



Sweden

This report describes the structure of the national higher education system in Sweden, focusing on the institutional types as defined by national categories. It builds on the Eurydice Report on the national higher education system but complements it with quantitative information on the role of higher education institution (HEI) types in national systems, based on data derived from the European Tertiary Education Register (<http://www.eter-project.eu>) for the period 2011-2019.

Types of Higher Education Institutions

According to Eurydice¹, higher education is provided at:

- Universities (*universitet*)
- University Colleges (*högskolor*) and University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing arts (*konstnärliga högskolor*)
- other independent higher education providers (*enskilda utbildningsanordnare*)

These institutions offer higher education of different kinds. The majority of them are public authorities, subject to the same legislation and regulations as other public authorities, as well as the particular statutes, ordinances and regulations relevant to the higher education sector.

The main part of higher education and research is carried out at the universities. However, first and second cycle education is given at an equivalent level at universities and at the other higher education institutions. What traditionally has differentiated the types of institutions is that universities have had degree awarding powers at first, second and third cycle level while the others have had degree awarding power at first and second cycle level. Since the early 2000s, some university colleges have additional degree awarding powers at third cycle level regarding a specific disciplinary domain.

In addition to the state universities and state university colleges, there are independent institutions within higher education receiving state grants for first and second cycle education and research. Some of them also have the right to award qualifications at third cycle level. However, they are not considered private institutions since they are publicly funded but instead independent higher education providers (*enskilda utbildningsanordnare*). Independent higher education providers are only partly included in ETER.

Main institutional characteristics. Legal status and the right to award a PhD

Universities (*Universitet*) are mostly public institutions and all of them have the right to award PhDs. In total, about 46% of all Swedish HEIs included in ETER are Universities and equivalent institutions. While also almost all University Colleges (*Högskola*) award PhDs within a specific disciplinary domain, only one of the University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts is PhD awarding.

¹https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/types-higher-education-institutions-80_en

Table 1 below provides a quantitative overview of the main institutional characteristics by HEI type. Universities (*Universitet*) are mostly public institutions and all of them have the right to award PhDs. In total, about 46% of all Swedish HEIs included in ETER are Universities and equivalent institutions. While also almost all University Colleges (*Högskola*) award PhDs within a specific disciplinary domain, only one of the University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts is PhD awarding.

Table 1. Institutional type and legal status by HEI type, 2019

Category		N	Public	Private government-dependent (independent higher education providers)	PhD awarding
University	Universitet	17	15	2	17
University College	Högskola	16	12	4	15
University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts	Konstnärliga Högskolor	4	4	0	1
Total		37	31	6	33

Note: Numbers reflect inclusion in ETER

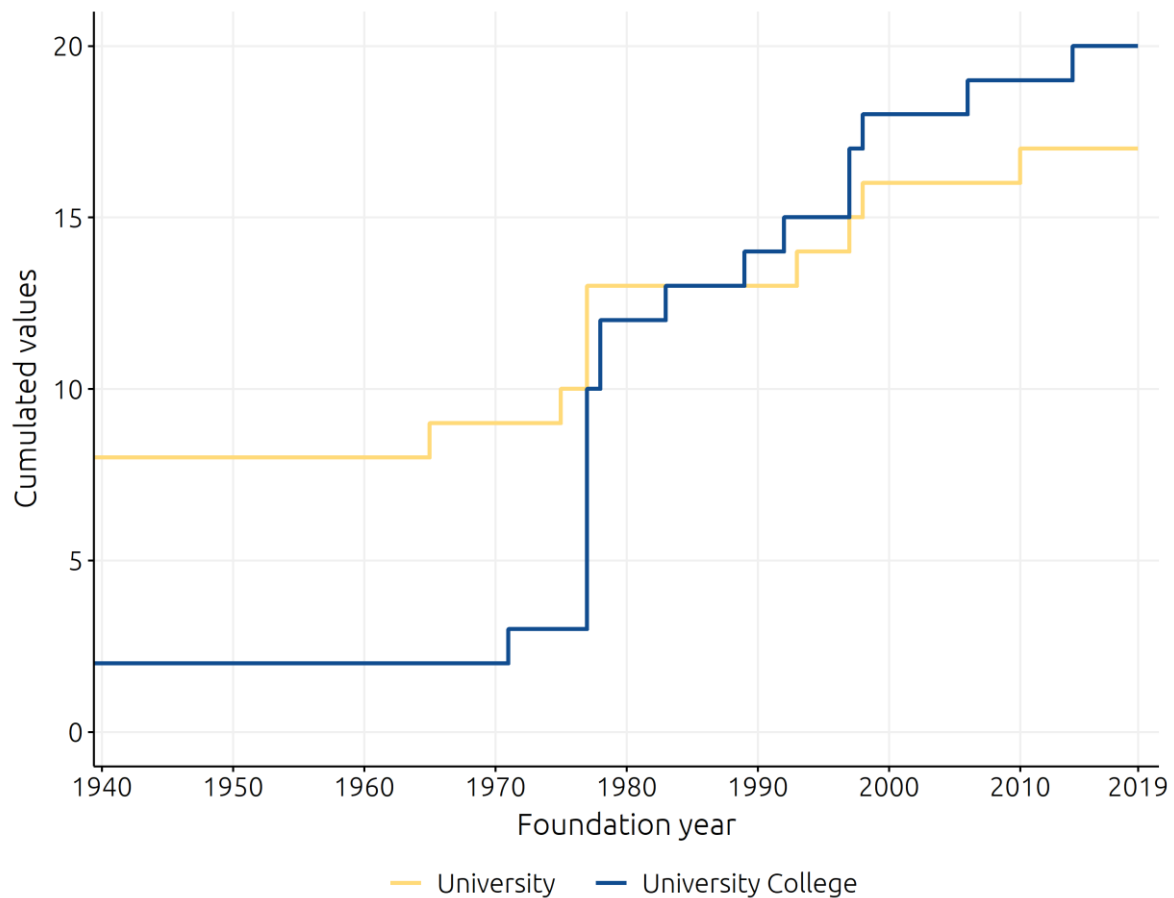
Institutional history. Older and younger institutional types

Data on the HEI foundation year provide information on the history of Sweden's higher education and its evolution over time.

Figure 1 overleaf shows that, despite ancient historical roots, the expansion of the system in terms of the number of HEIs is relatively recent. While the Uppsala University, the oldest Swedish university, dates back to 1477, followed by Lund University founded in 1666, only seven HEIs were founded before the 20th century, including five Universities and two University Colleges. Overall, however, Swedish HEIs are much younger; only ten of the HEIs were founded before 1965.

The figure shows distinct patterns of expansion. First, the number (and size) of Universities has increased steadily since the 1960s: half of the Swedish Universities were founded after 1960 with a peak of four foundations between 1975 and 1977 and a second period of expansion between 1993 and 1998 with another three University foundations. In parallel, the expansion of the number of University Colleges started in 1971, with a peak in 1977/78 with the foundation of 9 of today's 20 University Colleges within these two years. This expansion slowed down from 1999 onwards and the last foundation of an HEI displayed in 2014 in the figure was a merger and not a new establishment.

Figure 1. Foundation year of HEIs by type



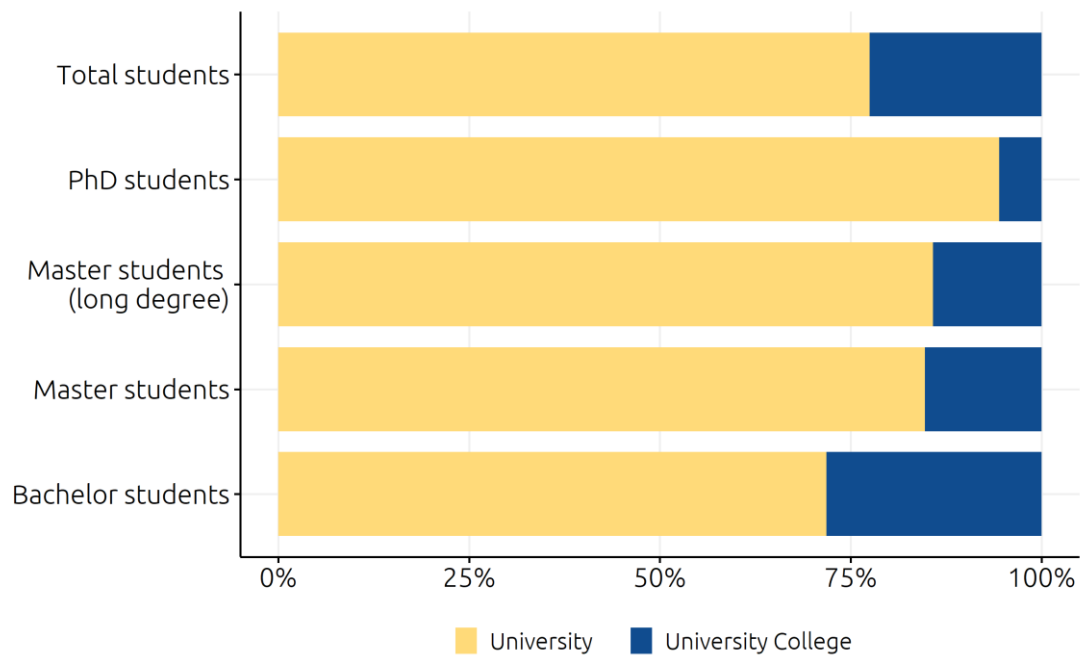
Note: University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts are included in University Colleges

How are students distributed?

In contrast to the number of institutions, in terms of the number of students enrolled, Universities still account for about 78% of all students and University Colleges (*Högskola*) for only 22% (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

According to different institutional mandates, we also observe systematic differences between educational levels: University Colleges account for 29% of the bachelor students and 15% of the master students, while doctorates are within the remit of Universities.

Figure 2. Students by level and type of HEI, 2019

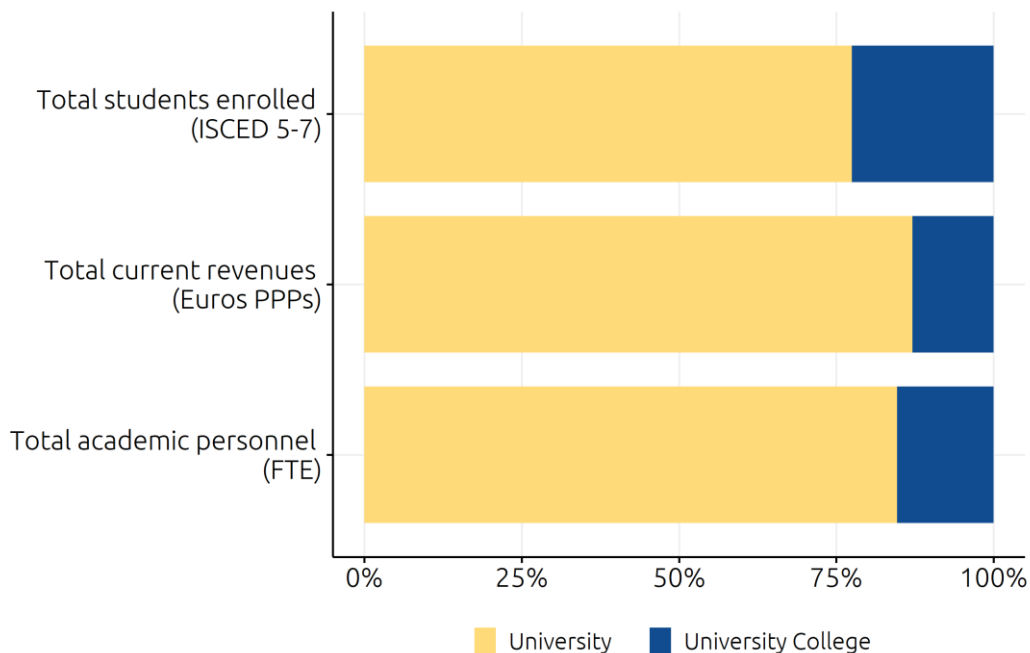


Note: University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts are included in University Colleges

Academic personnel and financial resources

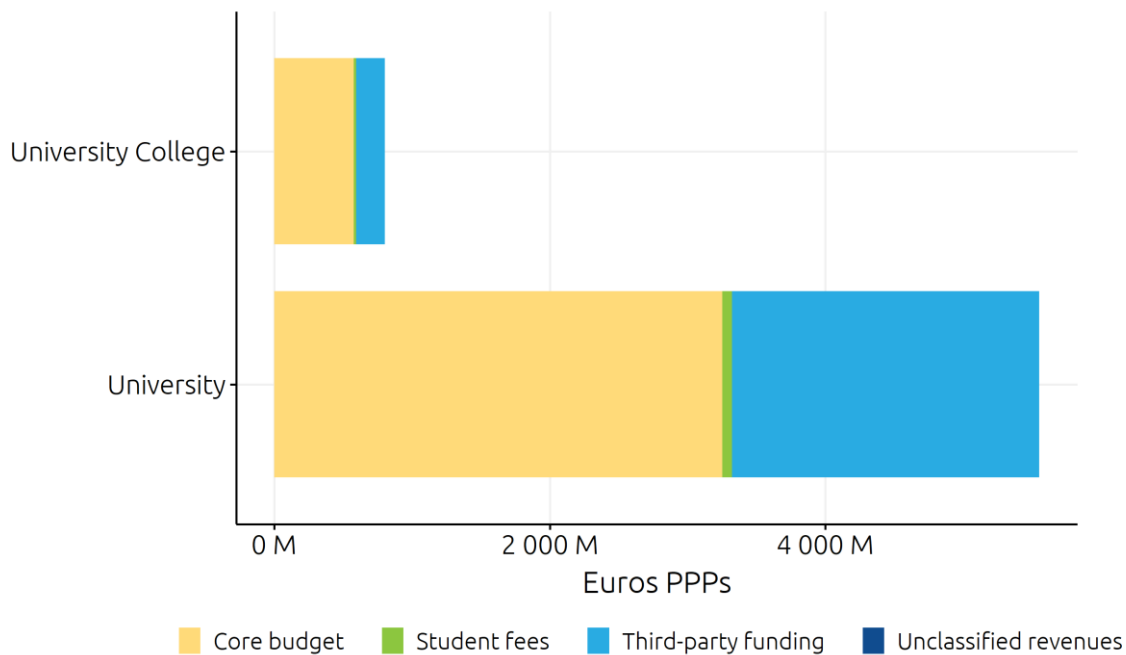
As illustrated in Figure 3, in the year 2019, Universities account for about 85% of financial revenues and academic personnel of the whole HEI system, i.e., substantially more than their share of students. This broadly corresponds to the fact that Universities also have an important research function and that the majority of the publicly funded R&D in Sweden takes place within HEIs. This difference is also reflected in the composition of revenues, where Universities receive a large proportion of revenues from (research-related) third-party funds. Overall, state allocation remains important for both institutional types in Sweden, while student fees play a minor role as only students from countries outside EEA have to pay such fees.

Figure 3. Resources, academic personnel and total students enrolled by type of HEI, 2019



Note: University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts are included in University Colleges

Figure 4. Composition of resources. Universities (Universitet) and University Colleges (Högskola)

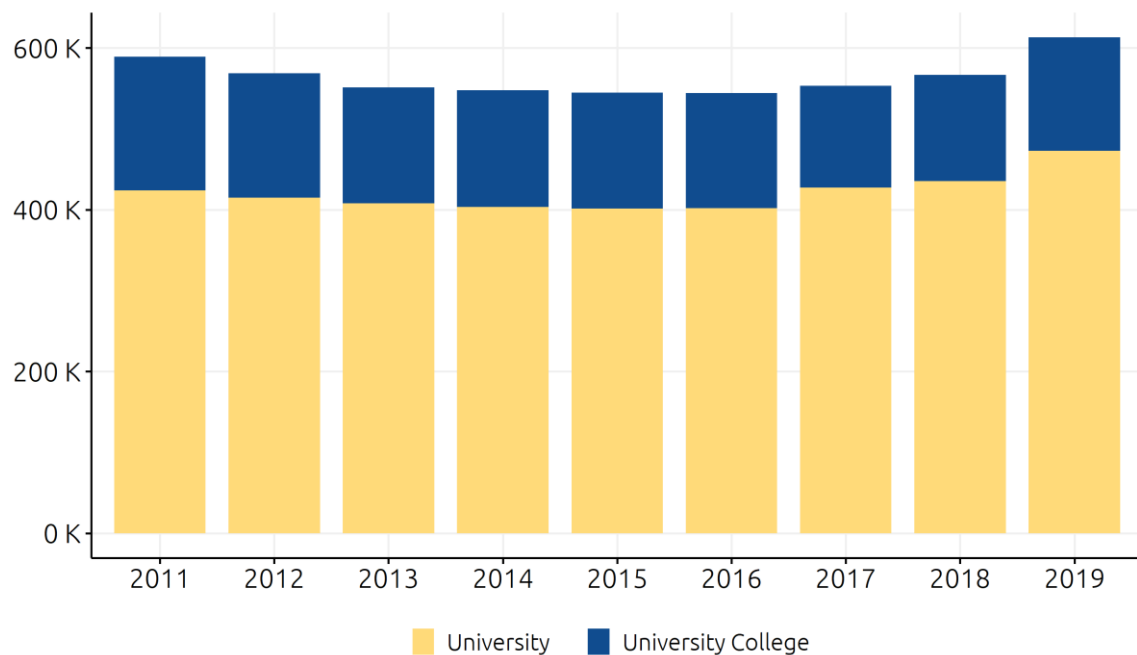


Note: University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts are included in University Colleges

Changing roles over time

When observed through the lens of the number of students, data show a rather stable pattern over the observed time period. A slight decrease of total students from 2011 until 2013, was followed by stable numbers of students from 2013 until 2016 and by an increase in the most recent year. While Universities accounted for 72% of all students already in 2011, this share further increased to 77% in 2019.

Figure 5. Share of students enrolled by institutional type



Note: University Colleges of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts are included in University Colleges



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