



FOCUS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Overview of the Swedish Education System

Mandatory Schooling

Every child has equal access to free education in Sweden. Children must attend a mandatory 9 years of schooling beginning at age six. Pre-school is not mandatory and is provided by municipalities for children aged 1-5. Subsidies are available to attend these schools and are determined based on the child's age and whether the parents work, study, are unemployed or on parental leave for other children. For example, children who are three years old and above are entitled to a minimum of 3 hours of free pre-school education regardless of their parent's employment status. This is applicable to all children regardless of their asylum status.

There are four stages of compulsory schooling starting from age 6:

1. Förskoleklass (year 1, age 6)
2. Lågstadiet (years 1–3, ages 7-9);
3. Mellanstadiet (years 4–6, ages 10-12);
4. Högstadiet (years 7–9, ages 13-15).¹

The final tier of schooling is known as upper secondary school (high school) or *Gymnasium* and encompasses years 10-12.

Upper Secondary Schooling

Upper secondary school is reserved for those aged 16-20. This is entirely optional but a prerequisite to university or vocational training enrolment. New arrivals who have received a permanent residence permit are entitled to begin their upper secondary education before the end of the spring term in the year they turn 20; for asylum seekers this limit is the year they turn 18.

There are 18 upper secondary school national programmes that are 3 years in length with 6 programmes preparing students for university and 12 preparing them for a specific vocational training stream (see Appendix 1 for a complete list). Pupils with passing grades after *Högstadiet* (year 9) in Swedish or Swedish as a second language, English, Mathematics, and five further subjects are qualified for a vocational programme. Pupils with passing grades after *Högstadiet* (year 9) in Swedish or Swedish as a second language, English, Mathematics and nine further subjects are qualified for a higher education preparatory programme leading to university or college admission.²

In 2017, roughly 18% of all 9th year Swedish students did not attain the required grades to enter upper secondary school.³ However, if a student does not meet the requirements they can enrol in one of five introductory or preparatory programmes which allows students to be eligible to move on to one of the 18 national programmes at the high school level. In 2017,

¹ <https://sweden.se/society/education-in-sweden/>

² <http://www.omsvenskaskolan.se/engelska/det-haer-aer-den-svenska-skolan/>

³ <https://sweden.se/society/education-in-sweden/>

roughly 90% of all students in the upper secondary stream completed the programme and received a diploma.⁴

Language Introduction Programme

Language introduction programmes are considered one of the 5 preparatory programmes for newly arrived refugees prior to qualifying for admission to upper secondary school. Each language introduction course is individually tailored to the needs of the newly arrived refugee student. It can also include comprehensive or upper secondary school subjects the pupils needs for his/her continued education. Measures to stimulate motivation, and/or work placements, can also be included. There is no set model and is adapted on an individual basis.⁵ Once a student has completed their introduction programme they can be placed into an additional preparatory programme or enrolled in one of the 18 upper secondary school programmes.

Preparatory Programmes

Introductory programmes are intended for pupils who are not qualified for the national programmes in upper secondary school. Language introduction is one such programme. The home municipalities are responsible for offering introductory programmes to those who fulfil the requirements for various programmes. The principal must draw up a study plan for each pupil and include the purpose and duration of the programme along with the main content. It must be tailored to the student's needs and interests.

Preparatory programmes can last for a maximum of one year and are geared towards helping students attain passing grades in certain subjects making them eligible for enrolment in upper secondary school. All preparatory courses are only offered to individuals under the age of 20. However, after the age of 20 there is the possibility of attending upper secondary adult education.

Adult Education

There are two principle streams for adult upper secondary school for those above the age of 20, *Komvux* (municipal adult education) and *Folk High School*. *Komvux* is for individuals who need to study courses at the elementary or upper secondary level but are over 20 years old. Participation in *Komvux* gives you access to:

- Study Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) and courses from elementary and upper secondary school;
- Study for an upper secondary diploma, corresponding to upper secondary school;
- Supplement courses to increase your qualifications;
- Receive vocational training.⁶

Folk high school is an alternative to upper secondary school and *Komvux* for those who have turned 18. Pupils can study courses at the elementary and upper secondary level in order to qualify for university, college or vocational school. Each participant is evaluated prior to

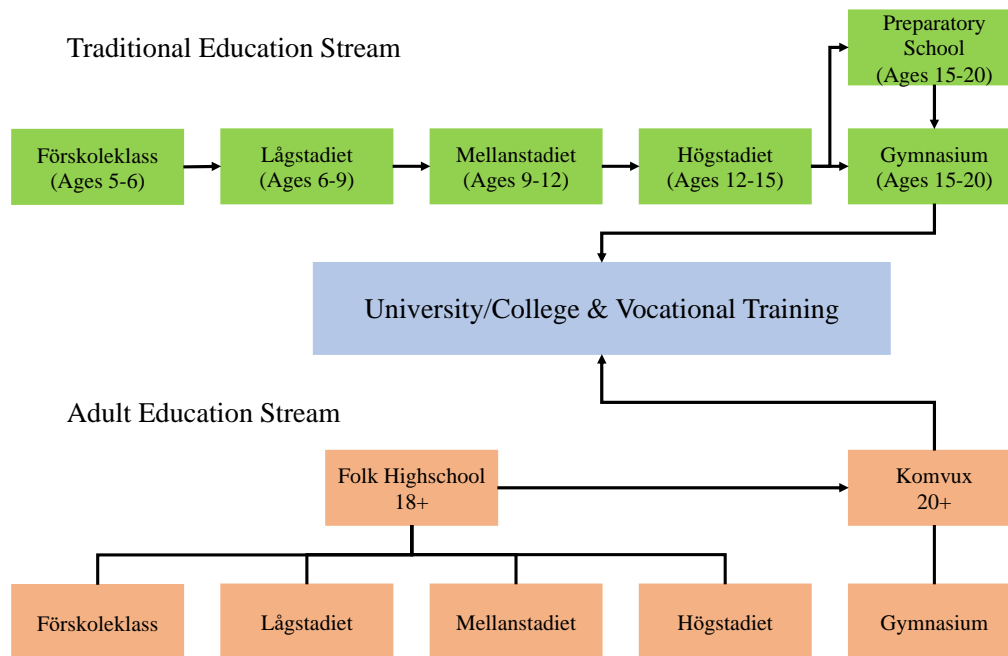
⁴ <https://sweden.se/society/education-in-sweden/>

⁵ <http://www.omsvenskaskolan.se/engelska/det-haer-aer-den-svenska-skolan/>

⁶ <http://www.omsvenskaskolan.se/engelska/vuxenutbildning/>

entry to determine their specific placement and needs. Those who require additional support with the Swedish language will receive this training at the folk high school. These institutions are also responsible for offering the SFI courses and integration courses as a whole for recognized refugees.

Diagram on Swedish Education System



Applicability for UAMs

Based on the latest amendments to Swedish law individuals can be granted a residence permit if they are enrolled in upper secondary school programme. This applies to all individuals between 18 and 25. For UAM NAMs they will be eligible to attend various upper secondary school programmes after they have turned 20. If they require additional support for a preparatory course to meet the requirements for enrolling into a upper secondary school they are eligible to participate in komvux or folk high schools. Furthermore, once they have completed their upper secondary school studies they can apply for an extension of their residency permit. UAM NAMs can choose to enrol in a university, college, or vocational training programme which will ensure the extension of a residency permit. Additionally, they are entitled to apply for a 6 month visa to find employment. If they choose the employment route, they can apply for permanent residence. If they choose to study they will continue on a student visa and can eventually transition to permanent residency once they have secured employment.⁷

⁷ "The duration of the residence permit depends inter alia on the length of the course and whether it is a national or induction programme. A residence permit can be granted for 4 years or 13 months. The applicant can also get a residence permit that is valid for 6 months after the course is completed. The amendment is not only applicable to unaccompanied children; young persons coming to Sweden together with their families may also apply for a residence permit on the grounds of their upper secondary school studies. It also applies to people over the age of 18 but under 25." (FARR, 'Uppehållstillstånd för gymnasister - Hur funkar det?', 14 June 2017, available in Swedish at: <https://bit.ly/2GluI3N>). "If you are between 17 and 24, and currently have or have previously had a residence permit based on the need for protection, and if you have begun a course of study at upper secondary level, then you may receive a residence permit for upper secondary studies."

Additional Resources

www.skolverket.se/nyanlanda – Skolverket’s website with information about how it works with new arrivals.

www.utbildningsinfo.se – Skolverket’s website with information and guidance about schools and education programmes.

www.valjaskola.se – Skolverket’s website to help you when you are choosing a school.

www.informationsverige.se – County administrative boards’ shared portal for information about Sweden for new arrivals.

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/Residence-permit-for-upper-secondary-school-studies.html> - Official Migration Board website containing detailed information on the asylum policies related to student visas and access to schooling

(<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/Residence-permit-for-upper-secondary-school-studies.html>)

Appendix 1: List of 18 Upper Secondary School Streams

Vocational Programmes

- Child and Recreation Programme
- Building and Construction Programme
- Electricity and Energy Programme
- Vehicle and Transport Programme
- Business and Administration Programme
- Handicraft Programme
- Hotel and Tourism Programme
- Industrial Technology Programme
- Natural Resource Use Programme
- Restaurant Management and Food Programme
- HVAC and Property Maintenance Programme
- Health and Social Care Programme

Higher Education Preparatory Programmes

- Business Management and Economics
- Arts
- Humanities
- Natural Science
- Social Science
- Technology