

Being a trainee at a government agency

INTRODUCTION



Arbetsgivarverket

Översatt till engelska

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Introduction

The public sector includes many qualified professions. Approximately 250,000 central government employees work daily with higher education, crime fighting, international work, collecting taxes, making payments from social security systems, mediating employment, planning infrastructure, cultural matters and much more. Examples of professional roles include researchers, police, investigators, museum employees, fighter pilots, dance teachers, tax experts and IT technicians, to mention but a few. Sweden currently has approximately 340 government agencies.

The five largest employers are the Police Authority, the Swedish Armed Forces, Försäkringskassan (Swedish Social Insurance Agency), Arbetsförmedlingen (Sweden's Public Employment Agency) and the Swedish Tax Agency.

Working for the central government means contributing to social welfare for everyone living in Sweden and for building Sweden's relationships with the rest of the world. Working for the central government also means carrying out the work and applying the laws and regulations that the Swedish government and parliament have decided on.



How Sweden is governed

A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Sweden is a parliamentary democracy. This means that all public power proceeds from the people. Being employed by the state means being part of the democratic process.

You are helping realise the will of the Swedish people and the Swedish state.

The Swedish people select representatives to the Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) in elections every four years.

The Riksdag appoints a prime minister who is tasked with forming a Government. The Riksdag is the supreme decision-making body in Sweden. Its tasks include deciding on laws and on the national budget.

The Government governs Sweden by implementing the Riksdag's decisions and proposing new laws and amendments to existing laws. It is assisted by the Government Offices,



Sagerska palatset, Riksbron, Riksdagshuset, Slottet, Stallbron och Regeringskansliet.

with ministries for different areas, as well as the various government agencies. The Government is free to decide how the agencies should work. But the Government may never control how the agencies apply laws. In many other countries, a minister may directly influence how the government agencies work. In Sweden, this is now allowed. Sweden has what is referred to as a prohibition against ministerial government

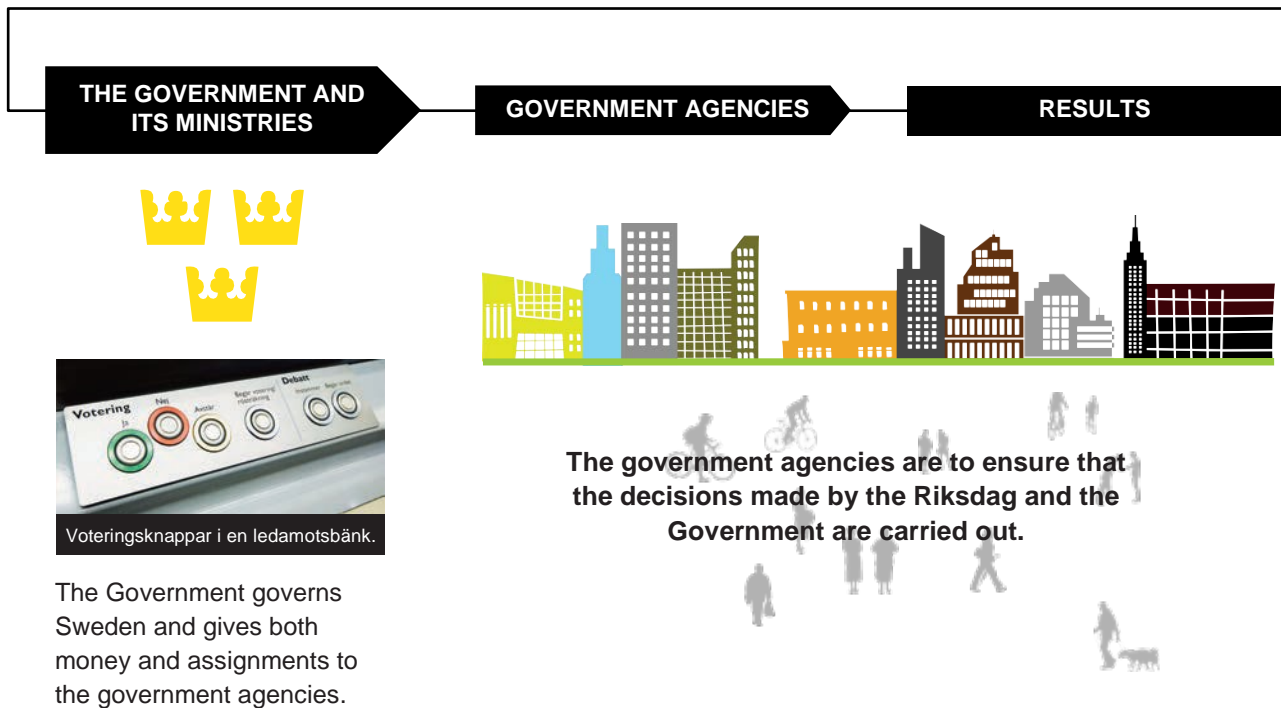
Each year, the Government decides on appropriation directions for the agencies. The appropriation directions specify how the agencies shall work and how much money they have at their disposal.

The Government decides who is made head of a government agency. The head of a government agency is called the Director-General.



Kammaren är samlad för omröstning.

THIS IS HOW THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WORKS



Private and public sectors – what is the difference?

In Sweden, work is often divided into public and private sectors. Public sector work includes work financed by taxes and carried out by government bodies. This includes all state operations, but also work in municipalities and county councils.

Public sector

The public sector involves tax-funded operations which are run by public actors. The public sector has two parts: government activities and activities conducted by municipalities and county councils

Government activities

Operations (administrative agencies, public enterprises etc.) with a commission from the Government and Riksdag to work with specific activities to develop and support society as a whole.

Activities conducted by municipalities and county councils

Hit Operations (schools, public traffic, health services etc.) working for a part of society with geographical delimitations. There are several such activities, which together takes care of society as a whole.

Municipal and county council operations

Här handlar det om sådan verksamhet som bedrivs av kommuner och landsting, till exempel skola, hälso- och sjukvård och lokaltrafik.

Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities and each municipality has its own elected body, a municipal council, which decides on municipal matters. The operations are financed by municipal taxes, fees and government funds.

Sweden is divided into 20 county council and each county council has its own elected body, a county council assembly, which decides on county council matters. The operations are financed by county council taxes, patient fees and government funds.

Municipalities and county councils employ around 1,098,100 persons, which is 23 per cent of all employees on the labour market.

Private sector

Companies or organisations that are often run for profit. There are competing actors producing similar goods/services.

Government operations

This is often a matter of government agencies being given specific tasks by the Government and Riksdag in order to develop and support society. The operations are mainly financed by taxes. Government operations include administrative agencies such as Arbetsförmedlingen and public enterprises such as Luftfartsverket. This does not, however, include stateowned companies such as Vattenfall. They are considered to be part of the private sector.

The state employs around 286,000 people. This is equal to 6 per cent of all persons employed in the labour market.

Private operations

These often involve companies or organisations that are run for profit, for example by competing with others who produce similar goods and services. Private operations involve (in addition to households) privately owned companies. These are often organisations seeking to make a profit. There are also non-profit organisations within private operations. These are sometimes referred to collectively as non-governmental organisations.

The private sector, which is the largest sector, has around 3,403,500 employees, which is equal to 71 per cent of everyone employed on the labour market.

Common fundamental values

*Fundamental values are the values that form the basis for an organisation's work.
There is a set of fundamental, democratic values that apply to all
government employees, regardless of professional role.*



Democracy

All public power proceeds from the people. We ensure that the people's will, via the Riksdag, is realised.

Legality

Public power is exercised in accordance with the law. We must obey the laws and rules that apply to our work.

Objectivity

We must treat everyone equally before the law, and be objective and impartial. We must ensure that similar cases are handled the same way and that decisions are not based on subjective opinions.
We cannot accept bribes.

Freedom of opinion

Swedish democracy is based on freedom of opinion. Openness and freedom of expression are important. We have a right to talk about what happens at the agency, apart from information that is confidential.

Respect for everyone's equal worth, freedom and dignity

The public power shall be exercised with respect for everyone's equal worth and for the individual's freedom and dignity. We must always respect the fact that people are equal and not discriminate against anyone due to factors such as their gender, ethnicity or functional capacity.

Efficiency and service

Efficiency and good use of resources shall be combined with service and accessibility. We are to provide information, guidance and advice to the public. We are to carry out our duties in an efficient way.





Working at a government agency

Government employees work in a variety of fields. The image on page 11 shows the different fields, with two examples of government agencies in each field.

THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ARE DIVIDED INTO SEVEN DIFFERENT OPERATIONAL FIELDS.

Education: This operational field has 74,700 employees in a total of 41 government agencies, such as Lund University and the National Agency for Education.

Social defence and administration of justice: This operational field has 52,300 employees in a total of 14 government agencies, such as the Police Authority and the Economic Crime Authority.

Social security etc.: This operational field has 41,600 employees in a total of 19 government agencies, such as Försäkringskassan and the Pensions Agency.

General public administration: This operational field has 28,200 employees in a total of 45 government agencies, such as the Tax Agency and the Agency for Public Management.

Armed forces and emergency preparedness: This operational field has 28,100 employees in a total of 13 government agencies, such as the Coast Guard and the Civil Contingencies Agency.

Trade and commerce matters: This operational field has 25,000 employees in a total of 53 government agencies, such as the Work Environment Authority and the Transport Administration.

Recreation, culture and religion: This operational field has 2500 employees in a total of 27 government agencies, such as the National Heritage Board and Moderna Museet.

Recreation, culture and religion

Our job is to preserve, utilise and develop the cultural heritage. We collect, preserve and display art.



MODERNA MUSEET

Social defence and administration of justice

Our job is to reduce crime and to promote security in our society.



Polisen



Ekobrottsmyndigheten
Swedish Economic Crime Authority

Education

Our job is to educate and do research at universities and university colleges and to promote an equal education for all, as well as a high level of quality in both education and research.

Skolverket



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

General public administration

Our job is to ensure that the right taxes are paid and that everyone living in Sweden are registered in the population register. Our job is to develop and streamline the operations of the government agencies.



STATSKONTORET



Skatteverket

Social security etc.

Our job is to pay out different forms of remuneration to parents, people with functional impairments, people with illnesses and pensioners.



Försäkringskassan

PENSIONS
MYNDIGHETEN

Trade and commerce

We set requirements to ensure that all workplaces have a good working environment. We strive to make sure that everyone gets where they are going in a smooth, environmentally friendly and safe manner.



ARBETSMILJÖ
VERKET



TRAFIKVERKET

Armed forces and emergency preparedness

We are responsible for environmental rescue and monitoring the nation's coastline. We help in the event of disasters and crises both in Sweden and around the globe.



KUSTBEVAKNINGEN



Myndigheten för
samhällsskydd
och beredskap

What does it mean to work at a government agency?

Work duties

As an employee of the state you are the extended arm of the Government. When working at a government agency, it is important to be aware that the citizens of Sweden (via the Riksdag and Government) are the ones who commission your work, and that your operations are financed by public funds. The work that is done at a government agency obviously varies depending on the agency. The work duties can also vary greatly within a single agency.

Exercise of public authority – making decisions in the agency's name

When an employee of the state does something as part of their work, for example deciding on a certain measure, they must always consider the rules that apply in that situation. Sometimes it can be a matter of exercising public authority. These are the types of decisions where a government agency is authorised to exercise authority over the citizen. Examples include decisions about permits, fees, compensation or obligations of some kind. In these situations, the government employee must follow the applicable legislation (laws, regulations or provisions).

Management by rule – how the work is carried out

There are certain requirements that apply to all government employees, for example about how cases shall be processed – as simply, quickly and cost-efficiently as possible. Where decisions need to be communicated, this should be done in a clear and easy to understand way. There are also rules regarding service, for example meaning that you are obliged to answer questions from the public. A government employee should also be objective in their handling of matters. For example, they should not handle cases relating to someone they know or are closely related to.

Openness and secrecy

Openness is important in public administration, for example in order to prevent corruption. The general idea is therefore that information and documents at a government agency are public and shall be provided to members of the public on request. However, for certain information and documents there are rules that mean that a government employee is sworn to secrecy and cannot disclose them. This can, for example, pertain to sensitive information about someone's health. If a government employee is sworn to secrecy, this applies both in the workplace, between colleagues who do not have the same work duties, and outside of the workplace.

The workplace

Working for the state is like any workplace when it comes to being comfortable with your work environment and work duties. Good work environment is a highly valued among government agencies.

Design of the workplace

The physical design of the workplace is important and your employer often tries to adapt the environment to the specific needs entailed by the work. If you work in an office, there may be adjustable desks that can be raised or lowered, and if you have a more physical line of work there are usually work clothes and tools to ensure that the work is safe and does not cause undue strain on the body.

Agreements

There are agreements that apply to the state as a whole, but also local agreements in each workplace that determine how much you are to work, how salaries are set, how and when you can take time off etc. The agreements form a foundation and framework for how the workplace is designed so that everyone is able to do a good job, with the possibility of balancing work and leisure time. The agreements are reached between the employer and the labour unions.

Dialogue with managers

Through dialogue with your manager, you will regularly discuss how you perceive your work situation. Some frameworks can, as previously mentioned, already be set in agreements and rules in the workplace. But by talking and telling your manager how you feel about your work duties, cooperation and goals, you can influence how your work should be done.

Being a trainee at a government agency

As a trainee you are not employed, but through work duties, the workplace and col-leagues you will learn more about what it is like to work for a government agency. Some elements of the work differ from how it is to be an actual employee at the agency.



Working hours

In many cases you may have been given your trainee position by Arbetsförmedlingen and, depending on their model, you may not be a full-time trainee but instead do other things in addition to the traineeship, such as learning Swedish or taking classes via Arbetsförmedlingen.

As a trainee you are not, unlike an employee, paid by the agency. However, Arbetsförmedlingen or Försäkringskassan will give you special compensation for your time as a trainee.

Work duties

As a trainee you are not an employee, which means that your work duties may differ. You will try different aspects of the work, but you will for example not be allowed to handle cases where you make decisions on behalf of the agency.

The agency that offers the trainee position is responsible for your work environment. In this respect, things are the same as for the agency's employees. Regardless of how your traineeship is set up, it is important that you, just like the employees, go ahead and influence your work situation, take an active interest in your work and ask questions when you want to know more.

Supervisor

From the very first day, you will have a supervisor who will help you in the workplace and tell you about working for the government. You can always contact this person if you have questions or want to know more about something.



More information

You can read more about what it is like to work for the government at our website,

www.arbetsgivarverket.se/jobbastatligt



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Box 3267, 103 65 Stockholm,
Besöksadress: Sveavägen 44



Växel: 08 700 13 00



www.arbetsgivarverket.se



registrator@arbetsgivarverket.se