

Spotlight on VET Finland

Spotlight on VET Finland

Skills and competences in focus

Education policy in Finland is based on the philosophy of equity: education and training for all, irrespective of social or ethnic background, geographical location, gender or economic situation. Most formal vocational education and training (VET) is publicly funded, and most VET providers are municipalities and federations of municipalities. The funding criteria are the same, irrespective of ownership.

The key factors in VET policies are:

- educational philosophy based on delegation of responsibility to local level;
- the Ministry of Education deciding upon the VET organisational framework and authorising provision of education based on the number of students and the variety of training fields;
- national core curricula forming the framework for local curricula: different components can be emphasised according to local needs and prevailing conditions;
- education and training at upper secondary level for everyone;
- emphasis on adult training, to upgrade the skills of people in working life without formal qualifications or with outdated qualifications (e.g. Noste programme);
- competence-based qualifications as a flexible way to acquire new qualifications;
- cooperation with social partners at national, regional and local levels;
- national-level evaluations with no inspectorate.

Homogeneous structure

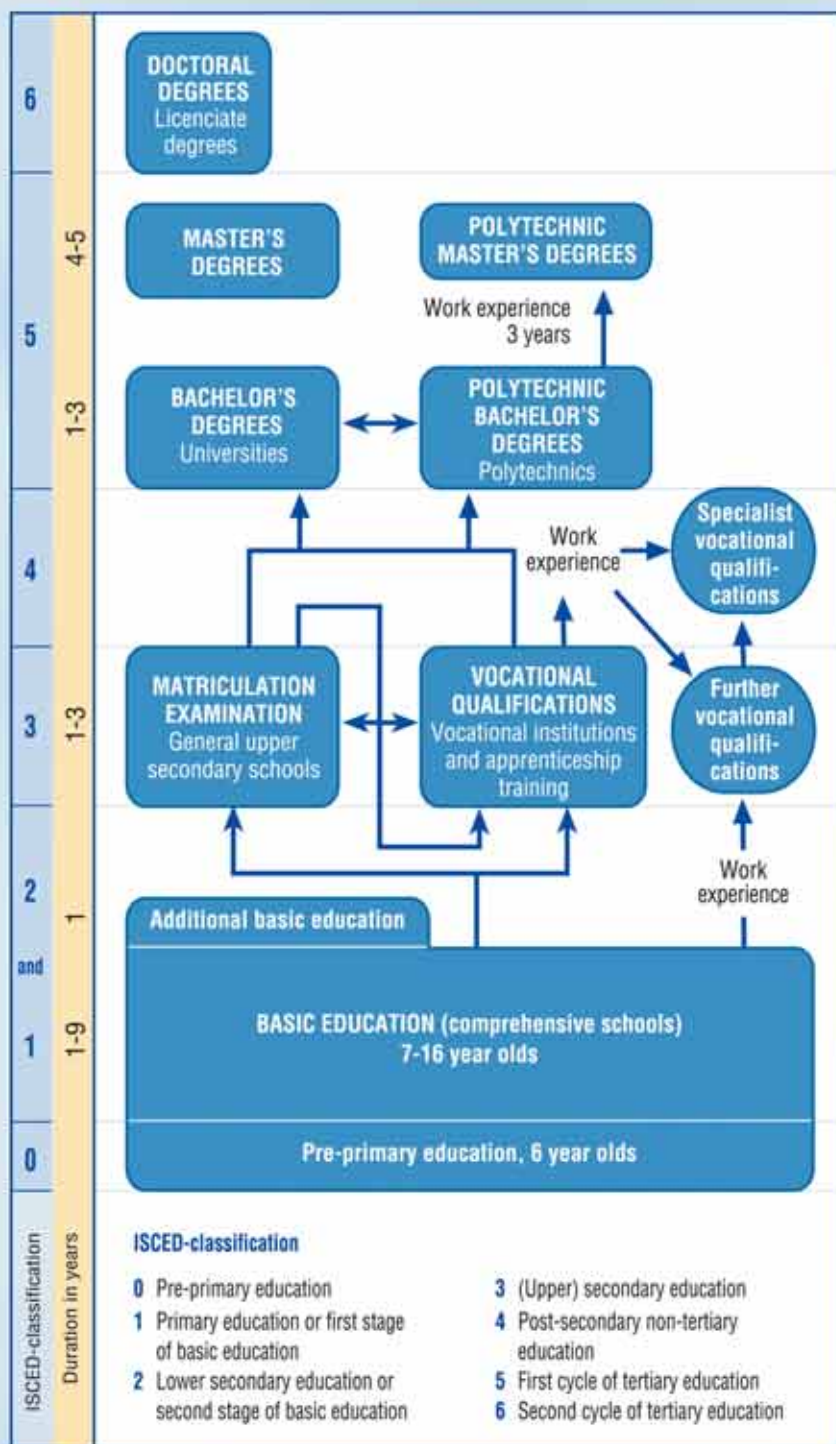
Vocational institutions (*ammattilliset oppilaitokset, yrkesläroanstaterna*) are upper secondary institutions offering three years of initial vocational education in almost all fields mainly for students aged 16 to 19. Every programme includes at least six months of workplace training. The training providers and institutions are responsible for the local curricula. Individual study plans are drawn up for all students to meet their personal aims and needs. During the learning process competence-based tests can show the student's learning achievements. All three-year qualifications allow progression to higher education.

Apprenticeship training (*oppisopimuskoulutus, läroavtalsutbildning*) is based on the national core curriculum or the guidelines for the relevant competence-based qualification. Both can form the basis of individual learning programmes which reflect students' skills levels and training needs. The approximate division of theoretical and workplace training is 20 % - 80 %. Most apprenticeship trainees are adults. Apprenticeship training leads to the same vocational qualifications as school-based education.

Polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulut, yrkeshögskolorna*) are vocationally-oriented higher education institutions which provide the knowledge and skills for attaining professional expertise. The first degree is the bachelor's degree (three to four years) and master's degrees are open to those who have completed a polytechnic degree and at least three years of post-graduate work experience. Polytechnics also organise adult education. Polytechnic degree programmes consist of general and professional studies, optional studies, practical training and a project.

Competence-based qualifications (*näyttötutkinnot, fristående yrkesinriktade examina*) offer adults, in particular, a flexible and individualised way to maintain and upgrade their vocational skills. Vocational skills are demonstrated through competence tests, regardless of how and where the skills have been acquired. Preparatory training may be arranged for the tests. There are three levels: initial, further (ISCED 3) and specialist (ISCED 4) vocational qualifications.

The Finnish education system



Source:
adapted from Ministry
of Education, 2006.

Finland

Hallmarks

Attaining a high quality of VET throughout the country is the aim of Finnish VET policy. It is characterised by a wide range of training fields, effective teaching and learning both in schools and at the workplace. Initial VET has the aim of strengthening the philosophy of a culture of lifelong learning. The characteristics are:

- a nation-wide network of vocational institutions;
- a joint nationally organised application system for students applying to upper secondary education or to polytechnics (two different systems);
- individual study plans which consider the personal needs and abilities of students and which include study goals, a course plan for each term, career planning, international studies and practice;
- workplace training as part of the curriculum in all upper secondary vocational programmes;
- an open pathway from upper secondary vocational qualifications to polytechnics and universities;
- highly educated teachers: 75 % of VET teachers have a university or polytechnics degree, about one year of pedagogical studies and three years work experience in the particular area of expertise;
- an advanced system of guidance and counselling both in schools and in labour offices, comprehensive services available via the Internet.

The **performance-based funding** system started in 2002 when education providers were granted separate State subsidies based on their performance. In 2006 it became part of the unit price determination basis. The performance-based funding makes up approximately 2 % (some EUR 20 million) of total vocational education funding.

The allocation of performance-based funding is based on an index which includes the following indicators:

- effectiveness (job placement and further studies);
- processes (drop out, ratio of qualification certification holders to entrants);
- staff (formal teaching qualifications and staff development).

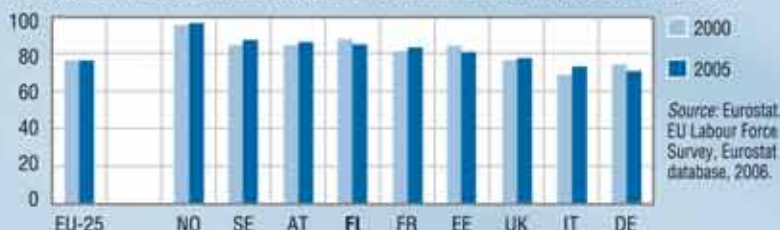
Challenges for VET in a changing society

A well-educated and skilled labour force is essential for Finland's future. For a small northern country, people are its best resource and a guarantee for prosperous development. It has been forecast that within the coming decade Finland will face a lack of qualified labour in many industrial occupations and services such as social welfare and health care. At the same time Finland has to continue to upskill the whole labour force and to make VET studies more attractive for young people in contrast to choosing academic pathways. The challenges are to:

- compete on the global market with a highly skilled labour force and high-quality production;
- anticipate changing needs so that VET teaching and learning can respond to new challenges;
- ensure a nation-wide quality of training outputs (the regional differences are increasing because of migration to the bigger cities in southern Finland and to regional centres);
- reduce the drop-out rate (the annual drop-out rate in upper secondary VET in 2003/04 was 9.6 %);
- improve employment after graduation (workplace training as part of the curricula is seen as a solution);
- control the quality of workplace training more regularly and systematically;
- measure the effectiveness and outcomes of training more carefully in the future.

Education and training in figures

Youth education attainment level (Percentage of the population aged 20-24 having completed at least upper secondary education) (2000 and 2005)



Students in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational programmes (2000 and 2004) (%)



Participation in non-formal education and training, by main reason for participating (2003) (%)



Education attainment of the population aged 25 to 64 by ISCED level in Finland and selected European countries in 2005 (%)

| Country | ISCED 0-2 | ISCED 3-4 | ISCED 5-6 | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---|
| Finland | 21 | 44 | 34 | ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 0-2: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education ISCED 3-4: upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education ISCED 5-6: tertiary education The countries are listed by the percentage of their population educated to level 5 or 6. (*) Figures for 2003 |
| Estonia | 11 | 56 | 33 | |
| Norway | 12 | 56 | 32 | |
| Sweden | 16 | 54 | 29 | |
| UK | 14 | 53 | 29 | |
| Germany | 17 | 58 | 25 | |
| France | 34 | 41 | 25 | |
| Austria | 19 | 63 | 18 | |
| Italy | 49 | 39 | 13 | |
| EU-25 (*) | 32 | 47 | 21 | |

Source: Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey, Eurostat database, 2006.

Spotlight on VET Finland

– 8019 EN –



11/26/06 10:11 AM

Further Information

- Eurydice. *The education system in Finland*. In Eurybase 2005 – Eurydice database on education systems in Europe. Brussels: Eurydice, 2005. Available from Internet [cited 1.7.2006]: www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/frameset_eurybase.html
- Kyrö, M. *Vocational education and training in Finland – Short description*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2006. (Cedefop Panorama series, 130). Available from Internet [cited 1.8.2006]: www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publications.asp?section=22
- Ministry of Education. *Development plan Education and Research 2003-08*. Ministry of Education, Helsinki, 2004. Available from Internet [cited 1.7.2006]: www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2004/liitteet/opm_235_opm08.pdf?lang=en

| | |
|--|---|
| www.minedu.fi | Ministry of Education |
| www.mol.fi | Ministry of Labour |
| www.oph.fi | Finnish National Board of Education, FNBE (national agency for development, evaluation and services for education and training, Europass, ReferNet national coordination, Eurydice Finland, Enic and Naric) |
| www.ammattilinenkoulutus.com | Vocational education (Ministry of Education) |
| www.opintoluotsi.fi | Education in Finland, institutions, information for foreigners (Ministry of Education) |
| www.koulutusnetti.fi | Education website (Ministry of Labour) |
| www.edu.fi/tonet/eng/index.html | Information on on-the-job learning (FNBE) |
| www.kela.fi/in/Internet/english.nsf | Financial aid for students / The Social Insurance Institution of Finland |
| www.cimo.fi | Centre for International Mobility (scholarships, exchanges, EU programmes, Ploteus...) |
| www.leonardodavinci.fi | Leonardo programme in Finland |
| www.stat.fi | Statistics Finland |
| http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/english | University of Jyväskylä, Institute for Educational Research |
| www.soc.utu.fi/RUSE | University of Turku, Research Unit for the Sociology of Education (RUSE) |
| www.oaj.fi | Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ) |
| www.eurydice.org | Eurybase, Eurydice database |
| www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ | Information on all European Union vocational education and training systems (Cedefop) |

We wish to thank Matti Kyrö (Finnish National Board of Education) for his valuable contribution. This brochure focuses on some of the main aspects of vocational education and training in Finland and does not claim to be exhaustive.

Project coordinator: Sylvie Bousquet



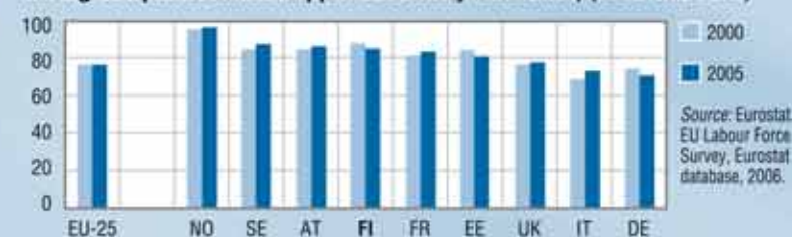
European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training

Europe 123, GR-570 01 Thessaloniki (Pylea)
Postal address: PO Box 22427, GR-551 02 Thessaloniki
Tel. (30) 23 10 49 01 11, Fax (30) 23 10 49 00 20
E-mail: info@cedefop.europa.eu Homepage: www.cedefop.europa.eu
Interactive website: www.trainingvillage.gr

Finland

Education and training in figures

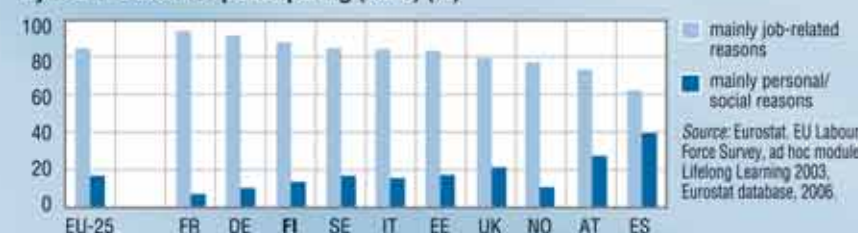
Youth education attainment level (Percentage of the population aged 20-24 having completed at least upper secondary education) (2000 and 2005)



Students in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational programmes (2000 and 2004) (%)



Participation in non-formal education and training, by main reason for participating (2003) (%)



Education attainment of the population aged 25 to 64 by ISCED level in Finland and selected European countries in 2005 (%)

| Country | ISCED 0-2 | ISCED 3-4 | ISCED 5-6 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Finland | 21 | 44 | 34 |
| Estonia | 11 | 56 | 33 |
| Norway | 12 | 56 | 32 |
| Sweden | 16 | 54 | 29 |
| UK | 14 | 53 | 29 |
| Germany | 17 | 58 | 25 |
| France | 34 | 41 | 25 |
| Austria | 19 | 63 | 18 |
| Italy | 49 | 39 | 13 |
| EU-25 (*) | 32 | 47 | 21 |

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education
ISCED 0-2: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education
ISCED 3-4: upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
ISCED 5-6: tertiary education
The countries are listed by the percentage of their population educated to level 5 or 6.
(*) Figures for 2003

Source: Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey, Eurostat database, 2006.

Spotlight on VET Finland

– 8019 EN –



Further information

- Eurydice. *The education system in Finland*. In Eurybase 2005 – Eurydice database on education systems in Europe. Brussels: Eurydice, 2005. Available from Internet [cited 1.7.2006]: www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/frameset_eurybase.html
- Kyrö, M. *Vocational education and training in Finland – Short description*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2006. (Cedefop Panorama series, 130). Available from Internet [cited 1.8.2006]: www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publications.asp?section=22
- Ministry of Education. *Development plan Education and Research 2003-08*. Ministry of Education, Helsinki, 2004. Available from Internet [cited 1.7.2006]: www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2004/liitteet/opm_235_opm08.pdf?lang=en

| | |
|--|---|
| www.minedu.fi | Ministry of Education |
| www.mol.fi | Ministry of Labour |
| www.oph.fi | Finnish National Board of Education, FNBE (national agency for development, evaluation and services for education and training, Europass, ReferNet national coordination, Eurydice Finland, Eric and Naric) |
| www.ammattilinenkoulutus.com | Vocational education (Ministry of Education) |
| www.opinto/uoetsi.fi | Education in Finland, institutions, information for foreigners (Ministry of Education) |
| www.koulutusnetti.fi | Education website (Ministry of Labour) |
| www.edu.fi/tonet/eng/index.html | Information on on-the-job learning (FNBE) |
| www.kela.fi/in/internet/english.nsf | Financial aid for students / The Social Insurance Institution of Finland |
| www.cimo.fi | Centre for International Mobility (scholarships, exchanges, EU programmes, Ploteus...) |
| www.leonardodavinci.fi | Leonardo programme in Finland |
| www.stat.fi | Statistics Finland |
| http://ktil.jyu.fi/ktil/english | University of Jyväskylä, Institute for Educational Research |
| www.soc.utu.fi/RUSE | University of Turku, Research Unit for the Sociology of Education (RUSE) |
| www.oaj.fi | Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ) |
| www.eurydice.org | Eurybase, Eurydice database |
| www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ | Information on all European Union vocational education and training systems (Cedefop) |

We wish to thank Matti Kyrö (Finnish National Board of Education) for his valuable contribution. This brochure focuses on some of the main aspects of vocational education and training in Finland and does not claim to be exhaustive.

Project coordinator: Sylvie Bousquet



European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Europe 123, GR-570 01 Thessaloniki (Pylea)
Postal address: PO Box 22427, GR-551 02 Thessaloniki
Tel. (30) 23 10 49 01 11, Fax (30) 23 10 49 00 20
E-mail: info@cedefop.europa.eu Homepage: www.cedefop.europa.eu
Interactive website: www.trainingvillage.gr



11-76-96-181-11-10

Spotlight on VET Finland

Spotlight on VET Finland

Skills and competences in focus

Education policy in Finland is based on the philosophy of equity: education and training for all, irrespective of social or ethnic background, geographical location, gender or economic situation. Most formal vocational education and training (VET) is publicly funded, and most VET providers are municipalities and federations of municipalities. The funding criteria are the same, irrespective of ownership.

The key factors in VET policies are:

- educational philosophy based on delegation of responsibility to local level;
- the Ministry of Education deciding upon the VET organisational framework and authorising provision of education based on the number of students and the variety of training fields;
- national core curricula forming the framework for local curricula: different components can be emphasised according to local needs and prevailing conditions;
- education and training at upper secondary level for everyone;
- emphasis on adult training, to upgrade the skills of people in working life without formal qualifications or with outdated qualifications (e.g. Noste programme);
- competence-based qualifications as a flexible way to acquire new qualifications;
- cooperation with social partners at national, regional and local levels;
- national-level evaluations with no inspectorate.

Homogeneous structure

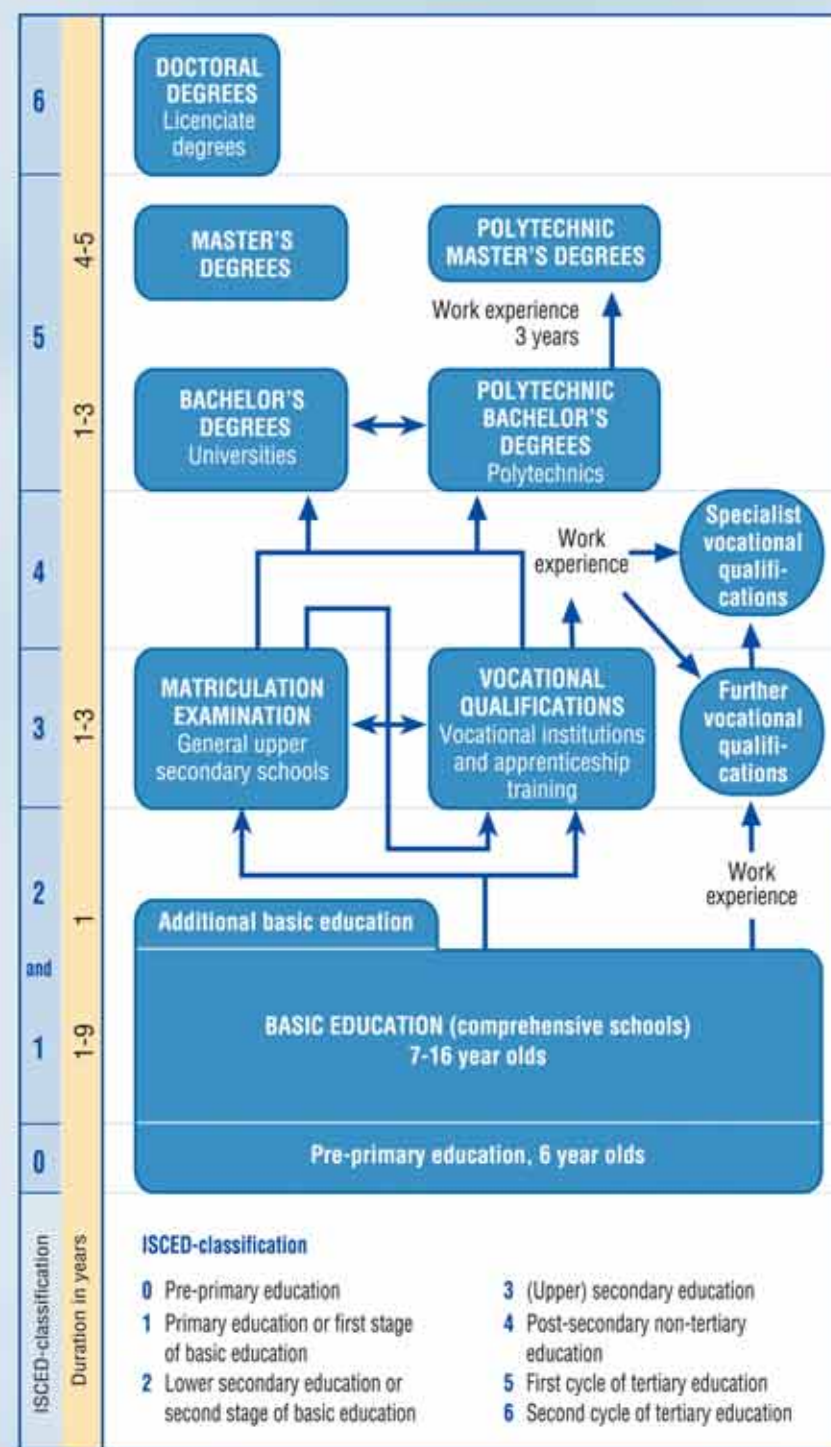
Vocational institutions (*ammattilliset oppilaitokset, yrkesläroanstaterna*) are upper secondary institutions offering three years of initial vocational education in almost all fields mainly for students aged 16 to 19. Every programme includes at least six months of workplace training. The training providers and institutions are responsible for the local curricula. Individual study plans are drawn up for all students to meet their personal aims and needs. During the learning process competence-based tests can show the student's learning achievements. All three-year qualifications allow progression to higher education.

Apprenticeship training (*oppisopimuskoulutus, läroavtalsutbildning*) is based on the national core curriculum or the guidelines for the relevant competence-based qualification. Both can form the basis of individual learning programmes which reflect students' skills levels and training needs. The approximate division of theoretical and workplace training is 20 % - 80 %. Most apprenticeship trainees are adults. Apprenticeship training leads to the same vocational qualifications as school-based education.

Polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulu, yrkeshögskolorna*) are vocationally-oriented higher education institutions which provide the knowledge and skills for attaining professional expertise. The first degree is the bachelor's degree (three to four years) and master's degrees are open to those who have completed a polytechnic degree and at least three years of post-graduate work experience. Polytechnics also organise adult education. Polytechnic degree programmes consist of general and professional studies, optional studies, practical training and a project.

Competence-based qualifications (*näyttötutkinnot, fristående yrkesinriktade examina*) offer adults, in particular, a flexible and individualised way to maintain and upgrade their vocational skills. Vocational skills are demonstrated through competence tests, regardless of how and where the skills have been acquired. Preparatory training may be arranged for the tests. There are three levels: initial, further (ISCED 3) and specialist (ISCED 4) vocational qualifications.

The Finnish education system



Source:
adapted from Ministry
of Education, 2006.

Hallmarks

Attaining a high quality of VET throughout the country is the aim of Finnish VET policy. It is characterised by a wide range of training fields, effective teaching and learning both in schools and at the workplace. Initial VET has the aim of strengthening the philosophy of a culture of lifelong learning. The characteristics are:

- a nation-wide network of vocational institutions;
- a joint nationally organised application system for students applying to upper secondary education or to polytechnics (two different systems);
- individual study plans which consider the personal needs and abilities of students and which include study goals, a course plan for each term, career planning, international studies and practice;
- workplace training as part of the curriculum in all upper secondary vocational programmes;
- an open pathway from upper secondary vocational qualifications to polytechnics and universities;
- highly educated teachers: 75 % of VET teachers have a university or polytechnics degree, about one year of pedagogical studies and three years work experience in the particular area of expertise;
- an advanced system of guidance and counselling both in schools and in labour offices, comprehensive services available via the Internet.

The **performance-based funding** system started in 2002 when education providers were granted separate State subsidies based on their performance. In 2006 it became part of the unit price determination basis. The performance-based funding makes up approximately 2 % (some EUR 20 million) of total vocational education funding.

The allocation of performance-based funding is based on an index which includes the following indicators:

- effectiveness (job placement and further studies);
- processes (drop out, ratio of qualification certification holders to entrants);
- staff (formal teaching qualifications and staff development).

Challenges for VET in a changing society

A well-educated and skilled labour force is essential for Finland's future. For a small northern country, people are its best resource and a guarantee for prosperous development. It has been forecast that within the coming decade Finland will face a lack of qualified labour in many industrial occupations and services such as social welfare and health care. At the same time Finland has to continue to upskill the whole labour force and to make VET studies more attractive for young people in contrast to choosing academic pathways. The challenges are to:

- compete on the global market with a highly skilled labour force and high-quality production;
- anticipate changing needs so that VET teaching and learning can respond to new challenges;
- ensure a nation-wide quality of training outputs (the regional differences are increasing because of migration to the bigger cities in southern Finland and to regional centres);
- reduce the drop-out rate (the annual drop-out rate in upper secondary VET in 2003/04 was 9.6 %);
- improve employment after graduation (workplace training as part of the curricula is seen as a solution);
- control the quality of workplace training more regularly and systematically;
- measure the effectiveness and outcomes of training more carefully in the future.