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## The Context of the current situation of Adult Education and University Continuing Education in general in Sweden

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**The Context of the current situation of Adult Education and University  
Continuing Education in general in Sweden  
- The initiatives and strategies on the lifelong learning processes**  
(University and University Colleges are in the text below just written as University/ies)

**Introduction**

The Education and Training Division OECD, has already 1998 (OECD 1998) and also the following years up to now, addressed the main policy interests of Education Ministries in Member countries. The current programme of work has five objectives; to monitor and evaluate strategies for lifelong learning, to strengthen the foundations for lifelong learning, to facilitate transitions through learning and work, to mobilize resources and use them effectively and to improve the sharing of roles and responsibilities among governments and partners [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).

At the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, government leaders set the EU a 10-year mission to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Lifelong learning is a core element of this strategy, central not only to competitiveness and employability but also to social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development.

Following the adoption by the Commission on 21 November 2001 of the Communication on [Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality](http://europa.eu.int), (europa.eu.int 2002). Lifelong learning has become the guiding principle for the development of education and training policy. The Communication sets out concrete proposals that aim to make lifelong learning a reality for all, "to identify coherent strategies and practical measures with a view to fostering lifelong learning for all" (europa.eu.int 2002).

Lifelong learning encompasses learning for personal, civic and social purposes as well as for employment-related purposes. It takes place in a variety of environments in and outside the formal education and training systems. Lifelong learning implies raising investment in people and knowledge; promoting the acquisition of basic skills, including digital literacy; and broadening opportunities for innovative, more flexible forms of learning. The aim is to provide people of all ages with equal and open access to high-quality learning opportunities, and to a variety of learning experiences, throughout Europe. Education systems have a key role to play in making this vision a reality. Indeed, the Communication stresses the need for Member States to transform

formal education and training systems in order to break down barriers between different forms of learning (europa.eu.int 2002).

Also the Commissions initiative on e-Learning has an important role to play in the strategies and processes on designing of tomorrow's education and to foster the lifelong learning initiatives in the member countries (e-Learning designing of tomorrows education 2000, Holmes 2001).

## **The strategy from the Swedish Government**

The Swedish response on the recommendations and demands concerning initiatives on lifelong learning and e-Learning, both from OECD (1998, 2002) and the Commission of the European Communities (Memorandum on lifelong learning 2000, e-Learning, 2001, Holmes 2001, europa.eu.int 2002,), can be mentioned as following. One has indeed to pay attention to, that the Swedish Education system and specially Universities has since many years ago, even before the above mentioned recommendations, worked in those directions and has for many countries been a model of good examples. Sweden has of course indeed, even to strengthen its strategies and implementation of lifelong learning in daily life and in the society and through higher education at Universities.

The Budget Bill for 2002 (Budget propositionen, 2002) states that there will be increasing resources for basic higher education, promoting of recruiting activities, new exams, e.g. Master education, shorter vocational education, pedagogic renewal, the Net University, supplementary education for students with foreign academic education, students with different kind of disabilities, increasing of courses in science and technical subjects as well as in rehabilitation and nursing, improvements of pedagogical resources and the education for teachers, co-operation with industry and enterprises both in the private and the public sector, increasing of research and doctoral studies.

The Ministry of Education and Science (Utbildningsdepartementet) is responsible for matters regarding pre-school education and child care for school children, pre-school classes, compulsory school and equivalent schools, upper secondary school, independent schools, adult education, popular adult education, post-secondary education, universities and university colleges, research, study support and student social issues. The Ministry of Education has a wide sphere of responsibility:

- 721,000 children attend Swedish pre-schools or childcare programmers for school children.
- 79,000 adults are employed within such establishments.
- 984,000 pupils attend Swedish pre-school classes and compulsory schools.
- 74,000 teachers work in Swedish compulsory schools.
- 313,000 pupils attend Swedish upper secondary schools. 23,000 teachers work within these schools.
- Just over 1 million people are enrolled in adult education programmes, including the Adult Education Initiative (Kunskapslyftet) and popular adult education.
- Sweden has 13 universities, 37 university colleges, of which 23 are state-run. 300,000 students are enrolled in universities and university colleges, 18,000 are enrolled in research training and 20,000 works as teachers and researchers.

The Government is raising high demands on Universities to provide good conditions for the lifelong learning process (SUHF 2000, Universitet och högskolor 2001, Budgetpropositionen 2002, Den öppna högskolan 2002). The society today is rapidly changing and working life is more and more complex and raises high demands on competence and knowledge and different ways of competence maintenance to the working life. The inquiry from the world around on different forms of University Continuing Education,(UCE ) is extensive and even increasing. The Swedish system gives already today possibility for continuing education, in-service training and competence maintenance. The system is open for everyone, who has the qualifications, irrespective of age, or other background and most of them are entitled for study financing. For all individual students all education is free of charge in Sweden. The form has still to be developed and be adapted for the world around and it's demands and inquires. There are for example different kinds of learning situations where different learning institutions play different roles and have different tasks:

1. "Learning by doing"; Such learning which more or less happens automatically in working situations, and often is a side-effect in the work as such.
2. "Just in time learning", such knowledge, competence, data or information we need in the nearest future to handle different situations in work
3. More advanced courses to get deeper in different condition in different working tasks, to be decided in co-operation with the employer and employee.
4. The individuals needs to realize ambitions, dreams or other demands

(Lundgren, Liljevall. 2001).

Those four learning situations can be satisfied in many different ways and by different learning institutions. Maybe Universities has more responsible for the three later categories.

Then even the concept "life-wide learning" has been introduced. (Memorandum on lifelong learning, 2000).

### ***Summary of the Government Bill:***

In the policy from the government, stated in the Government Bill (Den öppna högskolan 2001) interventions for promoting broader recruitments to Universities are described as follows:

- The government suggests that there will be special regulations in the Higher Education Act, concerning Universities duty to promote and widen the recruitment to Universities. The government suggests further that there will be a special delegation, aiming to stimulate and promote wider recruitment activities at each University.
- Each University will also establish special action programmes according to the plans for wider recruitment.
- Another activity supported from the government is the so-called college education, together with the Local Authority Administered Adult Education.
- The government also promote the new role of Universities, the role to stimulate lifelong learning, for example to stimulate judgment of real competence for qualification for higher education and even to state in the Higher Education Ordinance that real competence is adequate as well for

qualification for higher education. Universities have to develop methods for judgment of competence, besides the formal educational system.

- Commissioned Education is one instrument to confirm the Universities role in the process of life long learning.
- There will be new possibilities for doctoral students, to study on part –time and also for students at licentiate degree, to be enrolled in research study programmes.
- The government also states different commitments for renewal of the pedagogic in higher education, as well as organization and structure. Also all lecturers enrolled in higher education will have a formal pedagogic education as well as in ICT and ICT /netpedagogy.
- The Swedish Net University was established in March 2002. All net courses from all of the Swedish Universities will be co-ordinated from the The Swedish Net University.
- From 2002 there is also a new organization for flexible learning, aiming to co-ordinate, stimulate and promote all flexible learning (The Old organization was the National School for Adults).
- New forms for distributed learning and also new alternatives for education will stimulate and promote possibilities for lifelong learning.
- The government also estimates that there will be a stronger concentration on additional courses for immigrants with foreign higher education qualifications.
- The wider perspective of internationalization mobility activities will also promote recruitment to higher education. Sweden will also through different activities promote and stimulate recruitment of foreign students.
- Universities will also, without the government's admission, get possibilities to prosecute education on mission, even from customers outside the EES-region.

## **Some examples**

### ***University Continuing Education***

Rapid changes and reorganizations in the society mean that there are continual extensive demands for competence maintenance and education. Learning over a whole lifetime has become facts. In Sweden the Universities has been opened all the time for every kind of students, who have had the qualifications.

There have always been University programs as well as University single subject courses available even for so called adult students. The new challenge is today to develop structural arrangements for UCE ( Askling et al 2001). The authors have identified some structural components, that will have to be considered; access to higher education, supply of courses and programmes, selection and structure of knowledge/competence, forms of delivering of courses, teaching and learning methods and finally validation of students results and the achievement of competencies. Several other official sources are also confirming those aspects, specially recruitment and learning and teaching styles (Wigforss 2000, SUHF 2001, Söderberg &. Anderberg 2001, Universitet och högskolor 2001, Badersten & Wigforss 2002, Lund University 2002). Internet courses have been one efficient method, for students so they can study wherever they want and more or less whenever they like, "Just in time, just in right place". For this reason also special local study centers has been set up, so students who doesn't have computer facilities at home for example can go to those special centers.

They can even here take part in for example video conferencing etc. During some periods there can be tutors available.

Scientific seminars during daytime and/or evenings are also very frequently organized. This very basic form, maybe sometimes attracts people for further continuing education and they can see possibilities for themselves and for their future. It is a rather harmless way into the interest for higher education.

For students with special needs, for example persons with different kinds of disabilities, there is a high demand and also many times a need for specially arrangements. For those kinds of student-groups it is found out that internet courses are a challenge and a way, and sometimes the only way for higher education (Anderberg 1999, Söderberg & Anderberg 2001),

As mentioned earlier, the government stated (1999) that Universities should declare their policy for UCE. This was already done 1995 for Lund University, when the Office for Continuing and Distance Education, OCDE, was set up. In 2000 the University Board put forward a policy document (Lund University 2000) to define the aims, support, structure and maintenance for life long learning and UCE. So far this initiatives has been successful, particularly due to the early use of ICT in distance education. The OCDE (Wigforss & Badersten 2000, Wigforss 2000, OCDE 2001) provides teachers and students in UCE with support of course development. This policy document has now been a model for other Universities and is described in for example SUHF (2001). The policy states (Lund University 2000): UCE will as well as distributed learning be an area of high priority, quality assurance for UCE is of same importance as undergraduate and postgraduate studies, UCE will be ordinary tasks for lecturers, UCE will contribute to quality development of courses in general at the university, lecturers engagement in UCE will be a qualification for posts and salary as well as academic qualifications, for service and actions concerning commissioned education there shall be a special University-owned enterprise (Lund University 2000, Björk 2002, SUHF 2001).

For the coming years 2002-2006 Lund University has recently set up the strategic plan for the period. Concerning the task on lifelong learning and distributed learning the strategy follows the initiatives from the commission (memorandum on lifelong learning, 2000, e-Learning, 2001), documents from the Swedish government (Den öppna högskolan, 2001; Budgetpropositionen, 2002). The strategy is even a bit far ahead (Lund University 2002).

The Swedish authority, Distum, Distansutbildningsmyndigheten has in several reports documented the organization, support and needs for competence maintenance and development, (SAMS 2001, Söderberg & Anderberg 2001, Björk 2002, Borg 2002, Stöpfunghoff 2000). All of the reports show the demands raised by the government. The reports even show some good examples and show some concrete examples.

### ***Admission of 10% of students outside the regulatory system***

It is also possible for each single University to allocate 10% of the intake as a free quota.

### ***The Swedish Net University***

Recently the government took the initiative to create the Swedish Net University, ([www.netuniversity.se](http://www.netuniversity.se)) a consortium of universities with a common interest in providing UCE through distance learning. The role of distributed distance learning in UCE will by no doubt become increasingly important in the coming years. The use of ICT will also bring regular courses closer to non-regular courses used for UCE and vice versa. The Net University is likely to be a crucial step in the future development of ICT in Sweden. (e-Learning- Designing of Tomorrows Education 2001, Holmes 2001, Myndigheten för Sveriges Nätuniversitet (The authority for the Swedish net University 2001, Myndigheten för Sveriges Nät-universitet (The authority for the Swedish net University) 2002, Björk 2002, Wigforss & Badersten, 2002).

### ***Commissioned Education***

Commissioned education, which Universities organize is according to the government's judgment an important instrument to strengthen the role of the University in the lifelong learning process. Universities have to be more active in their work to provide commissioned education (Den öppna högskolan 2001, SUHF 2001). The financing systems, organization and regulatory systems have to be improved.

The most of the Universities in Sweden offer courses on demand for private enterprises, municipalities and to Government institutions. Lund University has recently 2000, set up a University-owned enterprise to commission UCE, Lund University Education AB. The aim is to commission courses from departments and to sell them to enterprises and authorities to meet their staffs needs and demands for in-service continuing education (LUEAB, 2001, [www.education.lu.se](http://www.education.lu.se)).

The same idea has been developed structured at the Karolinska Institute, KI, Karolinska Education AB in Stockholm.

[http://www.karolinskaeducation.ki.se/services/courses\\_seminars\\_se.html](http://www.karolinskaeducation.ki.se/services/courses_seminars_se.html)

### ***KOMVUX Local Authority Administered Adult Education (Municipal adult education)***

Komvux provides courses for people who want to upgrade their education and their grades, so they can have access even to higher education. It is possible to study either single subjects or full programs on "grundskola", eg. nine-year compulsory school and high school level, supplementary courses are also available. The courses are available both daytime or as evening courses. All education is free of charge. It is possible to get help for study techniques and also have the services from local study centres

Komvux also provide single courses and even full programs on university level, mainly Internet based in co-operation with ordinary Universities.

For both types of education through Komvux, the main principle is that all studies are individual based and you have an individual tutor [www.komvux.com](http://www.komvux.com).

### ***Folkuniversitetet (The Folk University, FU)***

Folkuniversitetet is an adult educational association that offers a wide range of adult education all over Sweden. It is an association of five foundations: the extra-mural departments attached to the Universities of Stockholm, Uppsala, Göteborg, Lund and Umeå. Their links to the universities allow them to provide, through lectures, study circles and seminars, information about the latest developments in research. They also



engage academic staff in offering university-level courses in a wide range of subjects.

Folkuniversitetet is independent of all political, religious and trade union interests.  
[www.folkuniversitetet.se](http://www.folkuniversitetet.se)

### ***Advanced Vocational Education***

During the period 1996-2001, a pilot project involving advanced vocational education (AVE) was carried out in Sweden. AVE is a new form of post-secondary education in which one third of the time is spent in the advanced application of theoretical knowledge at a workplace. What this entails is not the traditional traineeship period, but active workplace learning and problem-solving in an overall educational context. The courses are based on close cooperation between enterprises and various course providers (higher education, upper secondary schools, municipal adult education and companies). They are intended to correspond to real needs in the employment market. However, there are no restrictions in terms of sector on the enterprises in which AVE is to be provided. The courses are open both to individuals coming directly from upper secondary school and to people who are already gainfully employed and wish to develop their skills within a defined area (Myndigheten för Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning, 2002).

### ***Why a new form of education***

Today's employment market demands skilled labour. To be attractive on the labour market, a person needs to have not only traditional knowledge but also wide-ranging proficiency. This includes flexibility, social skills, a capacity to see both the overall picture and individual processes, and an ability to solve production problems in an enterprise's operations. In some areas specialist know-how is currently in short supply. In a number of sectors, a new form of education closely linked to the employment market is therefore called for. Although the range of courses offered at post-secondary level is very broad in Sweden, in many areas there is a lack of post-secondary education with significant elements of workplace learning.

The purpose of the AVE pilot project was to build up a bank of experience relating to new courses, new educational forms and new course providers. Concurrently with the project, an opportunity was provided to investigate the extent of interest in this type of vocational education on the part of the employment market and the students involved.

### ***AVE is a part of regular educational system***

Successful results from the pilot scheme led the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) to decide that AVE from 2002 will be included in the regular educational system in Sweden, administrated by The Swedish Agency for Advanced Vocational Education.

### ***Content of the education***

The education is post-secondary, in the sense that completed upper secondary education or equivalent knowledge is required for eligibility. The subject matter is taken from the employment market, courses in higher education, upper secondary, supplementary and advanced courses. The aim is that the courses should combine a practical orientation with in-depth theoretical knowledge. The interplay between theory and the workplace is important both for course quality and to meet the needs of the employment market and the students. Courses may be divided into terms, or conducted continuously with no division into terms. The student is entitled to financial support subject to the current regulations for higher education. The courses confer at least 40 "points" (i.e., comprise 40 weeks' full-time study) and will culminate in an AVE certificate. In addition to vocational knowledge, the subjects intended for

emphasis are

- mathematics and natural sciences
- computer technology and its uses
- economics and economic thought
- society and culture
- language and communication.

However, it is at least as important for the courses to comply with other crucial needs in the employment market of the future, and to develop the students' social and personal skills, i.e., their

- ability to speak, read, write and use information
- ability to solve problems and think critically and creatively
- ability to negotiate and work in a team.

### ***Employment market links***

AVE emphasizes workplace learning. For one third of the course, students will be occupied at workplaces, honing their analytical abilities, applying comprehensive and system approaches, and assuming responsibility. If this process is to work properly, advanced supervision must be available. A further requirement is that the workplace itself should be so organized as to make learning feasible. Although the aim of training is to impart familiarity with an occupation or vocational area, it must not be so narrow as to be in essence a form of in-house company training. There are many areas in which AVE is conceivable, e.g.,

- the engineering industry
- trade and tourism
- agriculture or forestry and the forest industry
- information technology
- health care
- the environmental sector.

### ***Education requirements***

A course provider applying for permission to arrange AVE must have an overall syllabus for the educational programme and a syllabus for the individual course in which objectives are defined. The following information should be clearly specified:

- the main parts of the educational programme
- the structure of the educational programme
- the skills required of the teaching staff
- the focus and organization of the workplace training included
- the requirements for eligibility
- the special requirements that apply with regard to previous knowledge.

Since the work-place training element of AVE is so important, active participation by employers in designing the courses is a requirement. Working life representatives are therefore also required to be in the majority in the management group for a course.

The employment market is to defray the expenses of the work-place training component of the education. Other important considerations are:

- the quality of the education, and quality assurance in the education
- that the education should help to break traditional gender-bound patterns of educational and occupational choice and that it should stimulate women's interest in occupations oriented towards the natural sciences and technology
- that the education corresponds to needs in the employment market.

### ***Swedish Agency for Advanced Vocational Education***

The Swedish Agency for Advanced Vocational Education has been directed by the Parliament to administrate and supervise this educational form on the national level. It is the Agency that approves applications and makes grants.

### ***College Education:***

College Education is an introduction to University studies, a co-operation with Universities and Komvux; the Local Authority Administered Adult Education. This is a part of the diversity strategy for recruiting different groups and more students to Universities. The education is structured like 30 ECTS on high-school level and 30 ECTS on University level. A several Universities in Sweden, for example Lund University, has been appointed and have assignments to organize those kind of courses. In the starting up phase, the pilot phase 15 000 students will be enrolled in the introduction course. Approximately 1000 students will then be enrolled during a year. The college semester will be both for groups who are lacking eligibility for University studies and those who have the qualifications, but for other reasons are lacking knowledge on a satisfactory level to follow studies on University level. (Den öppna högskolan 2001).

### ***Validation***

Validation through real competence is also a way for recruitment of new students to Universities (Den öppna högskolan 2001).

### ***Other Lifelong Learning activities***

Universities, for example Lund University has agreements with the largest Trade Unions in Sweden, such as The Union for the local government workers (they have over 600 000 members, and in their plan of actions in written, their members rights to higher education). Another Trade union is SIF, The Swedish Industries Union.

In Sweden many companies has established Individual Competence Assurance, (ICA), where university studies is a large part, both regular courses, but also courses on demand. Individual Competence Assurance can be used for different learning situations as those mentioned in paragraph 3 and 4, according to Lundgren and Liljevalles (2001) description, page 3 in this report.

Lund University has also co-operation with some of the largest assurance companies, such as Skandia, If etc. Also the largest companies in the region and in the country are involved in the Individual Competence Assurance system through UCE.

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