



SWEDISH NATIONAL AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

REVIEWS, DEVELOPS AND INSPIRES

WE HELP HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOP

Sweden needs higher education institutions that offer high quality education. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education thus appraises programmes of higher education from undergraduate to doctoral level. We also carry out studies of how universities and university colleges address comprehensive issues such as gender equality, student influence, internationalisation and collaboration with the immediate community.

The aim of our reviews is to assure quality and to provide a basis for development and improvement. The assessments are performed by specialists who often come from countries outside Sweden.

Determining which higher education institutions may award which degrees is another aspect of the National Agency for Higher Education's work towards improving the quality of higher education in Sweden. We occasionally rescind a higher education institution's right to award a particular degree if our assessment is that the degree programme is not of a high enough quality.

The National Agency also organises seminars and conferences that are aimed at people in a range of positions in higher education institutions.

WE MONITOR THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF STUDENTS

Students are to receive fair treatment. Every year just over 300,000 individuals devote time and energy to acquiring higher education. It is the task of the National Agency to monitor the legal rights of students and to check that higher education institutions are complying with laws and statutes. This supervision of the higher

education institutions is exercised at the request of the Government, on the National Agency's own initiative and as a result of complaints made by individuals.

The National Agency also hosts the secretariats of two other autonomous agencies. The Higher Education Suspensions Board makes decisions about the expulsion of students from their programmes and the Higher Education Board of Appeals hears appeals against decisions made by higher education institutions.

WE SUPPLY INFORMATION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND RIKSDAG

Every year extensive resources are invested to ensure that education in Sweden is of a high standard. Sound information is needed on which to base decisions in such an important a sector of society. The National Agency monitors developments so that it can provide the Government and the Riksdag with a sound basis for decisions that affect higher education. We are responsible for the official statistics for higher education. Our enquiries and analyses are also intended to provide other groups in the community with increased knowledge about higher education and the extent to which higher education programmes in Sweden correspond to labour market needs.

The statistical material we compile is made available in a national database to enable follow-up. The material is continually presented on our web site, hsv.se, and analyses are summarised in an annual report on the higher education institutions.

Through compiling facts about current national and international trends, the National Agency is able to indicate what the surrounding community demands and expects from the higher education sector.

WE EVALUATE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF GRADUATES FROM ABROAD

It must be possible for students to compare qualifications awarded in different countries. Graduates from higher education in other countries may request the National Agency to evaluate their qualifications when they apply for positions in Sweden. Guidance can also be given to employers about how foreign qualifications compare with Swedish ones. However, the higher education institutions themselves are responsible – supported by the National Agency – for evaluating the qualifications of those who want to continue their studies.

The National Agency is also the authority that issues qualification certificates (*behörighetsbevis*) to those who have teaching qualifications from other countries. These certificates are required for permanent teaching posts in Sweden. Other professional qualifications awarded abroad are, however, evaluated by other agencies.

The National Agency also acts as Sweden's NARIC/ENIC*-office, which has the task of facilitating student mobility across national boundaries.

WE PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

Those who want to begin higher education need correct, neutral and straightforward information.

The National Agency is required to provide information about higher education and the inspiration to study. Our web site studera.nu and our brochures offer potential students national information about studies in higher education, in Swedish as well as the major immigrant languages. In addition there is a web-based handbook for doctoral students: doktorandhandboken.nu.

Higher education requires students that are well prepared. The National Agency plays an important role in determining the levels of qualifications needed for higher education. We consider it important not to set demands too low, but neither should they be unnecessarily stringent. In our view it is also important to offer different categories of applicants equal opportunities to compete for attractive places in higher education. We are responsible for the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (*högskoleprovet*) and play an active role in the development of alternative selection methods.

* NARIC stands for *National Academic Recognition Information Centre* and it is accountable to the European Commission. ENIC stands for *European National Information Centre on academic mobility and recognition* and is accountable to the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is an authority that deals with issues concerning Swedish institutions of higher education. The National Agency's tasks involve quality audits, the supervision, monitoring and development of higher education, evaluation of foreign qualifications and information for students.

You can read more on our web site www.hsv.se.

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