticated and complex tasks,</p> <p>communicate the research or the areas knowledge base and findings in both national and international contexts</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Evaluate a field of work or study's information, facts and methods with regards to relevant aspects,</p> <p>identify the needs for further knowledge,</p> <p>assess an area's potentials and limitations,</p> <p>take responsibility for and manage their own area of work or study,</p> <p>take responsibility for the results of their own research or development work</p>
8	<p>Can demonstrate:</p> <p>The most sophisticated and systematic knowledge within a field of work, study and research,</p> <p>current specialist knowledge within a well-defined sub-area and an overview of adjacent areas,</p> <p>mastering the methods of knowledge development in general and to the specific field of work, study or research in particular.</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Analyse, synthesise and critically review and assess complex phenomena, questions at issue and situations;</p> <p>plan and implement development or research work and other qualified tasks,</p> <p>communicate results of development and research in both national and international contexts</p>	<p>Can:</p> <p>Evaluate the field of work or study's research or development work,</p> <p>create and select your own research, innovation or development tasks,</p> <p>evaluate the qualified development work or the scientific possibilities and limitations,</p> <p>take responsibility for how the results of development or research are used,</p> <p>take responsibility for or lead the development of the profession and area of operation.</p>

Annex 3 - Overview of the statutory regulated qualification levels of the formal education system and the responsible national authority

Level 1

- Final certificate from Compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities
- Final certificate from basic education for adults with intellectual disabilities

Level 2

- Final certificate from Compulsory school
- Final certificate from Special needs school at compulsory level
- Final certificate from basic Municipal adult education
- Upper secondary school certificate for pupils with intellectual disabilities
- Certificate from municipal upper secondary education for adults with intellectual disabilities
- Study Assessment from Swedish tuition for Immigrants course D, in municipal adult education or equivalent awarded by a Folk high school
- Study assessment of passing results in general courses at Folk high school at basic level

Level 4

- Diploma from a national program in Upper secondary education
- Final certificate from a completed national or specially designed program
- Diploma from Municipal adult upper secondary education
- Study assessment of passing results in general courses at Folk high school at upper secondary level

Level 5

- Upper secondary engineering qualification
- Diploma in Higher Vocational Education

Level 6

- Degrees, first cycle, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)
- Degrees, first cycle, Annex to the Regulation (1993: 221) Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- Advanced diploma in Higher Vocational Education

Level 7

- Degrees, second cycle, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)
- Degrees, second cycle, Annex to the Regulation (1993: 221) Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- Degrees, second cycle, in the Annex to Regulation (2007: 1164) Swedish defence University

Level 8

- Degrees, third cycle, Annex 2 to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)
- Degrees, third cycle, Annex to the Regulation (1993: 221) Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Disclaimer – update:

General courses of the Folk High School were levelled by the Government to the SeQF in 2017.

Annex 4 - The development and the progress of the Swedish National Qualifications Framework, SeQF

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Agency was tasked, by the government, to:

- With basis in the European Parliament and Council's Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework in lifelong learning (EQF), develop proposals for level descriptors of a national qualifications framework, design level descriptors so that they cover and can be applied in all parts of the formal education system and allows opportunity for stakeholders outside the formal education system to link their qualifications to the framework,
- create a consultative group in which The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt näringsliv), The Swedish Federation of Business Owners (Företagarna), The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO), Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR), The National Agency for Education (Skolverket), The Swedish Council for Higher Education and the Swedish Higher Education Authority (Högskoleverket⁴⁴) and The Public Employment Services (Arbetsförmedlingen) are represented,
- cooperate with *Högskoleverket*⁴⁵ on matters relating to the overall common framework for qualifications in higher education (European Qualifications Framework EHEA) according to the Bologna Process,
- ensure that proposals are rooted in different users' groups such as trade associations and professions councils (yrkesråd),
- Gather information about how the corresponding work was carried out, and how the solutions were adopted, in comparable countries such as Finland, Denmark, Belgium, etc.
- ensure that the results of the work can be the basis for a decision by the government on the National Qualifications Framework and its links to the EQF levels,
- submit proposals on how the assessment of the level of qualifications outside the formal education system should be made, in conjunction with such qualifications being linked to the National Qualifications Framework,
- and to ensure that terms, abbreviations and acronyms that will be used in the national framework meets the Language Act (2009:600) requirements.

The task, which was reported on 4 October 2010, is the basis for the Swedish Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. The framework has broad support after the cooperation with the working life organisations, adult education, relevant authorities and education providers within the formal education system.

Connection of the formal education system to SeQF

In the appropriation direction for the financial year 2011, the National Agency for Higher Vocational Educations received its assignment which was to describe how the diplomas and equivalent in all parts of the formal education system and related programs can be linked to the proposed eight levels of the SeQF.

The agency's assignment was to report the following three proposals:

- a linkage of only academic qualifications to the top three levels,
- a linkage of academic and other qualifications for the top three levels and

⁴⁴ After 2013 two different agencies, UHR and UKÄ.

⁴⁵ The National Council for Higher Education, UHR, since 2013.

- a linkage of only academic qualification to the highest level and the level of 6-7, and for other qualifications on 6-7 as well.

The agency was also tasked to analyse the implications of the proposals and weigh the pros and cons. An international comparison of how other countries connects to the European Qualifications Framework, the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL), as well as including an analysis of this in the report.

The assignment, which was reported June 7, 2011, proposed that academic and as well as other qualifications can be linked to the three top levels, a proposal that the government also used to establish the Swedish SeQF.

A model for connecting non-formal learning to SeQF

The authority was, in the appropriation directive, also instructed to develop the model so that it could include the stakeholders outside the formal education system in the qualifications framework, in a second step. The task showed that the proposed model would be independent of the SeQF's final form, the work should be characterised by openness and a dialogue with stakeholders, and that consultation would take place with a consultative group. The Swedish Council for Higher Education and the Swedish Higher Education Authority (Högskoleverket⁴⁶), *The National Agency for Education (Skolverket)*, The Public Employment Services (Arbetsförmedlingen), The Swedish Federation of Business Owners (Företagarna), The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen i Sverige), The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv), The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisation), Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR) and The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Tjänstemännens centralorganisation) would be represented. Furthermore, the proposed model is anchored in different user groups, such as trade associations (yrkesråd).

The task was presented to the government on 1st of September 2011.

Financial cost calculation

The mission statement order MYH to include an overall cost calculation regarding the proposal on the model of how qualifications should be linked to the framework which the authority has reported (U2011/4728/GV). The cost estimate will partly cover the entire administration of the model, and the different steps, organisation, process, quality assurance, monitoring and inspection.

The findings were reported to the government on 14 September 2012 where MYH specified what costs it believes to be associated with the whole process concerning the application for referencing of qualifications outside the formal education system to SeQF in Sweden.

Clarification of the level descriptors

The government's aim with this mission was to get supplementary information which clarifies the meaning of the proposed descriptions of the knowledge, skills and competences required to be placed at level 1-8 of the framework and the crucial differences between the levels.

A clarification of the Swedish level descriptions based on the European (EQF) was reported to the government on 28 September 2012.

⁴⁶ After 2013 two different agencies, UHR and UKÄ.

Placement of qualifications under the older conditions

In this mission the government wanted to get suggestions how qualification under the old conditions, such as the older advanced higher vocational education diploma and training in upper-secondary schools which was completed before July 1, 2011, can be placed in the framework.

The proposition on how older qualifications, such as the upper-secondary school diploma pre-2011, could be placed in the framework was reported to the government on 16 November 2016.

Development of national quality criteria

In this part, the government was given propositions on the national quality criteria, meaning the criteria that have to be achieved in order for a qualification to be placed in the framework.

MYH proposed three clusters of national quality criteria that should be achieved for a qualification to be placed in the framework. The task was reported to the government on the 16 November 2012. Based on this, the government has given MYH the mandate to draft regulations that regulate the national quality criteria that must be fulfilled for a qualification to be connected to the SeQF.

Develop an IT system for the application procedure

MYH has begun the development of a simple, easy to understand and effective IT system for the application procedure. The IT system that today handles the applications regarding HVE and which MYH has developed together with IT consultants is the same technical platform from which MYH wishes to base its new platform on. The IT system will be up and running during the first quarter of 2016.

Making qualifications connected to SeQF searchable

The website, [SeQF – Sveriges referensram för kvalifikationer - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan \(myh.se\)](http://SeQF – Sveriges referensram för kvalifikationer - Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan (myh.se)) is the hub for information and the implementation work of the SeQF. Qualifications that are placed in the framework by the government as well as qualifications from outside the formal education system which have been placed through an application and decision by MYH's director general will be published and made available on the website.

Information and implementation work regarding SeQF

The Information and implementation work will be conducted during meetings, conferences and the development of information material for select target groups.

How the level of the SeQF can be displayed in relevant qualifications documents

MYH suggests how the level of the national qualifications framework can be displayed in the relevant qualifications document within the formal education system as well as the qualifications which have been placed in the framework through the application procedure.

- MYH suggests that it should be mandatory to refer to the Swedish qualifications framework for qualification documents within the formal education system. This referral shall also be present in the Europass annexes to these documents.
- MYH suggest that any referral to the Swedish qualifications framework shall be abbreviated to SeQF and that the qualifications documents that refer to the framework should use both SeQF and EQF.
- MYH suggests that MYH, UHR and Skolverket should regulate these referrals in the respective education form that they are responsible for.

- MYH also presents how qualifications outside the formal education system whose qualifications have been placed in the framework through the application procedure can refer to the qualification level in the relevant documents.

Annex 5 - Comments from the international experts

Report according to the agreement between MYH and the international experts Kim Faurschou and Volker Gehmlich

In the process of the development of the Swedish Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning the experts participated in the required meetings. The main contribution was – as agreed in with Stefan Skimutis, International coordinator, Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan – made through active and well-prepared participation in the discussions during these meetings.

The work included preparation of and commenting during and after the meetings. The comments have been focused on opinions and advice within the following issues:

- Sharpen the structure of the final report
- Concepts, definitions (e.g. qualification) and taxonomy of the Qualifications Framework to be precise and concise and politically correct
- The need of perspectives from all stakeholders, in particular the learners´ and working life
- The need for clarification regarding validation
- The proposal for having one overarching qualifications frameworks instead of a separate one for higher education
- The need of a clear lifelong learning perspective
- The need for focusing on the learning outcomes instead of institutional perspectives
- The need for clarity about the different level-descriptors
- Select examples covering key actors and activities
- Secure that the framework can be and will be used in practice
- Ensure that the framework is understood and used within and across the national and international environment
- Make an implementation plan and a respective road map
- Identify the implications of the framework
- Communicate clearer the usefulness of the framework to all stakeholders
- Upgrade the sections concerning non-formal and informal learning
- Reflect on the qualifications frameworks in other countries
- Describe the quality criteria for all actors regarding the framework
- Use the qualifications framework as a starting point for the planning phase of the quality process
- Finalise the English version
- Detailed descriptions should be shifted to the annex
- Highlight the wording of the ten criteria to assure that the documentation reflects them
- Check the correctness of the descriptions of tools (Europass, 48 countries participate in the EHEA etc.)
- Give reference to the various guidelines for the tools published on the web
- Reveal clearly the interrelationship and interaction between policies and tools
- Outline the Swedish distinctiveness without an undertone of being better
- Formulate precisely the progression of learning from level to level. The level indicators should reflect the detailed descriptors (text).
- Ensure the distinctive progression by checking all levels vertically and horizontally.

Stockholm 2015-10-12

Kim Faurschou and Volker Gehmlich

Annex 6 - Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF

The EQF Recommendation invites countries to refer their national qualifications levels to the EQF by 2010. To meet this deadline and to ensure that the referencing process is designed in such a way that it can be understood and trusted by stakeholders in all countries involved, the EQF Advisory Group has agreed on a set of criteria and procedures to guide this process. In addition to listing the 10 criteria/procedures agreed by the EQF Advisory Group, this note contains a brief explanatory part clarifying context and intentions. Further clarification will be brought by debate within the EQF Advisory Group, based on work by its thematic subgroups and on the experience gathered through the practice of referencing.

1. REFERENCING CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

These criteria aim to ensure that the information and documentation that is put into the public domain is validated by the competent authorities, is relevant, is transparent, can be compared and generates trust. This emphasis reflects that the success of the EQF depends on the ability of the countries to refer their qualifications systems and levels to the EQF in a demonstrable, explicit and defensible way; that means in a way that the information can be judged as valid or not by those not familiar with a country's qualifications.

The referencing criteria are essential in the sense that they indicate the general direction of the referencing process. It is however important to note that criteria have to be proved through practice. This means that an agreement on a set of referencing criteria represents only a first step and that the application of the criteria needs to be followed up through guidance and systematic exchange of experiences and good practices. The National Coordination Points as well as the test and pilot projects play an important role in pursuing this.

The EQF is a voluntary initiative, based on mutual trust among the participating countries. These criteria and procedure provide countries that wish to engage in the EQF referencing process with a guide to carry it out in a transparent and consistent way, contributing to mutual trust.

Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF

1	The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities.
2	There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.
3	The national qualifications framework or system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems.
4	The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent.
5	The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer (s) to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in annex 3 of the Recommendation).
6	The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.
7	The referencing process shall involve international experts.
8	The competent national body or bodies shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national bodies, including the National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria.
9	The official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports.
10	Following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level.

2. REFERENCING CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES: CONTEXT AND INTENTIONS

2.1. The role of National Qualifications Frameworks in the referencing process

Countries are not required by the EQF Recommendation to develop National Qualifications Frameworks and can, in principle, relate their qualifications levels to the EQF without formally establishing a national framework. The criteria and procedures have therefore been written in such a way that countries without a formally established NQF will be able to refer to the EQF (see criteria 2, 3 and 4).

While keeping the door open to national qualifications systems, there are several reasons why NQFs will play a key role in the referencing process.

First, all countries concerned by the EQF have committed to developing NQFs compatible with the QF-EHEA in the framework of the Bologna process (cf. the Bergen Communiqué) and will therefore have NQFs for at least the higher education part of their education systems. Second, the overwhelming majority of countries in the EQF co-operation are currently introducing NQFs covering the full scope of qualifications. While a few countries are still considering their options as regards the development of NQFs, the referencing of national qualifications levels to the EQF will therefore in the majority of cases take place via a national qualifications framework. Third, and crucially, countries which want to relate their qualifications levels to the EQF have to make these levels explicit as well as define them in terms of learning outcomes. While the adoption of a formal NQF is not required for referencing to the EQF, a shift to learning outcomes and an explicit listing of qualifications levels will be necessary and can to a certain extent be seen as introducing a de facto NQF.

2.2. The learning outcomes requirement

The learning outcomes approach is fundamental to the EQF and criterion 3 states that the national framework or qualifications system and its qualifications should be demonstrably based on learning outcomes. Some countries argue that the learning outcomes approach can only be introduced gradually and that it is unrealistic to expect that all countries will have completed a total shift to learning outcomes before starting the referencing process. Instead, some argue, criterion 3 should be seen as a strong impetus for using a learning outcomes approach, not as something preventing countries entering into the process of gradual shifting to learning outcomes.

The requirement to develop and use learning outcomes may be seen as providing a link to mechanisms and systems supporting transfer of qualifications, notably credit transfer systems and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Criterion 3 underlines, however, that the link to credit systems and validation is non-mandatory and should reflect existing national or European practices.

2.3. EQF and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

The entire set of referencing criteria and procedures has been drawn up so as to take into account the relationship between EQF and the European qualification framework for higher education (the EHEA framework or 'Bologna framework').

While based on separate political initiatives, the EQF and the Bologna Framework overlap in terms of objectives and timing. Given the fact that EQF levels 5-8 are fully compatible with the EHEA first, second and third cycles as well as with the possibilities for national frameworks to comprise intermediate qualifications within these cycles, the Bologna framework can be seen as part of the overarching EQF.

This has to be reflected at national level and consequently, the criteria for referencing to the EQF and those for self-certification in the Bologna Process⁴⁷ must be compatible.

The referencing criteria have been designed in such a way that the framework initiatives can work together. A country which has completed the referencing process within the context of the EHEA has the choice of not repeating it for the relevant levels of the EQF. And vice versa, a country which refers its qualifications levels to the EQF has likewise the choice not to repeat it for the QF-EHEA. While this is eventually up to each country to decide, it should in principle be possible to carry out one of the two exercises and recognize its results within the other. Aiming for one national referencing process covering both the EQF and the EHEA would not only help to avoid double work but also – most importantly – avoid confusion among individuals and employers – the main users of qualifications. The development of overarching NQFs covering the entire scope of qualifications, including higher education, will greatly contribute to achieving this integration.

⁴⁷ See in annex for self-certification criteria for the European Higher Education Area.

It is important to note that levels 5-8 are relevant to other institutions than those covered by the EHEA framework. The EQF level descriptors, through their focus on knowledge, skills and competence, should also be used as a reference for high level vocational qualifications awarded outside the EHEA context.

2.4. The link to national quality assurance systems and bodies

The success of the referencing process, and the mutual trust it generates, is closely linked to criteria 5 and 6, both addressing quality assurance. Countries are asked to demonstrate the links between national quality assurance systems, NQFs and the overarching European agreements in this field (criterion 5), including a statement from the relevant quality assurance bodies that they agree with the documentation provided in the referencing process. If such an agreement were to miss, this would seriously undermine the credibility of the referencing.

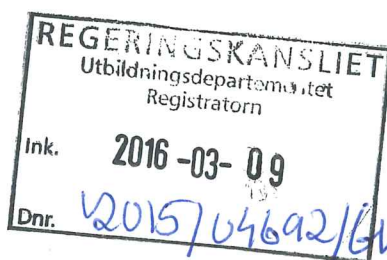
2.5. The limitation of the referencing criteria and procedures

The criteria and procedures outlined above will guide countries in their interaction with the European meta-framework, its levels and descriptors. The referencing criteria are thus not addressing the national political processes of reforming qualifications systems, for example by developing NQFs or introducing quality assurance systems. This distinction is illustrated by criterion 7 concerning the involvement of international experts. This requirement applies to *the referencing process*, for reasons of mutual trust, and *not* to national reforms (where the inclusion of international experts is a matter of national decision). In particular, involving international experts should be seen as a contribution to producing a report that, while complying with the criteria, presents the results of the referencing process in such a way that readers not especially acquainted with the national system can understand and appreciate the validity of this referencing. International experts do not need to be involved in the detailed referencing. The selection of the international experts is the competence of the national authorities in charge of the referencing process. As a general guideline, the membership of the referencing team should reflect a variety of stakeholders.

2.6. The need to speak with one voice

Criterion 8 asks for one comprehensive report outlining the national referencing process. This report must be certified by the competent national body/bodies. The aim of this criterion is to ensure that countries cover the entire range of qualifications levels (and types) in their framework or system, thus reflecting the overarching, lifelong learning character of the EQF.

2016-03-01



Diariennr [85, 2016, 11]

1 (1)

Utbildningsdepartementet
Carina Lindén, GV-enheten
103 33 Stockholm

Certificate

The Swedish reference report has been produced in consultation with Folkbildningsrådet (National Council of Adult Education) as a member of the reference group. We agree with the documentation provided in the referencing report and can confirm that criterion 5 is fulfilled. We also agree on the conclusions of the level to level referencing.

Best regards

Britten Månsson-Wallin
Secretary General

2016-03-03

1 (1)

Avdelningen för Verksamhetsstöd

Dnr 00-2016:1893



Certificate

The Swedish reference report has been produced in consultation with the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has participated by continuously being informed about the work of advisory group.

We agree with the documentation provided in the referencing report and can confirm that criterion 5¹, is fulfilled. We also agree on the conclusions of the level to level referencing.

On behalf of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate



Camilla Hangård
Head of the Division of Operational Support

¹ Criteria 5 The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer (s) to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines

Utbildningsdepartementet
Ministry of Education and Research
103 33 Stockholm



03/03/16
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Stated agreement regarding the Swedish reference report "Sveriges referensram för kvalifikationer"

The Swedish reference report has been produced in consultation with Director of Education Cristina Pontis as a member of the advisory group. The Swedish National Agency for Education, Skolverket, agrees with the documentation provided in the referencing report and can confirm that criterion 5 is fulfilled. We also agree on the conclusions on the level to level referencing.

Anna Ekström
Director General

Charlotte Wieslander
Senior Advisor



UKÄ UNIVERSITETS
KANSLERS
ÄMBETET

Utbildningsdepartementet
Ministry of Education and Research
103 33 Stockholm

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Certificate

08/03/16

Reg.nr
111-150-16



Stated agreement regarding the Swedish reference report: "Sveriges referensram för kvalifikationer"

The Swedish reference report has been produced in consultation with Senior Advisor Joakim Palestro as a member of the advisory group. The Swedish Higher Education Authority agree with the documentation provided in the referencing report and can confirm that criterion 5 is fulfilled. We also agree on the conclusions of the level to level referencing.

Harriet Wallberg
University Chancellor

Per Westman
Head of Strategic Planning

The right skills at the right time.



**Swedish National Agency for
Higher Vocational Education**

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