

Central education authorities

This fact sheet presents some of the official authorities answerable to the Ministry of Education and Science that operate in the school sector. Official authorities are responsible for the day-to-day operations of public administration. The Government decides on the objectives, guidelines and allocation of resources for the activities of the official authorities. The authorities themselves determine the procedures to follow in applying a law and they make their own decisions on matters that come before them.

National Centre for Flexible Learning

The task of the National Centre for Flexible Learning (CFL) is to promote the development and use of flexible learning in the municipal and adult education system, popular adult education and working life. By accommodating different learning needs and proceeding from individual requirements and abilities, learning can be made flexible. This flexibility gives students the opportunity to choose the time, place, pace and form of studies that suit them best individually. CFL's role is to support flexible learning and take an active part in its development. One example of CFL activities is to organise distance education.

Spheres of responsibility for CFL

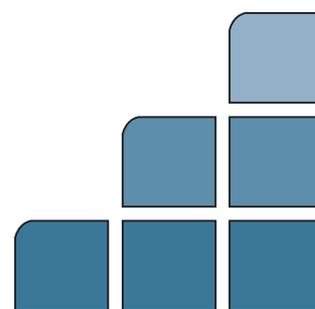
The responsibilities of this authority are to:

- *develop and provide* adult education, chiefly at upper secondary level, in the form of distance education;
- *distribute funds* and in other respects *support projects* in formal and popular adult education aimed at developing distance education and flexible learning;
- *develop and disseminate knowledge* about appropriate working procedures and methods when using material accessed via electronic media in flexible learning;
- *provide further education/training* for teachers, head teachers and study circle leaders;
- *provide information material* describing the current availability of Internet-based software in the area;
- *be a web-based information centre* for IT-supported distance education;
- *monitor and disseminate information about research* and development work relating to distance education and flexible learning in other countries; and
- in cooperation with the Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education, *develop support* for adult students whose first language is sign language.

A new authority

CFL was established on 1 January 2002 by an amalgamation of the former national schools for adults in Härnösand and Norrköping. CFL also incorporates the section of the Swedish Agency for Distance Education that previously worked with popular adult education. CFL has two major operative units, one in Härnösand and one in Norrköping.

The administrative office, which has a staff of six, is located in Hässleholm. In all, CFL has 160 employees, of whom 74 are based at the Härnösand unit and 80 at the Norrköping unit.



National Centre for Flexible Learning (CFL)

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MYNDIGHETEN FÖR
KVALIFICERAD YRKESUTBILDNING

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Alströmergatan 12, Stockholm

Website: www.skolverket.se

Director-General:

Mats Ekholm

National Agency of Advanced Vocational Education

The National Agency of Advanced Vocational Education is a central administrative authority for advanced vocational education (AVE).

The agency was established on 1 October 2001 and has held full official responsibility for this area of activities since 1 January 2002. Previously, AVE has been carried on since April 1996 on a trial basis under the supervision of the Committee on Advanced Vocational Education. The agency has two units, an administrative unit with a staff of four and an educational unit with eight employees, including the Educational Director.

The main responsibilities of the agency are to:

- *decisionmaking* on government grants or special allocations to education providers organising advanced vocational education under the Advanced Vocational Education Act (2001:239);
- exercising overall national *planning responsibility* for AVE and *submitting proposals* on the budgetary framework;
- *monitoring and promoting* the development of AVE;
- *disseminating information* and knowledge about AVE;
- exercising *supervisory control* over AVE;
- taking charge of *economic follow-up* in its sphere of responsibility; and
- promoting *student influence*.

Education to fit the labour market

AVE is post-secondary educational form. Programmes are in close touch with working life, being adapted to the needs the labour market and employing flexible forms. An AVE programme runs for a limited time only. This means that the provider is given a license that limits the number of course starts during a set period of time. As a result, these programmes keep up to date with the needs of the labour market. AVE may be provided by municipalities, companies, organisations and institutes of higher education. A third of the programme must be spent in an actual place of work.

Each programme has a supervisory team on which a majority represents working life, while other members represent students, municipalities and higher education. AVE is available in most industries and occupations.

National Agency for Education

The National Agency for Education is responsible for pre-school activities, school-age child care, schools and adult education in Sweden. The Agency is expected to take a proactive part in achieving the national objectives for the different areas of the school system. It has the task of examining and evaluating educational programmes, stimulating development and checking the performance of the education system with respect to the legislation. The National Agency for Education was established in 1991 when detailed central government control was replaced by a target-oriented system incorporating substantial local responsibility.

Although the National Agency for Education has its central office in Stockholm, it also has eleven local units spread around the country. These local units are actively involved in the overall operations of the Agency: in the different geographical areas for which they are responsible, they pick up signals, evaluate data and analyse the information the Agency obtains in its dialogue with the municipalities.

There are also four regional supervisory units. The National Agency for Education has approximately 500 employees, about 330 of whom are on permanent contracts.

Follow-up, evaluation, development and supervision

To learn more about school operations and contribute to their further development, the National Agency for Education engages in follow-up, evaluation, development and supervision.

Supervision entails verifying that the bodies responsible for child care and schools comply with laws and ordinances. Private individuals, such as parents, can report shortcomings to the National Agency for Education, which will then make a decision on initiating supervision. The National Agency for Education also conducts quality control and watches over and supports research on learning in school operations.

By means of targeted measures, the National Agency for Education is to work actively to enable responsible bodies, schools and child care units to improve their results and better fulfil their objectives. The role of the Agency is to be an active counterpart for dialogue, and to support and facilitate the work of improvement. The actual responsibility for this work, however, rests with the professionals and responsible bodies.

Reorganisation

As from 15 February 2002, the National Agency for Education is organised into four departments:

Follow-up Department

- Follow-up
- Financial management
- Adult education
- IT

Legal Affairs Department

- Supervision (4 units)
- Licenses
- Law
- Policy documents

Development Department

- Subject matter development
- Organisational support
- 11 regional units

Evaluation Department

- Systems evaluation
- Skills assessment
- Quality control
- Research

The National Agency for the Special Schools

The National Agency for the Special Schools (SPM) is responsible for the education of children and young people aged 7-17 who are deaf or have hearing impairments, including those with mental impairments, and those born deaf-blind.

SPM is required to offer education at bilingual (sign language and Swedish) special schools that as far as possible corresponds to the education offered at compulsory schools and compulsory-level schools for the mentally impaired. Furthermore, this education must be adapted to the situation and abilities of each pupil.

Another of SPM's tasks is to enhance the potential for equality and quality development at Swedish special schools. It is also required, in particular, to strive to promote cooperation between the six special schools in general, and especially cooperation on development issues.

The Agency is also responsible for ensuring a good environment for sign language at the schools.

Long tradition of special schools

The first special school opened as long ago as 1809 (the Manilla School in Stockholm) and most of the special schools now in existence are about 130 years old.

The National Agency for the Special Schools was established on 1 July 2000, when six official authorities were amalgamated. Previously each special school for the deaf and hearing impaired was a separate authority with its own governing board.

The six special schools in Sweden have a total of about 640 pupils. Operations are very staff-intensive, with about 700 employees (full-time and part-time).

Headquarters in Örebro

SPM's governing board and central office are based in Örebro. Ten resource staff work at the central office, their duties being to coordinate operations. The board is composed of members from all over Sweden. SPM's management team consists of the head teachers of the six schools and the Director-General of SPM. In addition, there is an advisory national users council with representatives from eight user organisations in the area of hearing and deafness.



SPECIALSKOLEMYNDIGHETEN

The National Agency for the Special Schools (SPM)

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Central office

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Website: www.spm.se

Director-General:

Greger Bååth

There are SPM special schools in:

- Lund
- Vänersborg
- Örebro
- Stockholm
- Gnesta
- Härnösand

The telephone and fax numbers, etc., of the individual schools can be obtained from the central office.

Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education:**Head Office**

Box 1100
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Fax: +46 611-268 66
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Website: www.sit.se

Director-General: Jan Rocksén

Northern Region:**Umeå Regional Office**

Tel: +46 90-17 19 00
E-mail: norra@sit.se

Eastern Region:**Stockholm Regional Office**

Tel: +46 8-18 49 95,
E-mail: ostra@sit.se

- *Sight Resource Centre:* Stockholm and Örebro

Central Region:**Örebro Regional Office**

Tel: +46 19-16 11 40
E-mail: mellersta@sit.se

- *Deafness/Hearing Resource Centre:* Gnesta
- *Deaf-Blind Resource Centre:* Gnesta
- *Speech and Language Resource Centre:* Sigtuna

Western Region:**Göteborg Regional Office**

Tel: +46 31-739 80 00
E-mail: vastra@sit.se

Southern Region:**Malmö Regional Office**

Tel: +46 40-30 69 33
E-mail: sodra@sit.se

Umeå Teaching Aids Sales Department

Tel: +46 20-23 23 00
E-mail: order@sit.se

Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education

The Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education is a nation-wide authority responsible for overall state support for issues related to special needs education. The Institute is a knowledge bank serving children, young people and adults with disabilities.

The task of the Institute is to provide support in special needs education to municipalities and other bodies responsible for pre-schools, schools, school-age child care and independent schools under state supervision. Its duties include disseminating information and knowledge in the area of special needs education, but also initiating and participating in development projects in this area. An important part of the work of the Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education is the adaptation and development of teaching materials for use in special needs education.

A broader mission

From 1 January 2002 the mission of the Institute has been extended to include support to responsible bodies in the public education system for adults and the development of teaching materials for adult students with disabilities in the public education system and folk high schools.

The operational base of the Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education is the regional support organisation. The support given includes:

- *providing advice and guidance* to teaching teams, special needs teachers, head teachers, managers and others to help them support individual children, youths and adults;
- *organising and participating* in continuing professional development;
- *providing information* on special needs education issues to parents, responsible bodies and their schools;
- *initiating and participating* in development projects for special needs education;
- *compiling and passing on* results of research in the area;
- *initiating and participating* in international cooperation.

An amalgamation of several authorities

The Institute was established on 1 July 2001 by an amalgamation of several different authorities with responsibilities in the area. The Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education comprises the following former authorities: the Swedish National Agency for Special Needs Education, Eke Resource Centre, Tomtebodavägen Resource Centre, Åsbacka Resource Centre and Hällsbo Resource Centre.

The Institute also incorporates a number of knowledge centres in the fields of mobility disabilities, deafness/hearing and autism. About ten computer educationalists at REDAH centres (regional centres for computer-based aids) are also attached to the Institute, as well as a number of former audiological consultants at the county council centres for educational audiology. A newly established resource centre for children and young people born deaf-blind is also included.

The Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education employs approximately 660 staff.

National resource centres

The Institute's specialised national resource centres provide examination and training for individual children and young people. The resource centres also offer information and education for parents, teachers and other staff.



REGERINGSKANSLIET

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Please address questions about the contents of this fact sheet to Merja Strömberg, tel: +46 8-405 22 02.

Additional copies of the fact sheet can be ordered from the Ministry of Education and Science, e-mail: info.order@education.ministry.se, or fax: +46 8-723 11 92.

Ministry of Education and Science website: <http://www.education.ministry.se>