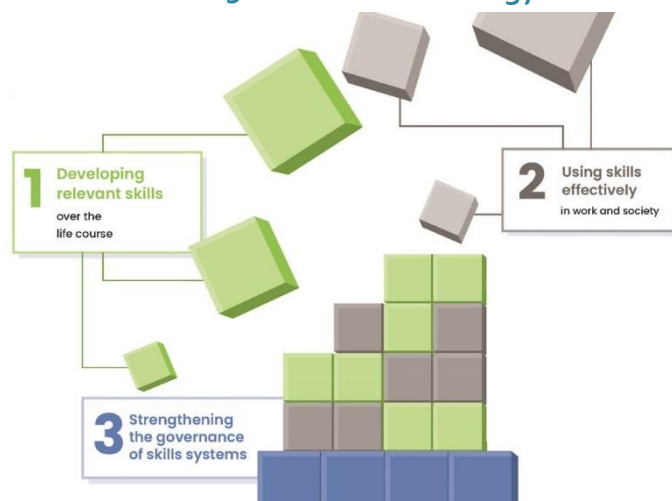




2019 OECD Skills Strategy: Sweden

Since its launch in 2012, the OECD Skills Strategy has provided countries with a strategic and comprehensive approach to assessing their skills challenges and opportunities. The 2019 OECD Skills Strategy incorporates lessons learned from applying the OECD Skills Strategy framework in eleven countries, including new evidence about the implications of so-called megatrends, such as globalisation, digitalisation, population ageing or migration. It also accounts for new evidence about skills policies that work under the proper governance arrangements, including effective co-ordination and accountability mechanisms, efficient funding from different sources and information systems. This document describes the key findings for Sweden.

The 2019 OECD Skills Strategy



OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard: summary indicators of skills performance

Dashboard indicators across pillars of the Skills Strategy		Country/Region																																				
		Australia	Belgium (Flanders)	Canada	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Iceland	Ireland	Israel	Italy	Japan	Korea	Lavnia	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Mexico	Netherlands	New Zealand	Norway	Poland	Slovak Republic	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK (Northern Ireland)	UK (England)	Turkey	United States			
Developing relevant skills	How skilled are youth?																																					
	Are skills of youth improving?																																					
	Are skills of youth being developed inclusively?																																					
	How many young adults attain tertiary education?																																					
	How skilled are young tertiary educated adults?																																					
	How inclusive is tertiary education?																																					
	How strong are foundational skills of adults?																																					
	Do adults have a broad set of skills?																																					
	Is there a strong culture of adult education?																																					
Are skills of adults being developed inclusively?																																						
Using skills effectively	How well are skills activated in the labour market?																																					
	How inclusive is the labour market?																																					
	How well aligned are skills with the labour market?																																					
	Do workplaces make intensive use of skills?																																					
	Do people use their skills intensively in daily life?																																					
	Is the use of skills at work improving?																																					
	Are firms designing workplaces to use skills effectively?																																					
Is skills use stimulated by innovation?																																						

Notes: Indicators are selected, aggregated and normalised in a way to ensure that a higher value and being among the “Top 20%” reflects better performance. Colours in the dashboard represent the quintile position of the country in the ranking, with dark grey indicating performance at the bottom, and dark blue indicating performance at the top of the ranking. The “x” indicates insufficient or no available data for the underlying indicators, and dotted circles indicate missing data for at least one underlying indicator. Only OECD sources have been used (see OECD (2019) for overview).

1. For Belgium (Flanders), United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), a combination of regional (PISA and PIAAC) and national data have been used. Note on Israel: The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and are under the responsibility of relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Sweden’s skills performance

The Skills Strategy Dashboard provides a snapshot of Sweden’s comparative skills performance. Sweden is a top performer in most of the Dashboard’s indicators. Sweden has a highly educated population and despite certain

challenges, the Swedish education system is highly efficient. Enrolment in early childhood and care (ECEC) is nearly universal for children between the ages of 2 and 5, and after years of declining performance in PISA scores, the

latest results show a curbing in the trend. Scores in mathematics and reading improved significantly in the last round, but are still lower than scores in 2003.

Sweden also does a comparatively good job of developing the skills of its adults. Average PIAAC scores in both literacy and numeracy are significantly above OECD average. Moreover, only 6.4% of the adult population report no prior experience with computers or lack basic computer skills. In contrast, 44% of the population score at the highest levels in a technology-rich environment in PIAAC and there is a strong culture of adult education in Sweden, which is encouraging in light of the expected change in the skills need in labour markets. Sweden has also one of the smallest gender gaps in earnings in among OECD countries and tertiary-educated adults enjoy high employment.

Despite Sweden's success in many areas, there still room for improvement. First, the gap in skills proficiency scores between advantaged and disadvantaged students in Sweden is increasing and is wider than the OECD average. PISA results show, for example, that while in 2006 a socio-economically advantaged student scored 37 points higher in science than a disadvantaged student, the difference had increased to 44 points in 2015. Reversing this trend will require systematic efforts to improve the governance and

funding of the education system and to strengthen the quality of teaching, especially in remote areas and in schools with high share of immigrants. Sweden has taken important steps to deal with some of these challenges. Initiatives like the "Teacher Salary Boost" programme and new efforts to better integrate immigrants certainly go in the right direction.

Second, Sweden can improve the alignment of its adults' skills with labour market needs. Roughly 40% of employers report hiring difficulties and there is evidence of mismatches in the labour market. For example, 25% of foreign-born adults in Sweden with a university level qualification work in a job requiring only an upper secondary degree or lower compared to 7% among native-born adults.

Finally, Sweden could also improve the intensity of skills use. Skills use at work is not improving in Sweden. Therefore, the adoption of high-performance workplace practices, which are found to stimulate skills use in the workplace, should be further encouraged.

Sweden could benefit from a renewal of its strategic vision for the future to ensure that all of its people have the skills to respond to the challenges and opportunities of a complex and rapidly changing world. A whole-of government approach is needed to achieve this aim.

Key recommendations for improving the performance of countries' skills system

Developing relevant skills over the life course: Making skills systems responsive

- Making each stage of learning a foundation for success in the next
- Enabling policies to support learning in adulthood
- Supporting teachers to become lifelong learners
- Financing adult learning
- Harnessing the power of technology as a tool for learning

Using skills effectively in work and society: Making the most of everyone's potential

- Make full use of everyone's skills
- Making the most of migrants' skills
- Activating skills to build more inclusive and cohesive societies
- Making intensive use of skills in work
- Aligning skills with the needs of the economy and society
- Aligning skills policies with industrial and innovation policies

Strengthening the governance of skills systems: Tackling increased complexity

- Promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government
- Engaging stakeholders throughout the policy cycle
- Building integrated information systems
- Aligning and co-ordinating financing arrangements

Further reading

- OECD (2019), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to shape a better future*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [//doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en).
- OECD (2019), *OECD Skills Outlook 2019: Thriving in a Digital World*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/df80bc12-en>.
- OECD (2019), *OECD Economic Surveys: Sweden 2019*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/c510039b-en>.
- OECD (forthcoming), *Strengthening the Governance of Skills Systems*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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