

Position Paper

Vocational education

Teknikföretagen (The Association of Swedish Engineering Industries) wants to see a publicly financed vocational education without lock-in effects that is permeated by quality, long-range thinking, collaboration and a labour market tie and also meets industry needs.

Teknikföretagen works to ensure

- **Higher quality in industry-relevant programmes in upper secondary school (high school).** Upper secondary programmes do not sufficiently lead to employability. The graduation targets are in most cases not achieved within the scope of a degree of 2,500 credits. Students in vocational programmes should be given the opportunity to obtain general entry requirements to university, but not at the expense of vocational courses. We want to see an education that is more indicative of working conditions at a modern workplace. To increase the quality, collaboration between schools and businesses needs to be developed.
- **Vocational education in adult education to be made permanent.** Too few young people apply to the industry-relevant programmes at upper secondary school. Adult education is therefore needed to provide the companies with personnel. The needs of industry must be awarded greater significance in the municipalities' planning of vocational education for adults. Young people who have an upper secondary certificate and who want an education in a trade may not be stopped by dead-ends.
- **More industry-relevant programmes in higher vocational education.** Higher vocational education needs to be given more resources. Today, many qualified applications are rejected and this prevents or stops the development of companies. To give more people the possibility of an education in higher vocational education, the education providers must also be able to offer preparatory courses at the upper-secondary level.
- **Better regional cooperation between education providers, companies and municipalities.** Education providers and labour market parties need to be given influence over educational planning at a regional level to ensure the long-term perspective, efficient resource utilisation and better matching between supply and demand in the labour market.

What Teknikföretagen is doing

In the scope of the Industrirådet, Teknikföretagen actively works for a development of the Teknikcollege educational certification initiative and in doing so for greater quality in education and for there being access to industry-relevant programmes in every region.

Teknikföretagen participates and influences the Swedish National Agency for Education's national programme council and the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education's industry council. We monitor and participate in discussions regarding apprentice training.

Facts

Global engineering companies

International companies place production and development where the expertise or market is located. Securing the supply of competent and developable staff is therefore crucial to Swedish engineering companies' competitiveness and continued operations in Sweden.

Recruitment problems

Teknikföretagen's member companies have major problems finding the right employees¹. Nearly two thirds of the companies that tried to recruit personnel in the first half of 2016 say that they had difficulty finding employees with the desired background or with the right education. Adult vocational education is a good complement to the youth education, but the scope is inadequate, and young people with an upper secondary certificate (high school diploma) from a university preparatory programme who do not want to continue studying are refused the opportunity to train in a trade². A new problem is the proposal to incorporate the courses that provide more general university entry requirements into vocational programmes within 2,500 credits, which weakens the programmes' vocational nature and thereby also the students' position in the labour market.

Consequences for companies and society

The consequence of this is that the companies cannot complete their expansion plans or are forced to turn down work. Ultimately, it may mean that they are forced to cut back production and that production leaves the country. At the same time that the companies have difficulty finding the right employees, open unemployment is high, particularly among young people. This entails major problems for both the individual, with a risk of life-long exclusion, and for society's possibility to offer the welfare we all take for granted.

Collaboration provides better education

Teknikcollege has been around for ten years and is a success factor. Collaboration between schools and business has improved. Schools list more to businesses than before. Focus has mainly been on industry-relevant programmes at upper secondary school. There is a need for higher vocational education programmes and adult education to be given a higher priority.

¹ Confederation of Swedish Enterprise's recruitment survey, 2016

² There is a proposal from the government that everyone, regardless of prior certificates (diplomas), shall have the right to take courses at adult education to both achieve general entry requirements and specific entry requirements for university and higher vocational education.

19 January, 2017



Teknikföretagen

About Teknikföretagen

Teknikföretagen is the employer organisation for the creative companies 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.

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