

Folkbildningsrådet

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education

Folk High Schools

A special form of adult education in Sweden is the Folk High School. The first Folk High Schools were established in 1868. There are now 147 Folk High Schools in Sweden. 48 of them are run by county councils or municipal authorities and 99 by various popular movements and organizations (such as the churches, the labour movement, the temperance movement and other associations).

THE SWEDISH NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADULT EDUCATION (Folkbildningsrådet)

One of the main functions of the Council is to apply for and distribute state grants to the Folk High Schools and to follow up and evaluate the various school activities in accordance with the provisions of a special ordinance for popular adult education.

THE AIM FOR FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS (Folkhögskolor)

The overall object of the Swedish Folk High School is to provide general civic education. The aim is to provide not only knowledge and skills, thus raising educational standards, but also to provide experiences and social awareness leading to a broader and deeper democratic participation. Folk High Schools offer a unique opportunity to enhance each individual's human resources.

The traditional independence of the Folk High School has led to ample experimentation and educational innovation. Problem orientated and thematic studies, for longer or shorter periods, are quite frequent.

Certain interest has been directed towards groups with special educational needs, e.g. people with short basic education, people with various disabilities and immigrants.

GENERAL COURSES

All Folk High Schools hold **general courses**, suitable for those who have not completed their secondary education. The subjects studied on general courses closely resemble the subjects in comprehensive schools or upper secondary schools. However, a different approach may be adopted. There is no centrally established curriculum for the Folk High Schools, each school determines its own programme. The course content covers a wide spectra of subjects. A variety of optional subjects is usually offered. The students study from one to three years according to their previous educational background. The lowest age of admission is normally 18 years.

General courses at the Folk High Schools have been ascribed a specific level of qualification by the State without a centrally established curriculum being required. These courses may be equated with the upper secondary school, which means that the students may qualify for higher education with a certificate verifying their qualification for studies at University: "Certificate, Qualification for Higher Education"/ "Certificate, Eligibility for Higer Education", in Swedish "Intyg för behörighet till högskolestudier".

SPECIAL COURSES

Folk High Schools also offer a wide range of **special courses**. Students may choose from e.g. esthetic subjects, music, theatre, art and design, athletics, environmental studies and computer science. There are also courses in massmedia and journalism and in subjects related to the developing countries. Quite a few Folk High Schools provide vocational training for various leader categories. These special courses can be at various levels, some of them are equivalent to university education/college level.

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