

Position Paper

Higher education

Teknikföretagen (The Association of Swedish Engineering Industries) wants the companies to have an impact on industry-relevant higher education programmes to a greater extent.

Teknikföretagen works to ensure

- **Higher education in Sweden shall better match industry needs for competence.** Companies need skilled workers to keep and develop their international competitiveness. All education programmes relevant to business must therefore maintain a high level of international quality and match the needs of industry.
- **The students' employability shall be a factor in university quality assurance.** The students getting a qualified job after graduation is a crucial measure of the educational programme's quality and relevance. We therefore want the universities and the Swedish Higher Education Authority to weigh the students' employability in to their work on quality assurance.
- **More engineering students shall complete their degrees.** At the same time that the figure of applicants per place in the engineering programmes is increasing, there are far too few who complete their programmes. This means that the shortage of graduate engineers is increasing and the universities therefore need to take steps for more to graduate with a degree. For their part, the companies need to clarify the significance of a degree.
- **Technical foundation year programme should be used more clearly for broadened recruitment for engineering programmes.** A technical foundation year programme can serve as an excellent channel to broaden recruitment, but the ordinance that governs the foundation year programme must be modernised and the mission must become clearer. One step is that the education programme receives earmarked funding.

What Teknikföretagen is doing

Teknikföretagen is involved in developing both the Swedish university system and today's engineering programmes.

We drive issues and projects, both under our own direction and together with other stakeholders from e.g. the Industrirådet, which contributes to our positions becoming visible and thereby influencing the issues.

Facts

Global engineering companies have a great need for engineers

The engineering companies account for nearly half of the Swedish product exports. In addition, around one third of the service exports are directly linked to industry product exports. Engineering companies also account for 40 per cent of research funding in Sweden and Swedish engineering companies clearly employ more white collar workers than blue collar workers. This has given rise to a greater need for engineers in Sweden and places considerable demands on the programmes meeting the companies' needs.

Employability is one of the purposes of higher education

The government has formulated this as follows: "A fundamental purpose of higher education, together with formative education and personal development, is that the students after their education have the knowledge and skills that mean that they can function well on the labour market." ¹

Collaboration provides better education and research

Collaborative research maintains a higher level of quality than strict academic research, according to a number of international studies. Moreover, research done jointly by industry and academia is more relevant to companies and more often leads to innovations and new products.² With better research and closer collaboration with relevant companies, the education programme also improves and becomes more relevant for working life.

The companies want to broaden their recruitment, but then the programmes must first be broadened

For example, the companies can never get a more even gender distribution among their engineers than what the education programmes have. We see that the technical base year has a larger share of girls than, for example, the upper-secondary technical programme and more come from an educationally disadvantaged background. Light needs to be shed on this and it needs to be developed.

About Teknikföretagen

Teknikföretagen is the employer organisation for the creative enterprises representing one-third of Sweden's exports. Throughout the country, we assist engineering companies in labour law and industry issues enabling them to focus on developing world class goods and services.

Contact person:

Per Fagrell, per.fagrell@teknikforetagen.se, tel. +46-8-782 09 86

¹ Government bill 2009/10:139, "Focus on knowledge – quality in higher education"

² [Teknikföretagen](#), 2012