



Validation for plumbing fitters

The work of a plumbing fitter involves fitting pipes and systems that provide us with a good indoor environment and allow us to shower and wash. A plumbing fitter works not only in residential accommodation but also in hospitals, business premises, offices and other buildings.

As well as fitting pipes, a plumbing fitter installs heat pumps and boilers, water heaters, radiators, underfloor heating and bathroom fittings, e.g. toilet bowl, bath, shower and washbasin.

As a plumbing fitter you can specialise in servicing, alterations or construction. If you do servicing work you will have a servicing vehicle with the tools and parts you need for the job. Plumbing fitters who specialise in construction have to be involved from the start and do the construction work from scratch.

The profession of plumbing fitter is a traditional craft that has seen innovation in the form of new technology, with computers often being used in heating and cooling installations, for example. In addition to mastering the new technology a plumbing fitter must be able to read drawings and think creatively in order to find the best solutions.

Several different types of material are currently used in the field of plumbing, with pipes being made from a range of materials including steel, copper and plastic. You thus need to be able to use all the types of material that you may encounter. At some workplaces plumbing fitters need welding skills.

Validation as a plumbing fitter

The plumbing industry's validation model is used to assess skills in persons with professional experience or training as a plumbing fitter or similar. The work can have been done either in another country or in a

Swedish company that is not a party to the Technical Installations Agreement on Plumbing and Cooling.

The Technical Installations Agreement on Plumbing and Cooling is a collective agreement between Installatörsföretagen (the Swedish Installation Federation) and Byggnads (part of the Swedish Plumbing Union). In the collective agreement the parties have agreed on the regulations that are to apply specifically to this industry. This can involve working hours, salaries/wages, training or anything else the parties have agreed on.

The aim of the validation is to assess whether whoever is seeking validation meets the industry's skills objectives to a level equivalent to an industry certificate. Applications for validation can be made by an individual, a company or an organisation. The validation must be carried out by an approved professional assessor.

On the website of VVS-branschens yrkesnämnd (the Plumbing Employer Association) – vvsyn.se – you will find application forms for validation, as well as information on what it costs and where validations take place.

How to apply for validation for plumbing

If you are unemployed and registered with the employment service you must contact your case worker. If you wish to apply as a company employee or privately you should do so through the website of VVS-branschens yrkesnämnd.

How validation for plumbing works

The validation is divided into different stages. Whether you should start at Stage 1 or 2 depends on your experience.

Stage 1

Basic Validation

Stage 1 of the validation corresponds to 1½ years (3 terms) on an upper secondary school (gymnasium) plumbing and property programme leading to proficiency as a plumbing fitter. If you have trained as a plumber in a country other than Sweden or have basic experience of fields related to the plumbing industry, e.g. property maintenance, this may be a suitable level to start at. Validation Stage 1 is an online theoretical test.

Following approval of Validation Stage 1 you can get work as an employee in training (trainee) with a company that is party to the Technical Installations Agreement on Plumbing and Cooling, and can be placed at Level 4 (of 10). You will have to study professional and specialist theory during your period of employment with the company.

If Stage 1 is not approved you will receive a report on the additional skills you will need for attainment of Stage 1.

The skills objectives for Stage 1 are to be found at vvsyn.se.

Stage 2

Validation in conjunction with completed school plumbing programme

If you have more experience, e.g. if you have worked as a plumbing fitter or have undergone training in the field of plumbing. The validation comprises a theoretical and an oral test, and takes 8 hours. Stage 2 tests basic skills, e.g. components and understanding of systems.

Following approval of Validation Stage 2 you can get a job as an employee in training (trainee) with a company that is party to the Technical Installations Agreement on Plumbing and Cooling, and can be placed at Level 7 (of 10). You can also proceed to Stage 3 of the validation.

Non-approval of Stage 2 indicates a lack of basic plumbing skills, and that VVS-branschens yrkesnämnd will recommend that the person in question become a company trainee or study professional and specialist theory, or undertake another form of adult education that we approve. Anyone not achieving Stage 2 approval will always get personal feedback on the areas requiring extra work.

The Stage 2 skills objectives are to be found at vvsyn.se.

Stage 3

Validation in conjunction with industry certificate

Validation Stage 3 is a test taking four days. Approval of Stage 2 is a prerequisite for proceeding to Stage 3.

The test comprises a theory test, a welding test and an installation test.

Following approval of Validation Stage 3, and if you have achieved a pass in Swedish, mathematics and English at upper secondary school (gymnasium) level or can demonstrate that you have equivalent skills, then VVS-branschens yrkesnämnd will issue a certificate that is equivalent to an industry certificate. After 3 months' employment with a company that is party to the Technical Installations Agreement on Plumbing and Cooling you can exchange this for an industry certificate.

If Stage 3 is not approved you will always receive feedback on areas in which you need to improve your skills, what you need in order to proceed in terms of gaining an industry-approved certificate, and the stage for achieving industry certification.

The skills objectives for Stage 3 are to be found at vvsyn.se.

VVS-branschens yrkesnämnd is a joint organisation for Installatörsföretagen and Byggnads. Through the professional board, the labour-market parties collaborate on professional training within the plumbing industry for plumbing fitters, industrial pipe fitters, plumbing HVAC-insulator, sheet metal insulator and sprinkler fitters.