



Adult Education Recruitment Grants

FACT SHEET

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Sweden

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The Adult Education Recruitment Grants scheme is a mechanism for the co-finance of lifelong learning. The scheme represents a new form of grant to enable certain groups of adults to finance their studies. The system has been created to respond, as far as possible, to demands for greater flexibility in adult education. The new recruitment grant can be awarded as of 1 January 2003.

The Government's specific aim for adult learning and the development of adult education together with strategies for its implementation, is to give all adults the opportunity to extend their knowledge and develop their skills. A broader aim is to promote personal development, democracy, gender equality, economic growth, employment and the fair distribution of wealth. To realise these goals, a new recruitment-orientated grant for studies was introduced. It is hoped that this support will provide those who are in most need of education with greater motivation to study. Financial support will be offered to adults to encourage their participation in education and skills development programmes. A general objective of the grant is to strengthen the individual's position on the labour market, to promote his/her personal development and encourage active citizenship.

The recruitment grant should serve as a complement to the ordinary study support system, which offers both grants and loans. The intention is that those who have commenced studies under the recruitment grant scheme will continue their studies within the framework of the ordinary study support system.

Target population

A recruitment grant may be awarded from the year of a student's 25th birthday until the year in which he/she reaches 50. The grant may only be awarded to persons with relatively little previous education and who are either unemployed, at risk of becoming unemployed or have functional disabilities and because of this need extra time to achieve educational targets. Local authorities are responsible for examining those eligible for

the grant. For those to whom this grant may be applicable, the incurring of debts within the ordinary study support system is not a realistic option.

The costs of the reform are expected to amount to somewhat more than SEK 2 billion a year, as of 2003. It is estimated that the funds allocated will enable local authorities to recruit the equivalent of approximately 30 000 full-time students.

Target of learning activities

The recruitment grant is available for learning activities at basic and upper secondary levels. Basic adult education corresponds to the education provided in the nine-year compulsory school. Courses are intended to provide the foundation of knowledge required for everyday and professional life and for further studies. A final certificate provides compulsory school equivalence for adults with a pass in four core subjects: Swedish, English, mathematics and social studies. Other courses and subjects may also be included in the final certificate. Local authorities are obliged to offer basic adult education to adults who have not completed compulsory school.

Upper secondary adult education and upper secondary school for young people have the same syllabi and curriculum. They offer students the qualifications necessary for further studies at institutions of higher education. At present, there are 17 different three-year national programmes. Of the 17 programmes, 15 are primarily intended to prepare students for working life. Students determine their own rate of study and the number and combination of subjects. Students who have completed all core subjects and other courses equivalent to approximately three years' full-time study are entitled to a leaving certificate from upper secondary adult education. The most popular courses are computer studies/technology, mathematics, Swedish and English.

Adult education is equivalent, but not identical, to the education provided in upper secondary schools for young people.

Courses available to adults in Sweden take very different forms, are of varying length and are organised by three course providers: local authority adult edu-

cation (Komvux), the Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning (CFL), and folk high schools. All these institutions provide both basic and upper secondary education.

Since the structure of the recruitment grant for adults needs to be adapted to a flexible system of courses, grants are awarded for both full- and part-time studies. It is, for example, possible to pursue studies at just 20 per cent of full-time.

Principal features of the initiative

Virtually all state or state-subsidised education is free of charge. The recruitment grant is thus designed to cover the student's living costs during the study period, as well as study-related expenses, such as course literature. The grant represents a special recruitment support and is only intended to be awarded for a limited period. The recruitment grant comprises two different amounts, awarded on the basis of the student's previous income. A student who had a minimum income of SEK 160 190, as of 2003, during the twelve months prior to his/her studies will be awarded a larger recruitment grant (grant level 2). The recruitment grant is pensionable and tax-free.

Total amount and grant levels for the recruitment grant in SEK (in 2003 prices)

	Per study month
Grant level 1	6 776
Grant level 2	8 304

The recruitment grant may be awarded for a maximum of 50 weeks, irrespective of the extent of the studies. A basic principle of the state study support system is that the student and society should in some way share responsibility for the investment and risks involved. Thus if, after a period of study, students continue to pursue a regular course of study, it is reasonable to expect them to transfer to the ordinary study support system.

Framework conditions

Greater flexibility in adult education requires a closer link between specific course places and decisions about financial grants for the period of study. Decisions about recruitment grants are best made as closely as

possible to the individual, especially with regard to persons who would not otherwise have applied to study. Thus the new system aims at improving the capacity of local authorities to provide reliable information about the financial conditions for studies in connection with guidance services and course admissions. It is hoped that the new organisation for processing applications will enable local authorities to plan more efficiently, contributing to greater flexibility, shorter processing times and more cost-effective operations.

Recruitment grants are only awarded for certain courses at schools under state supervision. This guarantees that the studies undertaken are documented in a manner recognised as adequate for admission to further education or as a qualification when applying for employment. The system is well-known among Sweden's citizens.

Administrative arrangements

The local authorities decide who is eligible for a recruitment grant during their period of study. The final decision is, however, made by the National Board of Student Aid (CSN), which also has financial responsibility. The local authorities examine whether an applicant fulfils the criteria for receiving a recruitment grant. They also draw up basic guidelines for the use of recruitment grants and initiate consultations on the guidelines with relevant representatives of local or regional parties to the labour market, agencies and organisations representing people with disabilities.

CSN estimates a specific resource framework for each local authority, according to a distribution key established by the Government. Reallocation between local authorities is possible. Local authorities are given direct access to certain electronically stored information and thus have up-to-date financial information at their disposal. They also help individual students with their applications and forward them to CSN. CSN decides on, and is responsible for, payment of recruitment grants and other necessary administration.



REGERINGSKANSLIET

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