

## 4 steps to develop a sector specific qualification and validation model – Sweden

In Sweden, the social partners and sector organisations have been involved in the work with validation of prior learning since the mid 1990ties. As of the spring of 2021 there are about 30 sector specific validation models (branschvalidering) that encompass around 100 different job profiles. Between 2016 and 2020 (no numbers available before that) approximately 27 000 individuals have had their prior learning validated using these models. Many of these individuals are already employed in the sector and have been validated for re- and upskilling purposes, others have been offered sector specific validation through the public employment services (Arbetsförmedlingen).

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH) is responsible for supporting the industry sectors when they develop, quality assure and inform about sector specific models for validation of prior learning. To further strengthen this work, MYH is managing a European Social Fund project, BOSS, in cooperation with around twenty industry sector organisations, aiming at capacity building for the sectors among other things. One important outcome of the BOSS-project is the development of competence standards for validation purposes that also can be used as the basis for non-formal qualifications that can be included in the Swedish National Qualifications Framework (SeQF).

### The 4 steps

As part of the BOSS-project a process for developing competence standards described in terms of learning outcomes have been developed and tested. The standard is the basis for the validation model and the learning outcomes are used for the mapping and assessment of prior learning. The standard can also be used as the basis for a qualification that then can through an application procedure be included or “levelled” in the Swedish NQF.

The process is divided into four distinctive steps:

- first, identifying work tasks and competence areas for the occupation,
- second, defining core tasks and sorting them in competence areas,
- third, defining learning outcomes for skills needed to perform core tasks,
- forth, defining learning outcomes for knowledge, responsibility and autonomy to match the skills and core tasks.

The process of developing a competence standard according to the 4-step model is mainly managed by the social partners related to the specific industry sector, with process management and support from the BOSS-project and MYH.

Before being able to apply for the inclusion, or “levelling”, of a qualification to the SeQF, the competence standard needs to be described in a full qualification with the relevant

part qualifications according to the competence areas in the standard. Furthermore, the systematic quality assurance needs to be described including relevant stakeholders, roles and responsibilities, quality indicators, etc.

When all this has come together, the awarding body of the qualification (usually the sector organisation) can apply to MYH for the “levelling” of the qualification to the best fitting level in the SeQF.

## Benefits, sustainability and challenges

Around twenty industry sector specific organisations have developed competence standards and qualifications according to this process over the last couple of years. So far, it has resulted in about ten high quality applications for “levelling” to the SeQF and about 50 to 60 more applications are foreseen to come in the following years. One of the benefits, both for the sectors and for the labour market, is the enhanced link between the SeQF and the validation procedures within the sectors.

The process is well documented and a public web-based quality tool – [Kvalitetskompassen](#) – to support industry organisations have been developed and managed by MYH. Furthermore, there is financial support in the form of a government grant that sectors and social partners in cooperation can apply for, to partly finance their development of validation models and qualifications.

One of the main challenges is that there are very few national experts capable of facilitating this kind of development processes. The sector organisations cannot be expected to have expertise and resources within their own organisations. Capacity building and support for knowledge sharing is necessary and must be organised in cooperation between MYH and the sectors and between the sectors themselves. The BOSS-project will go on until spring of 2023 and capacity building activities and development of additional support tools will continue.

## Possible further development of the process

For the industry sectors involved, the development of qualifications is the basis for a more efficient strategic skills supply which will support the industry sectors to become more competitive locally, nationally and globally.

## More information

[www.myh.se/branschvalidering](http://www.myh.se/branschvalidering)