

The Insider's Guide to Recruiting International Talent

01

The Essential Basics

How to attract international talent and preparing for successful recruitment.

02

Welcoming, Onboarding and Settling in

From teaching the fine art of lagom to create a welcoming and inclusive workplace.

03

From First Day to Long Stay

Retain international talent and create conditions where people can build a life.

Hej!

Vi är Sverige – du, jag och tio miljoner andra människor i ett avlångt nordiskt land. I vårt professionella DNA samsas fikaraster och frihet under ansvar med avancerade välfärdslösningar och kreativa innovationsmiljöer.

I Sverige finns talang och kompetens, men den räcker inte alltid till. Ibland måste vi blicka utåt för att hitta rätt människor. Vi tror att det är därför du läser den här boken. Du vill ha inspiration och råd för att rekrytera utländsk talang till ditt företag.

Sverigebilden är stark. Vi är en nation med utrymme att växa. Ett land där frihet och öppenhet är självklart, ett land med stora möjligheter. Vi är ett modigt och tryggt land som är attraktivt för internationella talanger och kompetens.

Vi vill att du ska känna dig just så: modig och trygg. Att rekrytera internationell kompetens är inte så svårt och krångligt som många tror. Det är en gammal sanning.

Du behöver skaffa koll på vad som gäller och hur du kan hjälpa till med uppenbara saker som arbets- och uppehållstillstånd. Därtill blir onboardingprocessen viktig och omfattar till exempel the need to translate everything concerning your onboarding process from Swedish to English.

Sweden is an attractive option for many talents. This book contains advice and inspiration to make you feel confident and brave, just like Sweden, once you have decided to recruit international talent.

This is a guide for employers in Sweden. It provides you with the essential basics of how to recruit international talents as well as friendly reminders like how to teach the fine art of lagom, our culture of fika and the fact that everyone suddenly vanishes from Swedish offices at the end of June.

Lycka till!

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Helpful Links



Looking for the right information at the right time? These are your go-to resources when hiring international talent:

switchtosweden.se

Get help matching your company's competence needs with international talent – designed to connect Swedish employers with skilled graduates from Swedish universities.

verksamt.se

Sweden's official portal for entrepreneurs (Verksamt). Great for understanding the laws and regulations around starting and running a business – especially if you're employing international staff.

skatteverket.se

The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). This is where your new colleague will get their personal identity number (personnummer) or coordination number – both essential for getting paid, opening a bank account and registering to live in Sweden.

migrationsverket.se

The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket). Everything you need to know about necessary permits and requirements. The digital application process for work permits starts here.

arbetsformedlingen.se

The Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen). Offers support for international recruitment – including hiring within the EU/EEA through the EURES network.

tillvaxtverket.se

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket). Packed with practical guidance on skills supply, recruitment strategies, and how to build a stronger workforce.

eures.se

Your shortcut to hiring across the EU/EEA. EURES, run through Arbetsförmedlingen, helps you connect with talent across Europe – with tools and checklists to make it easier.

sweden.se/work

This site offers helpful information for international talent about working and living in Sweden – information that can be useful for you as an employer as well. A great link to share with your future colleagues!

jobbspranget.se

Jobbsprånget is a 4-month internship program that connects international academics with Swedish employers – a great way to build local experience and find new talent.



How to Recruit International Talent in Three Steps

1. Prepare Before You Recruit

Start by understanding why international talent is a smart move – to meet skill shortages, bring new perspectives, and grow your business. Learn the basics about permits, housing, banking and how to write a job ad that speaks across borders. Use trusted sources like Sweden's official portal for entrepreneurs (Verksamt), Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket), and The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). And don't forget: plan early and ask for help when needed – relocation partners and checklists are your best friends. Publish the job ad on The Swedish Employment Agency (Arbetsförmedlingen). This allows you to recruit from outside the EU and ensures your ad will appear in the Swedish Institute's upcoming job portal.

2. Welcome With Purpose

Recruitment doesn't end with a signed contract. It continues with onboarding. Create a warm, practical welcome with support for everything from the Tax Agency to the coffee machine. Teach the unspoken rules of Swedish workplaces and prepare your whole team, not just HR. Inclusion is a shared responsibility – and the small things matter.

3. Think Beyond the First Day

Long-term success depends on real integration – at work and beyond. Support language learning, help partners and families settle in, and understand your responsibilities when things change. Whether your talent is changing roles, relocating within Sweden, or considering their next step, show that you're in it for the long haul. When people feel welcome, they want to stay.

01

Attract International Talent and Prepare for Recruitment

Why Recruit International Talent?

According to the Swedish Institute, Sweden's nation brand is one of the strongest in the world – built on innovation, trust, democracy, sustainability and quality of life. This reputation makes Sweden an attractive destination for trade and investment as well as talent.

At the same time, skill shortages across many sectors mean that companies need to look beyond national borders. International talent doesn't just fill urgent gaps – they bring new perspectives, boost productivity and help businesses grow.

“International recruitment is absolutely possible – and it's not that hard if you have a clear plan in place. It's about being thoughtful, setting honest expectations about what life in Sweden is really like, and understanding that adaptation goes both ways. We're great at promoting Sweden as an idea – but success comes when we also explain the everyday culture, both at work and beyond.”

Carl-Johan Hamilton, owner and co-founder, ANTS

Are you unsure where to start? You're not alone – but you're in the right place. This guide will help you cut through the noise, skip the stress and recruit international talent with confidence.

Since rules and laws change rapidly every now and then we decided to focus on general inspiration and advice. To keep you updated on a detailed level, we are providing you with the links you need.

“Do you truly want international talent – or just the skills, without the international part? Because making it work takes effort from both sides. As an international in Sweden, I do my part – I learn the language, try to understand the workplace and the culture, how things function here. But companies need to meet us halfway. They need to be open, to show interest in where we’re coming from. Some employers do that really well, but others simply don’t have much experience working with international colleagues. So it’s a learning process for them too – and if they want it to work, openness is key.”

– One of the international talents graduating from Swedish universities

Five Good Reasons for Recruiting International Talent



By embracing international talent, you can address immediate staffing needs but also position your company for long-term success in an increasingly globalized market. Here are five good reasons to hire international talent.

1. Addressing Skill Shortages

Sweden faces skill shortages in various sectors, particularly in STEAM fields. Science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics that is. Recruiting from the global talent pool allows employers to fill these gaps with qualified professionals, ensuring business continuity and growth.

2. Access to New Markets and Cultural Insights

International employees can provide valuable insights into foreign markets. Their understanding of different cultures and languages can help companies tailor products and services to new audiences, facilitating smoother entry into diverse markets.

3. Boost in Productivity and Innovation

Hiring foreign experts can lead to significant productivity gains. The study, *Utländska experter och produktiviteten i svenska företag*, by Svenskt Näringsliv found that companies employing international specialists experienced a productivity increase of 6-11% within three to five years of hiring. These experts often bring unique skills and perspectives that drive innovation and efficiency.

4. Positive Spillover Effects on the Workforce

The benefits of hiring international talent extend beyond the individual. The same study observed that the presence of foreign experts led to wage increases of 1.5-2% for existing employees, indicating a positive impact on the broader workforce.

5. Driving Innovation and Enhancing Diversity

A diverse workforce encourages creativity and innovation. Employees from different backgrounds bring varied perspectives, leading to more comprehensive problem-solving and decision-making processes. This diversity can be a significant asset in developing innovative solutions and staying competitive.

Recruit International Talent Who Suits Your Company!

You can recruit pretty much any talent who suits the needs of your company. In order to make it as simple as possible we divided talent into four categories.

1. Talent Living Abroad

Exactly what it sounds like. Talent living abroad who have the skills you need as well as the readiness to relocate to Sweden.

2. Talent With Foreign Background Living in Sweden

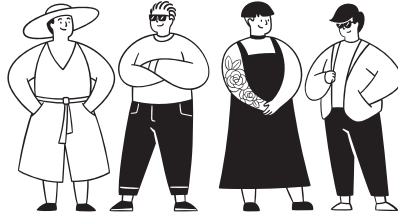
Students and researchers are a good example here, but the category also includes international talent who already work in Sweden.

3. Family of Talent

Spouses and partners of international talent working in Sweden. Most of the practical details, like accommodation may already be solved and they are often highly motivated to be part of a professional context.

4. Remote Work: When Talent Stays Abroad

Not all international hires need to relocate. It's possible to employ talent who live abroad to work for your company. Just keep in mind that tax, social security and employment laws in the talent's country may apply. Check with The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket), Sweden's official portal for entrepreneurs (Verksam), or a legal advisor before you proceed – remote setups can work very well, but they do require careful planning.



“Offer as many opportunities to students as you can – summer internships, part-time work, thesis projects. It’s a win-win. Students gain real experience, and companies benefit from their skills. Since we come from academia, we’re often more flexible and research-oriented. We can explore new ideas without it being risky for the company. That kind of collaboration helps everyone.”

– One of the international talents graduating from Swedish universities



Finding Talent with Research Skills – Even If You’re Not in R&D

You might think recruiting someone with a research background isn't relevant for your company – especially if you don't have an R&D department. Think again! A PhD isn't just an expert in microbiology or sensor technology – they're also highly skilled in data analysis, communication and long-term project management. If you're curious about how a research profile could strengthen your business, get in touch with EURAXESS Sweden – they help researchers and companies connect.

International Recruitment is Always Complicated and Time-Consuming? Well, That's an Outdated Truth!

Recruiting international talent doesn't have to be complicated – but getting things right from the start is essential. Your go-to resources are **Sweden's official portal for entrepreneurs (Verksamt)**, **The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket)** and the **Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket)**, where you'll find the most up-to-date information. Since rules change quickly, we share inspiration and links instead of listing any detailed process.

Hiring from the EU/EEA? No work permit needed. For non-EU talent, permits are mandatory but the process might actually be straightforward and easy – just make sure the job offer is in place, salary and conditions meet the requirements and union involvement is handled early.

“At the Swedish Migration Agency, we know that hiring international talent can be daunting. We take great pride in our role as experts here and we provide guidance and information for both individuals and employers. If you are willing to put some time into gaining an early overview of the process, it will help you to take the right steps from the start when applying for work and residence permits.”

Migrationsverket



Tip: Don't Miss EURES!

If you're recruiting from within Europe, make use of EURES – the European job mobility portal. Their website offers practical checklists, hints and guidance tailored to employers hiring across borders.



[Read more](#)

Questions on Swedish Life You Might Have to Answer During the Recruitment Process:

1. Safety, Security & Peace of Mind. Feeling safe means different things to different people. Some candidates may ask if it's safe to walk to work or what route is the most secure. Others may worry about child safety or the need to bring two phones in case of robbery. In Sweden, personal safety is high, childcare is affordable and public services like healthcare, schools, and even higher education are well regarded – often free or heavily subsidized. Make sure to communicate this clearly. It can be a real eye-opener – and a reason to say yes to Sweden.



Read more:

The Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan)

2. Be Transparent. The image of Sweden is the image of a strong nation with red cottages, deep forests and midnight sun. Don't be afraid to give an honest image of your part of Sweden, after all it is a stretched out northern strip of a country which brings great variety. The southern part of Sweden is rarely covered by a thick fairy-tale layer of snow from November to March and the summer in the north is stunningly bright but also short. And a Swedish town does not consist of tiny red cottages surrounded by deep forests filled with elk and reindeer. Share an honest picture of Sweden when you recruit.



Read more:

Sharing Sweden

3. The Flat Hierarchies and Consensus Culture of Swedish workplaces are quite the opposite of what many talent are used to. They come with the need to master the art of freedom within responsibility. Make sure you explain how it works and what is expected and prepare yourself to guide your foreign talent through some minor culture clashes when they arrive.



Rowing a boat on a lake under the midnight sun in Swedish Lapland.
Per Lundström/imagebank.sweden.se

Checklist: How to Write a Job Ad that Attracts International Talent

We made a list for you, use it as a check list or an inspiration to get you started.



Language & Clarity

- Write the ad in professional, accessible English.
- Avoid Swedish-specific terms like “prestigelös” or “driven” – use straightforward alternatives.
- Use simple, direct language – no insider jargon or overloaded lists.



Role & Requirements

- Clearly outline the main responsibilities.
- Highlight the must-haves, not a long list of “nice-to-haves”.
- Be transparent about whether Swedish is required – and why.



Location & Lifestyle

- Mention the city and region, especially if it's less known internationally.
- Many municipalities and regions offer ready-to-use texts linked to their place brand – free for businesses to use in recruitment and marketing. Take advantage!
- Briefly describe why it's a great place to live (e.g., family-friendly, close to nature, work-life balance). Don't forget the transparency!



Relocation & Support

- State if you offer relocation assistance (even informal guidance helps!).
- Mention support with permits, housing, or local orientation if available.



Culture & Inclusion

- Share a sentence about your team culture or values.
- Mention if the workplace or team is already international.
- Communicate your openness to diverse backgrounds.
- Mention the fika breaks as well as parental leave and other typical Swedish workplace features. Everything that Swedes take for granted might be a positive surprise for international talents.



Purpose & Impact

- Include something about the purpose behind the work – why it matters and what difference you make. This is often very important to global talents.
- If relevant, mention the innovation, sustainability, or global goals of your company.



Transparency

- Let applicants know about the recruitment timeline and next steps.
- Provide a contact person for questions – ideally someone who speaks English.



Internal Review

- Ask a non-native colleague or international employee to review the ad.



Do You Need Assistance?

- Relocation companies are professionals within this area.
- Authorities are often more helpful than you might think, give them a call!
- Don't forget to check whether your ad must be placed at Platsbanken as well.



Read more:
Sweden



Sweden is one of the world's most innovative and research-intensive nations.
Margareta Bloom Sandebäck/imagebank.sweden.se

Ensure Talent has the Right Skills and Verified Qualifications

Verifying qualifications, such as academic degrees or criminal background checks, often involves navigating unfamiliar systems in other countries. To avoid recruitment errors our advice is to work with trusted partners who specialize in international recruitment. A relocation company, for example, can help manage everything from document verification to settling-in support, making the process smoother for both you and your new colleague.

Bringing in experts early is a smart way to prevent costly delays and ensure that the person you're hiring really has the qualifications and clearances required for the role. It also signals professionalism and builds trust with the candidate – which is crucial when asking someone to move their life across borders.

Professional help with reading CVs as well as interviews is really valuable. It's a cost, but in the long run it will probably turn out to be worth it since it will help you avoid recruitment errors. Using AI-tools might also be a great help when doing your research as well as writing job ads and preparing for onboarding.

UHR, Universitets och högskolerådet, offers a helpful service to guide you in making fair and accurate assessments when hiring from abroad.



Read more:
UHR

Before You Roll Out the Smörgåsboard of Recruitment:

Get a Basic Understanding of Residence and Work Permits

When hiring someone from outside the EU/EEA, they may need a residence and work permit to take up employment in Sweden. The tricky part? You might not know their permit status until later in the process. It's smart to get a basic understanding of residence and work permits – before you start recruiting.

Understanding things like salary thresholds, conditions set by collective agreements (even if you're not formally bound by one), and the need for union involvement can save you time and avoid delays. You can't submit a permit application until a job offer is in place, but knowing what's expected in advance helps you plan better – and increases your chances of a successful hire. If you don't already have a contact with relevant trade unions, it's a good idea to establish one early. Late involvement can slow things down.

To meet The Swedish Migration Agency's (Migrationsverket) requirements, jobs must be advertised for at least 10 days in the EU/EEA and Switzerland. Roles filled only through networks or informal contacts are not eligible for work permits.

Be as informed as possible when it comes to work and residence permits, to make it possible for you to speed up the recruitment process.

A Quick Guide to Employment Contracts and LAS

In Sweden, employment is regulated by the Employment Protection Act – **LAS (Lagen om anställningsskydd)** – which outlines how employment relationships should be structured and terminated. The standard form is a **permanent (indefinite-term) contract**, though fixed-term contracts are allowed under certain conditions. If an employee has held consecutive fixed-term positions for more than 12 months over a five-year period, the role is automatically converted into a permanent position.

LAS applies to everyone employed in Sweden, including international talent.

There are some exceptions to the rule: roles like CEOs, consultants, and interns are not covered by Sweden's Employment Protection Act (LAS).

Even though verbal agreements are legally valid, it's highly recommended – and professionally expected – to have a **written employment contract**. A written contract is also a requirement if the employee needs to apply for a residence permit based on employment (work permit). This helps avoid misunderstandings and ensures both parties are clear on rights and obligations. Employment terms are often influenced by collective agreements, so even if you aren't formally bound by one, it's smart to be aware of the conditions they set.

In Sweden, health insurance typically refers to income protection during sick leave, not covering medical costs. Healthcare is publicly funded. As an employer, your obligations may include providing additional insurances through collective agreements. Clarifying the difference between Swedish health insurance and ordinary insurance with your international talent is key.

Checklist: Employment Basics when Recruiting International Talent

- ✓ **Use a Written Contract** – include all key terms like title, duties, salary, start date and working hours.
- ✓ **Clarify Contract Type** – permanent or fixed-term (with clear legal justification if it's the latter).
- ✓ **Understand LAS Rules** – especially regarding termination, notice periods and permanent conversion.
- ✓ **Check for Collective Agreements** – they might apply even if your company isn't formally tied to one.
- ✓ **Plan for Union Involvement** – contact relevant unions, fackförbund, early in the process.
- ✓ **Inform the Employee** – make sure your international talent understands their contract and rights under Swedish law.
- ✓ **Post the Job Publicly for at Least 10 Days** – to meet The Swedish Migration Agency's (Migrationsverket) requirements, jobs must be advertised for at least 10 days in the EU/EEA and Switzerland. Roles filled only through networks or informal contacts are not eligible for work permits.

Smart Support to Make Recruitment Smoother

Switch to Sweden - Get Matched With the Right Talent

Around 70% of open positions in Sweden are filled through personal networks. But international talent – like master's students and researchers – often don't have access to these networks. That's where **Switch to Sweden** comes in. This initiative connects global competence with local needs by helping skilled students and researchers meet the right employers. A simple and smart way to connect with international talent already in Sweden.

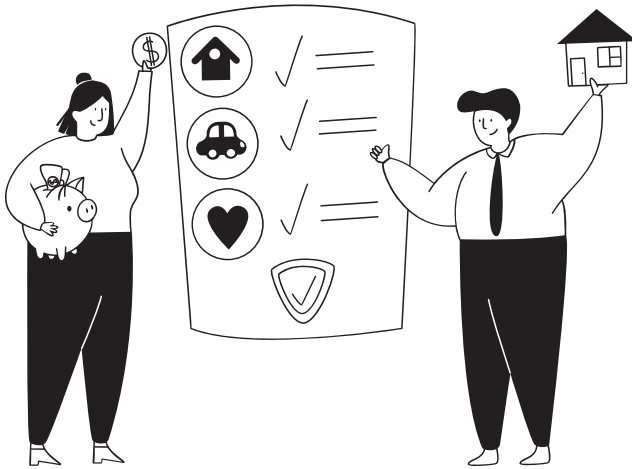
Relocation and Recruitment Companies

A relocation company offers services to make it easier for international talent to move – whether it's within Sweden or from another country to Sweden. Relocation typically includes several elements, such as moving logistics, finding somewhere to stay and immigration support. Getting help from a relocation company is a smart move – they're experts at handling the parts you might find complicated or time-consuming.

A Relocation Company Can Support You Throughout the Entire Recruitment Process.

They can assist with everything from writing job ads and reviewing international CVs to interpreting migration rules and finding housing. While their core expertise is relocation, many also help with coordination, mentorship and networking. They can even support you in assessing competence through work samples, case tasks or references – which can sometimes be more valuable than a traditional CV.

Housing, Banking & Social Insurance - Plan Early for a Smooth Start



When recruiting international talent, there are three practical essentials you'll want to plan for from the start: housing, banking and social insurance. These aren't just administrative details – they're critical in order to help your new colleague land on their feet and feel supported.

Housing

Finding a place to live in Sweden can be tricky, especially in larger cities where the rental market is tight. Many people begin with sublets, and long-term rentals often come with long waiting lists. As an employer, you don't need to solve the housing market – but to offer advice and explain the Swedish way of renting, municipal queues and buying a home can make a huge difference.

Bank Account

To get paid, your new colleague will need a Swedish bank account – and to open one, they'll usually need a coordination number (samordningsnummer) or a Swedish personal identity number (personnummer), both are obtained through registration with the The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). Sometimes, opening a bank account is a process that can take a bit of time. Offer support with everything from booking appointments to documents as well as how to navigate the necessary steps.



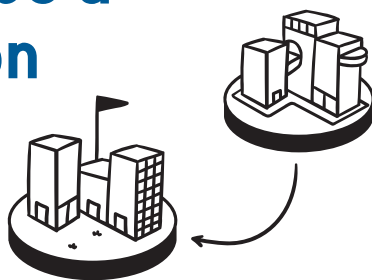
Read more:

The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket)

Social Insurance

Once your talent is working or living in Sweden, they should register with The Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan). This gives them access to important benefits like sick pay, parental leave, and pension rights. Some employees may not know this is a separate step – giving them a heads-up is a small gesture that goes a long way. In short: A bit of forward-thinking and a few practical tips from professionals can prevent this from taking too long. Support with the everyday stuff is a key part of creating a smooth start.

Relocating to Sweden Might be a Family Decision



When international talent considers relocating to Sweden, it's often a family decision. As an employer, recognizing and facilitating the needs of accompanying partners and family members is crucial for a smooth transition and successful integration and in the long term: retention (we'll get back to that later on). Here's what you need to consider to support partners and families in the relocation process.

Residence Permits for Family Members

Family members, such as spouses, registered partners, cohabiting partners and children under 18, can apply for residence permits to join the employee in Sweden. The application can be submitted simultaneously with the employee's work permit application or afterwards. It's important to note that the employee in Sweden must meet a maintenance requirement, demonstrating sufficient income to support themselves and their family, and provide suitable housing. Keep in mind that when children turn 18 or in some cases 21, they must apply for new residence and work permits.



Read more:
The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket)

Population Registration and Personal Identity Numbers

Upon arrival, both the employee and accompanying family members should visit a Swedish state service centre for an identity check. This step is essential for registering in the Swedish Population Register, which is necessary to obtain a personal identity number (personnummer). This number is crucial for accessing various services in Sweden, including healthcare, banking and education.

Access to Social Services

Once registered, family members are entitled to access Sweden's comprehensive social services, such as healthcare and education. Children can enroll in local schools, and spouses or partners may seek employment or educational opportunities, depending on their residence permit conditions.

Your Role in Supporting Families

Employers can play a significant role in easing the transition for accompanying families by:

- Providing information about the application processes for residence permits and population registration.
- Assisting in finding suitable housing that accommodates the entire family.
- Offering support or resources for partners seeking employment or educational opportunities in Sweden.
- Facilitating connections with local communities or networks to help families integrate socially.

A power of attorney may be required in some of the situations described above.

By proactively addressing the needs of accompanying partners and families, employers not only support the well-being of their international employees but also enhance the overall success and retention of global talent within their organizations. You can read more about local initiatives that support talent on page 72.

Checklist: Before Arriving in Sweden

Moving to Sweden involves several important steps to ensure a smooth transition. Here's what your international talent should arrange before arriving:

Essential Documents & Registration

- ✓ **Secure a Residence and/or Work Permit**
Ensure all necessary permits are approved before departure.
- ✓ **Register With The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket)**
Upon arrival, register to obtain a personal identity number (personnummer), which is crucial for accessing services like healthcare and banking.
- ✓ **Apply for a Swedish ID Card**
After receiving the personnummer, apply for an ID card to facilitate identification in various situations.

Housing

- ✓ **Search for Accommodation**
Begin looking for housing early, especially in larger cities where demand is high. Consider registering in municipal housing queues.

Banking

- ✓ **Open a Swedish Bank Account**
With your personnummer and ID card, set up a bank account to manage finances and receive salary payments.

Language & Integration



Prepare to Learn Swedish

A Swedish beginner's class at university or investing in a course aimed at professionals often hold higher standards than Swedish for Immigrants (SFI).



Read more:
Study in Sweden

Healthcare



Register With a Local Health Center

After obtaining a personnummer, your talent should choose and register with a healthcare provider to access medical services.

Education for Children



Apply for Preschool or School Placements

Your new colleague needs to contact the local municipality to enroll children in appropriate educational institutions.

Driving



Check Driving License Requirements

Find out if a current driving license is valid in Sweden. Otherwise, there's a need for your international talent to apply for a Swedish one.



Don't Forget to send your new international colleague a copy of The Insider's Guide to Moving and Living in Sweden. It's written specifically for international talent who want to move to or stay in Sweden. It contains valuable information on everything from Sweden essentials to Swedish history, culture and everyday life.

Two Smart Moves That Make International Recruitment Smoother

There are two things that will help you avoid unnecessary complications and cold showers when hiring and relocating international talent:

1. Start Early with the Basics.

Delays can hit hard if you haven't done your homework. Even if you already understand the basics of running a business in Sweden, you'll also need a general understanding of immigration law and administrative processes. Knowing what's expected from the start can help you avoid unpleasant surprises later on.

2. Pay Attention to the Details – They Can Affect the Entire Process.

Keeping a clear thread throughout the application process is essential. How you advertise the position and classify the role (e.g., using SSYK and SNI codes) should align with how you draft the employment contract and submit the application to The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket). You may also need to show when your collective agreement was signed or consider how the candidate's migration history could impact the process. If you'd rather not dive into all the details yourself, consider getting help from an expert – it can reduce the risk of unnecessary mistakes and delays.



Read more:
The Swedish Institute

“Sweden is known for its strong workers’ rights and for being home to some of the world’s happiest people. One of the reasons I want to be here is to understand how a society can create that kind of culture – where work-life balance is real, people are genuinely happy, and no one is left behind. That’s what I want to learn from and experience in Sweden.”

Common Challenges and How to Handle Them with Confidence

Every recruitment process is unique, no matter if you're recruiting a Swedish colleague or if you are hiring across borders. With the right mindset – and a little preparation – most challenges are easy to navigate.

1. Migration processes can feel complex – but they're manageable.

The key is to ensure applications are complete and accurate from the start. Most issues come from missing or incorrect documents, or from permit holders switching roles without understanding the implications. A little extra attention early on can save a lot of time later.

2. Sometimes expectations and reality don't quite match.

Sweden is great at telling the story of red cottages and equality – but the practical details matter too. Be honest and transparent about what life really looks like in your town or workplace. Talk openly about housing, schools and what opportunities exist for accompanying family members. It builds trust from day one.

3. Responsibility can feel unclear – make a plan.

Who arranges what? What's the employer's role, and what does the employee handle? And when should a relocation partner be brought in? These are important questions – and the answers will vary. Get aligned early, communicate clearly, and remember: a shared plan means less stress for everyone.



A Small Mistake on a Form Won't Stop Your Recruitment

In many countries, a small mistake on a form can stop everything. In Sweden, things are more forgiving. If something goes wrong, there's usually a way to correct it. Still, it's important to acknowledge that fear of making mistakes is real, and not just for international talent.

Employers, too, often worry about doing something wrong that could affect a person's permit or right to stay. Having to correct a mistake or to send additional documents might prolong the handling time, but it will not affect the final outcome if you fulfill the requirements. So take a breath. Read up on changes that might apply. Double-check the details. And know that mistakes can usually be sorted out.

National security is protected - you don't have to worry about that at all

Don't worry – Sweden has a system in place to protect national security. You won't necessarily notice this in the process, but knowing it happens might give you some extra peace of mind.

“International recruitment isn’t just about finding the right skills – it’s about welcoming people. When we open the door to a job, we also need to open the door to life here. It’s not only about them learning our culture – we have just as much to gain by embracing theirs. That’s when it truly works – for them, for us, and for the culture we create together.”

Therese Hansson-Rosenqvist, CEO Sylog Väst

Reflect With and Prepare Your Team



Prepare your team before your new international colleague arrives. Remind them that what is perfectly normal in a Swedish workplace might not be obvious to an international colleague.

Things like consensus-driven decision-making, flat hierarchies and freedom with responsibility can be confusing without context as well as the habit of taking your shoes off indoors, the near-total absence of cash or the sacred daily fika break. Dedicate a fika break to reflect over what unwritten rules might apply at your company. A little lagom awareness goes a long way in helping someone feel welcome.

You can read more in the forthcoming chapter.

02

When Your International Colleague Arrives

What Makes a Good First Day, Week and Month?

A Meaningful Introduction Goes Beyond Onboarding Checklists.

When welcoming an international talent, don't just prepare HR – prepare the whole organization. Make the arrival memorable: pick them up, stock the fridge, offer a proper Swedish fika and take time to connect.

Practical support is just as important. Help with registration at the Tax Agency, opening a bank account, getting insurance, understanding local transport and finding the nearest grocery store can make a huge difference – especially if a process takes time or when local knowledge is needed.

Give your new colleague a complete contact list to everyone in your team and be available. Human connection is powerful and successful. Onboarding is not just about sharing information and to start working together, it's about building relationships and community.

A welcome dinner can be more than just a nice gesture – it's a smart way to build connections from day one. You might get some inspiration from Sylog who invites their new international colleagues out for dinner with someone who's already made the move to Sweden. It's not just about good food – it's about real talk, shared experience and a chance to ask the questions that never make it into an onboarding binder.

You can also pair newcomers with a “settled-in” colleague for a casual lunch during the first week – just to talk, compare stories and start building trust. Simple? Yes. But it makes a difference.



Assign a Workplace Buddy who Can be an Onboarding Guide and Mentor to Your New Colleague.

Having someone whose role is to make sure the new team member feels welcome can make a huge difference. A mentor spends a little extra time and effort to help your new talent navigate the workplace, culture and feel at home.

Bank Holidays, Fettisdagen and Fössta Tossdan i Mass

Don't forget to include cultural awareness in your onboarding. Bank holidays and festive occasions and how they affect working hours. Make sure to mention the fika hype when it comes to Fettisdagen and Fössta tossdan i mass as well as Kanelbullens dag and Kladdkakans dag.

Checklist: How to Make Arrival Feel Like a Welcome

Moving to Sweden involves several important steps to ensure a smooth transition. Here's what your international talent should arrange before arriving:

Before Arrival

- ✓ **Learn About Their Country of Origin** – build basic knowledge about culture, norms, and practicalities.
- ✓ **Prepare Your Whole Team** – not just HR. Everyone should be ready to welcome a new colleague.
- ✓ **Start the Conversation Early** – increase communication before they arrive, follow up often and answer questions proactively.
- ✓ **Offer Practical Advice** – for example, inform your talent not to bring large amounts of cash since Swedish banks may not accept it.

Arrival Day

- ✓ **Be Present** – those first hours matter. Share your time, not just information.
- ✓ **Create a Warm Welcome With Small Gestures** that make a difference. Meet your new colleague at the airport or make sure the fridge is stocked with a few local specialties for example.

First Days & Settling In

- ✓ **Help With the Basics** – provide a bus pass, explain where the nearest grocery store is and offer practical tips about everyday life.
- ✓ **Support the Paperwork** – assist with registering at The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket), getting a personal ID number, opening a bank account and setting up insurance.
- ✓ **Offer a Point of Contact** – provide phone numbers and email addresses for the whole team and encourage your talent to call if they need anything.
- ✓ **Go With Them on Day One** – accompany your new colleague to their office, worksite or client. Just showing up together makes a difference.
- ✓ **Assign an Onboarding Guide/Mentor to Your New Colleague.**

Creating Belonging & Community

- ✓ **Plan a Welcome Dinner** – invite colleagues, especially others from the same country if possible, to share experiences.
- ✓ **Organize Informal Activities** – lunches, casual meetups, or even celebrating Midsummer together.
- ✓ **Be Available for All the Questions** – big or small like broadband, home insurance or any case “how does this thing work?”
- ✓ **Remember: Things Take Time** – setting up a bank account or insurance can take weeks or even months. Your new talent needs support to bridge that gap.



Help Your Talent Build Confidence in Navigating Things on Their Own.

Make sure your new colleagues understand that freedom within responsibility and flatter hierarchies at a workplace comes with the responsibility to find out things by own initiative.

“I believe that because of the flatter hierarchies at the workplace in Sweden, you have more freedom to shape your own path of how you would like to develop but will also need to take more initiative to pursue it. It really helps to be aware of and enjoy this, as it is both a great opportunity, but can also be frustrating if you rely too much on receiving directions from others”

Tabea Schroth, International talent working in Sweden.

Culture Awareness – an Important Aspect of Your Onboarding Process

Integration is a Two-Way Street

As an employer, you have a big and important responsibility when it comes to offering a warm welcome and ensuring a smooth onboarding process. However, your new talent also has a significant role to play since integration is a two-way street. It helps when your new colleague is open, curious and willing to take initiative. Explain to your new colleague that this is the first connection with freedom within responsibility – things tend to go more smoothly when someone moving to Sweden is actively engaged.

You might even take inspiration from the tourism industry. There, hospitality, värdskap, is a key focus – but even the best of hospitality relies on the visitor being part of the experience. It's a shared responsibility.

“It's easy to say “welcome” – but it's only when everyday life begins that the real work truly starts. Real integration isn't about smiling at the door; it's about opening up the whole home – and doing it with heart.

Here in Boden, we've had the privilege of witnessing something truly special: a quiet, genuine hospitality that grows naturally. Neighbours clearing snow from each other's driveways, spontaneous chats over coffee, new families being invited into local clubs, teams, and everyday community life.

This spirit – this deep, instinctive kindness – lives in the people of Boden. But we also know it's something we have to nurture and protect, together. If we don't, our words of welcome risk becoming just that – words.”

Jens Andersson, Chief Communication Officer Bodens kommun

Introduce International Talent to Swedish Leadership

Swedish leadership may initially raise eyebrows among international talent – and depending on where your new colleague comes from, a crash course on how things work here might be needed.

It often starts with something as simple as names: in Sweden, we don't use titles, and everyone is addressed by their first name – even senior managers. For someone from a different cultural background, calling a high-ranking executive by their first name can feel strange or even uncomfortable. On top of that, Swedish workplaces are typically characterized by a **flat hierarchy**, with a strong focus on **diversity and gender equality**.

Add the concept of Swedish consensus driven workplaces and the unwritten agendas of freedom within responsibility – and you have enough conversational topics for an extended fika break with at least seven types of cookies.



How to Create an Inclusive and Welcoming Workplace



Let's start with a few tips to help you create a workplace that's truly ready to welcome and onboard an international talent. Forget lagom for a while, this needs a lot of work. However - it will probably be memorable both for your international talent as well as your Swedish colleagues.

Before Onboarding

- **Translate all onboarding materials** – make sure your welcome guides, policies and instructions are available in English.
- **Make inclusion everyone's job** – help your team understand that hospitality and inclusion are shared responsibilities.
- **Assign an onboarding guide or mentor** – a workplace buddy dedicated to helping your new talent settle in, ask questions and feel supported.
- **Learn about your new colleague's culture** – even a little background knowledge makes a big difference, and that applies to everyone in your company.
- **Send a copy of the Insider's Guide to Moving and Living in Sweden** to your new colleague.

The First Weeks

- **Explain the unwritten rules** – things like “we always eat out on Tuesdays” or “everyone hits the gym on Thursdays” matter more than you think.
- **Plan a proper welcome fika** – If there was ever a time for seven kinds of cookies, it's now!
- **Don't forget to teach the fine art of lagom** – explain the Swedish concept of “just enough” and how it shows up in everyday work life.
- **Organize a Swedish-style after work** – whether it's prawn sandwiches and Norrlands Guld at your local pub or an outdoorsy evening around the fireplace with hot dogs, make it social and low-pressure.
- **Don't forget to get your remote workers involved!**

Introduce Your Talent to Swedish Culture, Religion and Bank Holidays

It's a good idea to explain how religion and holidays work in Sweden.

Even though Sweden is relatively secular, most people celebrate the major Christian holidays in one way or another. We also have our Swedish traditions like Midsummer and kräftskiva (crayfish party). Be sure to explain how public holidays (röda dagar) work – and whether you have the tradition of leaving work early the day before a public holiday.

It's also helpful to share some context about religion in Sweden. Some regions have a strong church presence, while others are very secular. It might be useful for your new colleague to know both how religion is generally viewed in Sweden and where they might find a local version of their own faith community.

Join the Club - Fast Forward Integration

Anyone is free to join most clubs and associations and the tradition of föreningsliv is an important part of the Swedish lifestyle. Help your new colleagues to find the associations and clubs that suit their sports, interests and hobbies – it's an easy way to start integration into Swedish society no matter if you join Friluftsrörelsen or the local gym.



"Små grodorna" is a playful Swedish dance traditionally performed during Midsummer celebrations.
[Plattform/Johnér/imagebank.sweden.se](https://plattform.johnér/imagebank.sweden.se)

The Swedish Silence

If your new colleague comes from a culture where conversation is constant and silence signals discomfort, Sweden might take them by surprise. Silence here isn't awkward – it's a form of respect. In meetings, it gives people time to think. In social settings, it leaves room to breathe. Swedes tend to speak when they have something to say, not just to fill the air. This can be misread as disinterest, when in fact it's the opposite: space is offered as a sign of trust. It might help to explain this early on – that a quiet colleague isn't ignoring them, and that a pause in conversation isn't a problem that needs fixing. In Sweden, silence is often a part of the rhythm.



Encourage your New Colleague to Learn Swedish

Even though most Swedes are more than happy to speak English – and are impressively fluent – it's still a good idea to encourage your international talent to learn Swedish.

Language is more than just a tool for communication; it's a door into the culture, the workplace and everyday life. It makes it easier to understand context, join in on small talk and feel truly included. It also helps with practical matters like reading letters from authorities, navigating healthcare or helping a child with schoolwork.

Learning Swedish isn't just a nice-to-have; it's deeply connected to belonging, independence, and participation in everyday life.

Support your new colleague by helping them enroll in a language course. You might encourage them to enroll in a university language class or buy a course aimed specifically at professionals to ensure high quality of education. Encourage a workplace culture where people are patient, inclusive, and positive about language learning. It takes time – but it's worth it.

Teaching Freedom Within Responsibility

The idea of **freedom within responsibility** is deeply rooted in Swedish work culture – almost as much as Allemansrätten, the right to roam freely in nature. You could think of it as the workplace version of Allemansrätten; you're trusted to find your own way, but expected to respect the boundaries and take care of your surroundings as well as your tasks.

For international colleagues who come from more directive environments, this can feel confusing – or even frustrating. The lack of constant check-ins or detailed instructions doesn't mean no one cares; it means you're trusted to take initiative. Help your new team member by explaining how this works and what's expected.

Let your international talent know that asking for help or guidance isn't a sign of failure – quite the contrary, it's expected and seen as a perfectly normal part of any process.



Oh, and by the way

Don't forget a crash course in Allemansrätten while you're at it!

Holidays, VAB and Parental Leave – News to International Colleagues



In Sweden, semester means vacation – not university term. It might come as a big surprise to your international talent that full-time employees are entitled to at least **25 paid vacation days per year**, and that taking several weeks off in a row during summer is completely normal. Most workplaces slow down or even shut down in July, and it's perfectly acceptable – expected, even – to disconnect completely. No one checks their email from the hammock.

Another important part of the Swedish workplace DNA is parental leave and the opportunity to combine career and kids. We take it for granted but your international talent might be surprised once more, this time by the generosity of our system. They might also be surprised to find out that parents can stay at home getting paid from Försäkringskassan while their children are sick. And that the father might be the one caring for sick children as well as their mother.

Help your new colleague to understand the rules and how they apply. Be a little extra supportive at the start.

Assign your New Colleague a Workplace Buddy

Assigning a mentor or a workplace buddy to a new international colleague can make a big difference – but for it to really work, the role needs more than just good intentions. Here are a few ideas to help make the buddy system a success:

Choose someone approachable and genuinely interested.

A good mentor is curious, patient and open to cultural differences. Ideally, they've worked with international colleagues before – or are eager to learn.

Make the expectations clear.

This isn't about managing tasks. The workplace buddy should be a go-to person for everyday questions: workplace culture, how the coffee machine works, where to find lunch and what “lagom” really means.

Schedule regular check-ins.

Encourage the buddy to set up short, informal catch-ups during the first few weeks. This helps new talent feel supported without having to ask for help.



Share the unwritten rules.

Things like: “We eat lunch at 11:30,” “Everyone brings cake on their birthday,” or “We don’t book meetings on Friday afternoons.” These details matter more than you think.

Make space for the social stuff.

The work place buddy is someone who invites your new colleague to lunch, after-work events or casual chats – especially during the first month, when everything is still unfamiliar.

Be a bridge – not a fixer.

The goal isn’t to solve every problem, but to be a supportive first point of contact and help the new colleague feel like part of the team.

Fika is not a Luxury, it's How Things get Done



Tiofika, elvakaffe, eftermiddagskaffe. We return to the habit of having a cup of coffee or tea and something sweet to go with it on a scheduled basis.

Make sure your international colleague understands that company fika break isn't a luxury – it's part of how Swedish workplaces function. It's where relationships are built, ideas are tested, and people stay connected with what's happening in the team.

Fika is inclusion. Fika is integration.

**Fika is how
things get
done – one
cinnamon
bun at a time.**

Teaching the Fine Art of Lagom

Introducing your international colleague to the concept of lagom isn't just about explaining a quirky Swedish word – it's about setting them up for long-term success in your workplace.

Lagom shapes how Swedes collaborate, make decisions, take breaks, speak up in meetings, and balance work with life. Without understanding this cultural rhythm, a new employee might mistake Swedish calm for lack of urgency, or confuse consensus-driven decisions with indecisiveness. Teaching **lagom** helps your new team member read the room, find their place and contribute in a way that aligns with your company culture.

Help your international talent understand that in Sweden, doing things **lagom** doesn't mean doing less – it means doing things thoughtfully, with room for others. It's not mediocrity. It's harmony. It's not about asking them to become Swedish – it's about giving them the tools to understand what's going on around them.

Understanding lagom helps your new colleague navigate the balance-driven, quietly collaborative rhythm of Swedish workplaces.

Who's Responsible for Keeping Permits in Order?

Stay on Top of Permits – Avoid Unwanted Surprises

Once a work and residence permit has been granted, The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket) steps back – there's no ongoing monitoring. However, the permit must be used: the individual needs to enter Sweden within four months of approval. The permit remains valid until its expiration date, and it is **the responsibility of both the employee and the employer** to keep track of when it's time to renew.

If the permit lapses without a new application being submitted in time, it can lead to serious complications – including difficulties obtaining future permits. There are no criminal consequences for missing a deadline, but the administrative setbacks can be significant. In some cases, reminders are sent by the authorities, but not always – the system isn't fully automated. It's up to you and your employee to stay informed and act in time.

Make sure your international talent has a valid **passport** and that all documents related to their **residence and work permit based on employment** are in order.

Swedish Office Life:

10 Things That Might Confuse Your International Colleague

1. The Unwritten Fika Law

It's not officially in any contract, but skipping fika? Social suicide. Make sure your new colleague expects at least one shared coffee break a day – with pastries, awkward silence, or both.

2. Everyone's on a First-Name Basis – Even the CEO

Yes, you just emailed “Anna” and she's the CFO. That's totally normal. Titles are left at the door. Swedes are fans of flat hierarchies – and flat shoes.

3. Shoes Off, Slippers On?

Shoes by the way: some offices have a no-shoes policy. You might spot indoor sneakers or stylish wool slippers under desks. Perfectly normal to Swedish colleagues but it might seem as very strange behaviour to international recruits.

4. Quiet. So Much Quiet.

Open floorplan office, 20 people, and the loudest sound is someone typing. Swedes take workplace silence to Olympic levels. (And no, it doesn't mean we're angry.)

5. Lagom Everything

Not too much, not too little – just right. That's the unofficial rule for everything: ambition, lunch portions, enthusiasm, even emails. Caps lock? Aggressive.



6. Long Vacations...That Actually Happens

Yes, we really do take at least four weeks off in July. No, we're not answering emails. And yes, your calendar will look like a ghost town. Teach your new colleague the rules of semesterschema!

7. Team-Building Through Nature and Awkward Singing

You might find yourself hiking with your colleagues or singing traditional songs while eating crayfish in a paper hat. No one fully knows why, don't forget to teach your new colleagues the basics of paper hats and hot dogs.

8. Passive-Aggressive Dishwasher Notes

Someone will eventually write a laminated note about how "mugs don't walk themselves into the machine." It's part of Swedish tradition.

9. "Lunch at 11:30?"

Yes, it sounds early. International talent might think we're joking. However, a Swedish lunch break may start early, end fast and involve very quiet chewing.

10. The Mysterious Lunchbox Fridge Politics

We don't take someone else's lunch box. We just don't. Also: prepare your new colleague for mysterious labeled jars and one colleague's pickled herring - and try to balance that with the need to be careful with fish in the microwave oven.

03

03 From First Day to Long Stay

Retaining International Talent



Kayaking in Trosa archipelago in Södermanland.
Anna Hållams/imagebank.sweden.se

Retention Starts With Real Integration

Let's be clear: not every international talent is looking to stay in one job forever – and that's perfectly normal. But if your company invests in inclusion, support and long-term development, the chances of people wanting to stay with you grow significantly.

The key? Create the conditions where people can build a life – not just fill a role. That includes helping them learn the language, supporting their social integration, and being patient with the learning curve. Even if language is a barrier at first, motivation and willingness often make the difference. People thrive when they feel trusted, welcomed and seen not just as a resource, but as a colleague with potential.

Think of retention as part of a bigger journey – one that includes onboarding, career development, community-building and everyday encouragement. If your networks are open, your leadership is visible, and your feedback is continuous, your international employees are far more likely to stay – and grow.



Don't Forget

If you promote an international employee, the permit process often needs to be updated – it's not automatic!

It Takes More Than a Job: Why Partners and Family Matter in Retention

Helping international talent feel at home isn't just about offering a good job – it's about making sure life outside of work works, too. Companies that succeed in long-term retention often invest early, especially in the first six months. That might mean regular check-ins that go beyond tasks – asking how things are going socially and personally. Some companies assign Swedish mentors (not from the same country) to help with both cultural integration and day-to-day questions. Informal mentorship is great, but formalizing the role makes sure no one stumbles and falls between any Swedish chairs.

Supporting language learning is another key factor. Encourage your talent to take Swedish seriously – and make it easier for them to do so. Some employers bring in language teachers to the office weekly, in addition to encouraging participation in SFI.

Reading, writing, discussing films and even casual conversations in Swedish help speed up both integration and confidence. And don't forget the importance of community: running clubs, team sports, shared lunches and social events give international talent – and their families – something to belong to. There are great organisations out there that offer hands-on support with everything from finding a place to live and navigating healthcare, to settling into daily life and making social connections. The best part? Your talent's partner and family members can get support too – whether it's finding local networks, activities for the kids, or even exploring career opportunities of their own. Integration works best when everyone feels at home. It's simple: when families thrive, people stay.



Read more:
The Mitt Livs Chans Mentoring Program

Local Support in Action: Helping International Talent Settle In

When international talent arrives, they're not just stepping into a new job – they're stepping into a new life. That's why the support available at a local and regional level can make all the difference, especially when it comes to integration and making the whole family feel at home.

Across Sweden, municipalities, regions, universities, science parks, business networks, and civil society often work together to form a kind of support ecosystem. It's rarely one single actor, but a shared effort – and the result can be incredibly valuable for both employer and employee.

This local collaboration often includes help with:

- **Finding housing**
(including temporary solutions and queue registrations)
- **Language learning**
(workplace language support or tailored courses)
- **Partner support**
(career guidance, volunteering, mentorship)
- **Children's education and preschool enrollment**
- **Community networks**
(clubs, associations, meetups and cultural introductions)

Some regions even offer structured relocation programs or welcome coordinators who guide newcomers through the basics of Swedish systems, help answer practical questions and connect people to networks.

As an employer, get to know what your local area offers – and tap into it. It not only eases your new hire's transition, it shows you care about the whole picture – not just the job description.

Local Initiatives That Support Talent

Welcome House Skellefteå

Skellefteå offers newcomers personalized guidance through Welcome House – covering everything from practical relocation support to community integration and life in northern Sweden.

Uppsala International Hub

Offers tips for making your move to Uppsala as smooth as possible, including checklists, document requirements and information regarding the Swedish tax system and social insurance.

International House Gothenburg

A welcoming hub offering free services such as digital pre-arrival meetings, career support and events covering housing, schooling, and nature exploration in West Sweden.

“Across Sweden, there’s a remarkable commitment to supporting international talent – and a wide network of local expertise ready to help not only the talents themselves, but also their accompanying families and the employers welcoming them.”

Anna Broeders ,Talent and Community Manager, Linköping Science Park

Move to Gothenburg

An initiative providing information about moving, living, working and settling in the Gothenburg region, one of the most innovative regions in the world.

Welcome to Jönköping

The municipality offers helpful information for international individuals considering making Jönköping their home, covering various aspects of living in Sweden.

International Citizen Hub Lund

Provides guidance on social insurance, housing, and living in southern Sweden, aiming to make the experience enjoyable for newcomers.

When Things Change: What to Know About Permits and Transitions

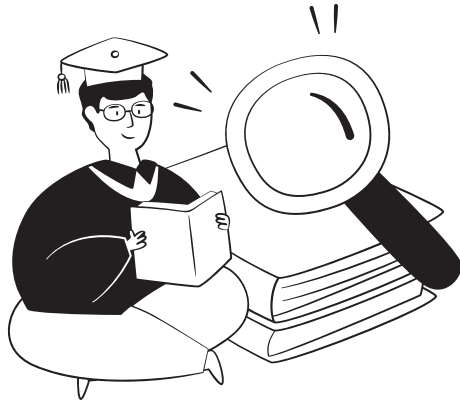
When an international employee leaves your company – whether by choice or not – the work and residence permit doesn't automatically disappear. However, once employment ends, the clock starts ticking. The individual has a certain amount of time before The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket) can revoke the permit. This doesn't happen automatically, but The Swedish Migration Agency can initiate an investigation. If the employee doesn't present new grounds for residence permit within the right time frame, the permit will be revoked or not renewed.

As an employer, your **formal responsibility ends when the contract does**, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't communicate what happens next. Let your departing colleague know about the time window and the importance of taking quick action. Support, if possible, by connecting them to networks, local employers or platforms like The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverkets omställningsguide) and The Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen). Clear information can help someone land on their feet – and leave with a lasting positive impression of your company.

“I think my international background helped me realise something important – that sometimes it's just cultural differences at play, not that there's anything wrong with me.”

– International talent graduating from Swedish university

Fair, Firm and Swedish: Understanding LAS and Employment Transitions



Swedish employment law – LAS, or the Employment Protection Act – applies to international employees just like it does to Swedish ones. That means contracts, terminations and transitions must follow the same rules for everyone, regardless of citizenship or permit status. Immigration law does not override LAS, and this can be confusing. For example, just because a permit is at risk doesn't mean an employer can skip legal procedures when it comes to ending a contract.

It's also important to recognize that international employees often place deep trust in their employer – not just for their job, but for their ability to remain in the country. That creates a different kind of responsibility.

Employers who handle departures with transparency and care often find that former employees remain brand ambassadors – or come back later as “boomerang hires.”

Checklist: Swedish Employment Law in an International Context

- ✓ **LAS Applies to All Employees** – including international talent. Immigration concerns don't override the Swedish Employment Protection Act. Some roles, like CEOs, consultants and interns are exceptions not covered by LAS.
- ✓ **Always Follow Due Process When Ending Employment** – proper notice periods, documentation, and fair treatment apply.
- ✓ **Help Talent Understand Their Options** – if someone loses their job, they may still be able to stay in Sweden with a new employer.
- ✓ **Offer Exit Support** – connect former employees with other companies, recruiters or networks. It makes a difference.
- ✓ **Stay Human – and Stay in Touch** – a warm goodbye can lead to future returns or great word-of-mouth.
- ✓ **Remember That Mobility is Natural** – not everyone wants to stay in one role forever. Respect career shifts – they're part of growth.

Don't Miss the Deadline: Permits Need Attention, Too

It's crucial to keep track of permit dates. If a work or residence permit expires before a renewal application is submitted, the process becomes significantly more complicated – and the individual may risk losing their legal right to stay. Way worse than missing out on tiofika.

It is very important to apply for renewal before the current permit expires. Encourage your international talent to stay on top of their dates – and where possible, offer a reminder or even help them navigate the timeline. A simple heads-up can save everyone from unnecessary stress.

What Happens to an International Colleague If a Company Goes Bankrupt?

You probably don't need to read this – most businesses don't go bankrupt. But if your company should face bankruptcy, it's important to understand what happens next, especially when international employees are involved. In Sweden, bankruptcy is handled by the **Swedish Enforcement Authority** (Kronofogdemyndigheten) and a **bankruptcy trustee** is appointed to manage the process. At that point, your role as employer ends and the trustee takes over responsibility for the company and any employment issues.

Employees – including international staff – may be entitled to support through the **state wage guarantee**, which can cover unpaid wages, holiday pay and other compensation. While the rules are the same for all employees under Swedish law, it's helpful to offer your international team members some extra guidance. Clear information can make a tough situation easier to handle – and ensure everyone knows where to turn for help.

When Talent Relocates: Moving within Sweden or Changing Jobs

Relocation isn't just about crossing borders – sometimes it means moving across Sweden, sometimes it means taking on a new role within the company. For international employees, these transitions can come with added complexity. As an employer, a bit of support can go a long way.

If your international talent is moving to another city, remind them to **report their new address to The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket)** within one week. They should also check with **The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket)**, especially if their work permit is tied to a specific role or employer. A change in job title, workplace location or responsibilities might require **a new permit application or an update** – and applying before the change is key to avoiding legal complications.

Even within your company, a promotion or department change could mean a shift in permit conditions. Keep track of the details and encourage open communication so you can act in time if anything needs updating. Helping your talent navigate these transitions smoothly shows you're committed to their long-term success – and to doing things right.

Navigating Crisis: Employer Responsibilities in Challenging Times

Crises may arise unexpectedly – whether due to economic downturns, global events or unforeseen disruptions. If you understand your responsibilities as an employer, it's easier to navigate through unforeseen crises, especially when it comes to supporting international talent.

1. Understanding Work Permit Implications:

If your company faces significant changes, such as restructuring or downsizing, it's important to understand how these might affect employees from outside the EU/EEA. While it's the individual's responsibility to ensure their right to stay in Sweden, employers need to be aware of the rules and what changes – like a role ending or shifting significantly – might mean for a third-country national. It's good practice to inform The Swedish Migration Agency when relevant changes occur. Doing so not only supports the individual but also helps maintain a smooth relationship with the authorities for any future recruitment.

2. Reporting Changes to The Swedish Tax Agency:

Significant organizational changes, including layoffs or changes in payroll, must be accurately reported to The Swedish Tax Agency. Maintaining up-to-date records ensures that tax obligations are met and helps prevent potential legal issues.

3. Supporting Employees During Transitions:

In times of crisis, employees may face uncertainties regarding their employment status and legal rights. Providing clear communication and guidance can help alleviate concerns. Employers can direct employees to relevant resources, such as The Swedish Migration Agency's information on residence permits and The Swedish Tax Agency's guidelines on taxation.

4. Collaborating with Authorities:

Engaging proactively with Swedish authorities can facilitate smoother transitions during crises. For example, collaborating with The Swedish Migration Agency can help address immigration-related concerns, while working with The Swedish Tax Agency ensures compliance with tax regulations.

By staying informed and taking proactive steps, employers can navigate crises effectively, ensuring that both the company and its international employees are supported during challenging times.

Separation or Death: When Circumstances Change

In all cases involving residence and work permits, there is a **main permit holder** – usually the employee. If that person's circumstances change significantly, such as in the case of separation or death, it can also affect the legal status of any **accompanying family members**.

As an employer, you're not legally responsible for their permits – but it's wise to be aware of who holds which permit, and whether a spouse or partner is a dependent. If the main permit holder is no longer eligible, their family's permits may also be affected. Offering guidance or pointing the affected individual to **The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket)** can be a valuable act of support during a difficult time.

Turning Challenges into Opportunities: Lessons from Successful Transitions

Organizational changes, such as downsizing or restructuring, can pose significant challenges. However, with proactive strategies and collaboration, these challenges can be transformed into opportunities.

AstraZeneca in Södertälje: When AstraZeneca reduced its workforce, local and regional stakeholders – including the municipality, Uppsala Innovation Center and the county administrative board collaborated to repurpose facilities and support entrepreneurship in the life sciences sector. This initiative led to the establishment of new companies and research institutions, revitalizing the local economy.



You're Ready to Start the Process of Recruiting

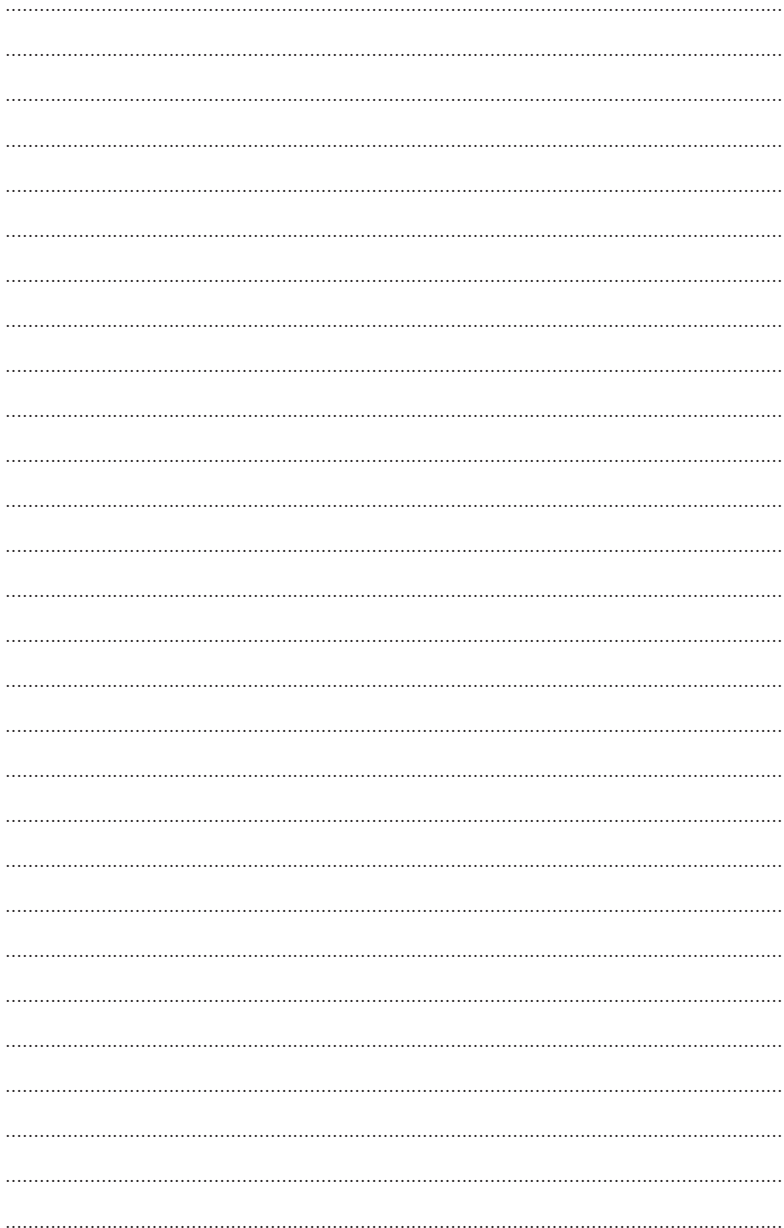
Recruiting international talent is lined with old truths of impossible paperwork. However, it is more of an exciting opportunity, it's possible and doable and it's often a smart way forward. Don't forget to test, evaluate and improve - recruiting is a process in many ways.

We hope this guide has answered your questions, eased your concerns and sparked new ideas. Perhaps even made you smile once or twice. At the end of the day, this isn't just about filling a vacancy. It's about welcoming someone into your company, your team – and your corner of Sweden.

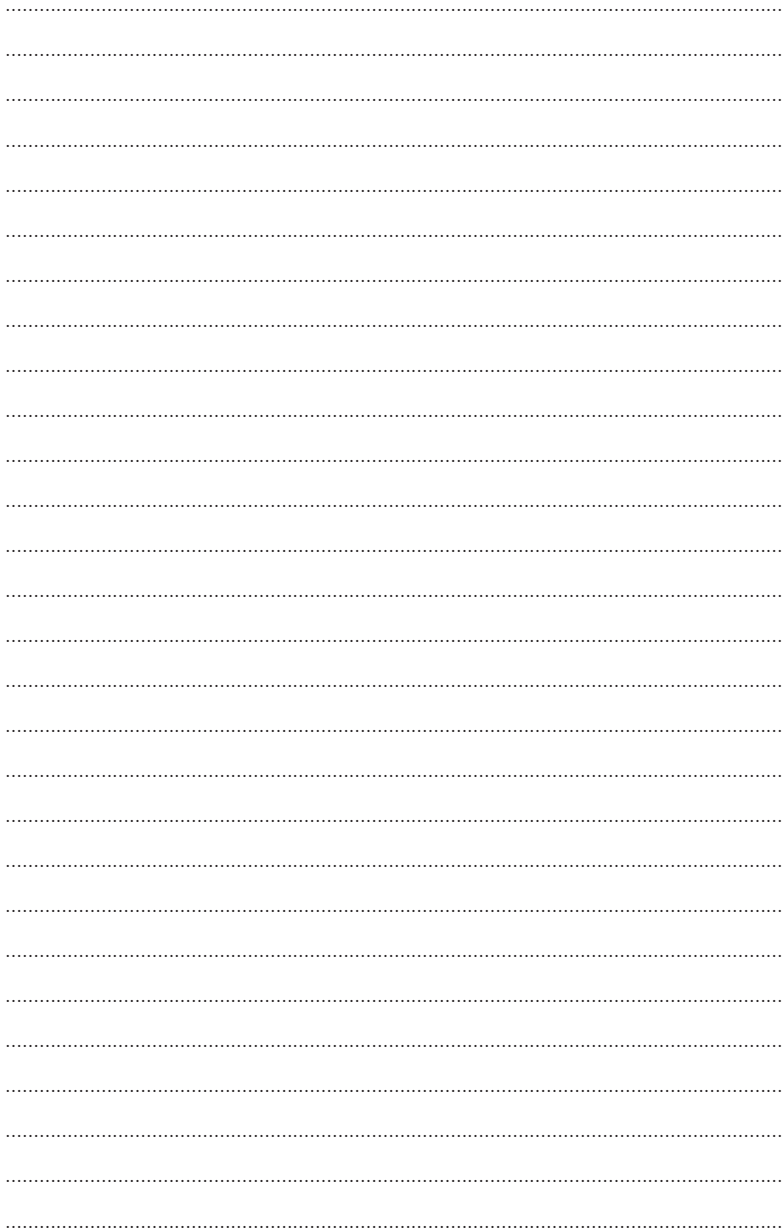
You've got the checklists. You've got the resources. You've got a country with a strong brand, a country filled with innovation, fika breaks, and room to grow. Now all you need to do is to find international talents.

Lycka till – and welcome to the future of Swedish work life.

This image shows a full page of a handwriting practice worksheet. It consists of approximately 20 horizontal rows. Each row is defined by two parallel dotted lines, creating a series of uniform gaps for letter height. The entire page is otherwise blank, with no margins, text, or other markings.







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Work in Sweden is a common assignment from the Swedish government where eleven authorities will work together to strengthen cooperation to attract and retain highly qualified international labor and other foreign workers of importance for Swedish competitiveness.

Funderar du på att rekrytera internationell talang?

Att anställa internationella talanger är ett bra sätt att hitta rätt kompetens. Processen kantas av gamla sanningar, det är inte alls så svårt och omöjligt som många tror. Du behöver skaffa koll på vad som gäller och vilka tillstånd som behövs. Introduktionen är viktig och omfattar till exempel the need to translate everything concerning your onboarding process from Swedish to English.

Sweden is home to innovation, trust and strong fika culture - but not always enough talent to meet the demand. If you're struggling to find the right people, it might be time to look internationally. This guide shows you how.

From the first job ad to long-term integration, this book walks you through the steps of the process. You'll find checklists, advice and insights from employers and international talents alike. Whether you're hiring your first international colleague or looking to improve your existing onboarding routines, this book will help you recruit with confidence – and create a workplace where global talent can truly thrive.

International recruitment isn't just about finding the right skills. It's about welcoming people.



Read more about The Insider's Guide



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