

Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Finland

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Introduction

In Finland, career information, guidance and counselling is a citizens' entitlement identified in national legislation. The services are provided mainly by two established, publicly funded systems. Namely, the [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) and the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#). In addition, the National Lifelong Guidance Working Group, consisting of multiple national, regional and local stakeholders, aims to promote access to lifelong guidance, support career management skills' development, strengthen guidance practitioners' competencies, develop a quality assurance system and create a coherent and holistic lifelong guidance system.

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Coronavirus Update

At this point, there are a number of open questions and the government instructions relate to health and safety issues as well as economy first. There are restrictions in education and public employment services on face-to-face activities, but since all the services should be available, they are delivered more in distance. Hence, career practitioners have been forced to shift their services online as much as possible, while technology is used to deliver information. Practitioners use the telephone, various social media channels or videoconferencing tools to get in contact with their students and clients, while youth workers started organising virtual meetings using existing communication tools.

The national initiative on developing an online platform for distance guidance was on pilot phase in some local [one-stop-guidance centres](#) for youth (*Ohjaamo*) and within the PES national online career services (see section ICT in lifelong guidance). The national coordination unit in charge of the development of this tool has allocated additional resources to increase the number of pilot users among the career practitioners in the one-stop-centres and in PES. In addition, practitioners started sharing materials and experiences on distance guidance within their own social media channels.

On April 8 2020, the Government reached an [agreement](#) on the second supplementary budget proposal for 2020 and the General Government Fiscal Plan for 2021-2024. As a result of the loss of event revenue and other income due to the coronavirus crisis, the Government proposed that an appropriation increase of EUR 2.5 million will be allocated for government grants to youth organisations and youth centres. An additional appropriation of EUR 1.5 million is proposed for youth workshop activities and outreach youth work to cover the additional costs caused by the epidemic.

See dedicated sections below:

- [Guidance for school pupils](#)
- [Guidance for VET participants](#)
- [Guidance for higher education students](#)
- [Guidance for the employed](#)
- [Guidance for unemployed adults](#)
- [Guidance for young people at risk.](#)

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Ohjaamo centres (one-stop-guidance centres).

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Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

The Finnish [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) is responsible for providing guidelines and objectives for educational affairs. In turn, the Finnish [National Agency of Education](#) is the national agency responsible for the implementation of these guidelines. In doing so, it transfers the responsibility for the actual design and implementation of teaching methods, including guidance courses, to local municipalities and individual education institutions. As such, there is an increased level of freedom in the implementation of guidance activities, though these are made in accordance with the national core curriculum.

The Public Employment Services Act ([1295/2002](#), *Laki julkisesta työvoimapalvelusta*) which is updated regularly, regulates several issues such as objectives and principles within public employment services as well as services provided and labour market activities (International Labour Organisation). In general, the interests of employers and employees are integrated within labour policies, since the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#) collaborates with their representatives on the drafting of labour policies.

Coordination and collaboration at national level is managed through a National Lifelong Guidance Working Group. This national group is designated and co-chaired by both the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Ministry of Economic affairs and Employment. The first working period was 2010-11 and the group launched a national strategy for LLG for both sectors covering the years 2012-16. A new working group

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was designated to follow up the implementation of this strategy and to act as the steering group for national level development programmes for guidance (Felt et al, 2017). The third period of the working group covered the years 2015-19 and a new mandate for the years 2020-22 was endorsed by the both ministries in January 2020. The main task for this new working group is to update the cross-ministerial strategy for lifelong guidance.

The lifelong guidance group includes representatives from many stakeholders.

- a. Ministry of Education and Culture;
- b. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment;
- c. Confederation of Finnish Industries;
- d. the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions – SAK;
- e. Akava – Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland;
- f. Trade Union of Education in Finland – OAJ;
- g. National Union of University Students in Finland – SYL;
- h. KEHA-Centre (employment and economic administration; no official name in English yet);
- i. Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Northern Ostrobothnia;
- j. Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Central Finland (including the project Kohtaamo funded by ESF);
- k. Employment and Economic Development Office in Northern Ostrobothnia;
- l. Regional administration in South and Central Finland, Swedish-speaking unit;
- m. Federation of Finnish Enterprises;
- n. Finnish Association for the Development of Vocational Education and Training – AMKE;
- o. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health;
- p. Finnish Guidance Counsellor Association – SOPO;
- q. Finnish National Agency of Education;
- r. Finnish Adult Education Association;
- s. Centre for International Mobility CIMO;
- t. University of Jyväskylä/Institute for Educational Research;
- u. Finnish Diverse Learners’ Association – HERO;
- v. Social Insurance Institution of Finland -KELA.

The strategy 2015-20 for lifelong guidance was defined and endorsed by both the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and aims to achieve the following objectives:

- a. make services equally accessible for all;
- b. support individual career management skills;
- c. strengthen competences of guidance practitioners;
- d. develop a quality assurance system for guidance;
- e. create a coherent and holistic lifelong guidance system (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011).

In November 2017, the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment nominated a steering group for the establishment of regional [one-stop guidance centres](#). The mandate covers the years 2017-21. The development of the centres was a joint initiative endorsed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health. The Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of Central Finland (ELY Central Finland) was selected as the national coordinating ELY centre. It was decided that the 2014–20 ESF funding for the Youth Guarantee under the administration of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment would be allocated on the one-stop guidance centre projects as well as the development coordination project Meeting site ([Kohtaamo](#)). The projects are part of the European Social Fund programme (Felt, Heinivirta, Heinonen, Kettunen, Toni & Vuorinen, 2019). At regional level, most of the centres are managed by the municipality and its department for youth affairs.

In addition, a national cross-ministerial working group is supporting the development of integrated online career services. The mandate of the group covers the years 2015-20.

In 1999, the Finnish Euroguidance centre established a national advisory and expert group which gathers different stakeholders (ministries, HEIs, companies, student organisations, youth centres) and career providers. The task of the group is to support the Finnish Euroguidance centre in planning, implementing and monitoring their national activities. The aim is to reflect the EG centre activities from national and regional lifelong guidance stakeholder perspectives and national lifelong guidance strategies. The group feeds the preparation of annual work programmes, creates links between the EG centre services and the national stakeholder needs. As a long-term goal, the group supports the quality development and impact evaluation of the EG centre.

Since the beginning of 2013, Finland has also been focusing on regional and local cross-sectoral developments linked to employment and education priorities, supported by cooperation on lifelong learning and lifelong guidance developments. The development, design and implementation of guidance services is coordinated by 15 regional authorities, [ELY centres](#) (Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment) which have all established regional lifelong guidance forums. The quality assurance of the LLG provision is one of the tasks given to the ELY centres (Felt, Heinivirta, Heinonen, Kettunen, Toni & Vuorinen, 2019). This work of the regional working group is coordinated by the government designated national lifelong guidance working group. This group has its mandate from both the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Felt et al, 2017).

The National Agency for Education draws up the core curricula and requires that the principles and division of labour among the different players in guidance and counselling activities are to be defined locally (Basic Education Act [628/1998](#), section 14). The local institutional curriculum must include a description of how

cooperation with the local labour market and business community is being implemented within the school. Classroom visits by labour market representatives, visits to workplaces, project work, the use of different sectors' information materials and introduction-to-working-life periods are central parts of this co-operation (FNAE, 2016).

A [national reform for continuous learning](#) has been enforced by the Finnish Government 2019-13 (Publications of the Finnish Government, 2019) with a long-term aim to enhance more flexible education possibilities, personalised guidance and funding structures. The aim is to improve guidance services not only for unemployed persons, but also for those returning from extended family leave, employees and immigrants. The government programme also invites all stakeholders to enhance the lifelong guidance services by utilising and intensifying the existing good practices in cross-sectoral and multiprofessional service provision. The aim is to enhance services for those in need of special support (including people with partial work capacity, immigrants, people with disabilities, young people and older members of the workforce). The goal is also to improve the availability of work coaches in employment and social services. The government presents concrete measures to strengthen the career education and guidance in different levels of education e.g. by examining the optional student/practitioner ratio and by stronger emphasis on guidance within the transition phases during individual learning paths. The capacity of first and second-generation immigrants to access further studies will be improved by more structured guidance and multidisciplinary collaboration with their families

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Access to guidance

In Finland, career information, guidance and counselling is a citizens' entitlement identified in national legislation. The services are provided mainly by two established, publicly funded systems.

Ministry of Education and Culture

Schools have the main responsibility for vocational and educational guidance. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the organisation of guidance and counselling services in comprehensive and upper secondary schools and in higher education. The [Basic Education Act](#) (628/1998, para. 11, states that every pupil is entitled to adequate counselling services (para. 30). Counselling services in vocational schools ([Law 531/2017](#), para. 61) and upper secondary general education ([Law 629/1998](#), paras. 7 and 22) are similarly prescribed by law.

Career education (guidance and counselling) is a compulsory element in the curriculum, comprising 76 hours of scheduled activities in students' timetables during classes 7 to 9. In addition, there is an entitlement for individual guidance and group counselling, and work-experience periods. In grades 1 to 6, guidance is embedded in the work of the classroom teachers. Since August 2016, in upper secondary level there is also 76 hours of compulsory time for students in career education. Guidance services are generally provided by school counsellors in cooperation with group advisers. Also, all teachers are expected to instruct their students in study skills. (Felt et al, 2017). From the beginning of 2018 the new law on VET requires that in each 3-year programme there is a compulsory module (25-30 hours) on the development of Career Management Skills ([Law on Vocational Skills 531/2017](#)). A personal competence development plan is drawn up for every student. VET providers and their guidance counsellors are the main source of information and guidance for students, but the public employment service produce labour market information, courses and guidance for young people as well.

Various working methods should be used in accordance with the needs and readiness of individual students and groups. These include individual discussions with a focus on personal issues, small group guidance and whole classroom activities. The groups are formed flexibly, taking into account the contents and opportunities for peer support. Within personal/individual guidance, students have the opportunity to discuss issues in relation to their studies, educational and career choices and their life situation. In small group guidance sessions, the student learns to deal with common issues within the group or those personal matters which can be shared with the other students in the group. The continuum of the career development process should be ensured by providing guidance and counselling at all grade levels. If appropriate, guardians should have the opportunity to discuss questions related to the students' studies and their choices during joint meetings with the teacher, student counsellor, student and guardian.

From the beginning of 2018 there is one [ECVET module of career education](#) in the national qualification requirement for each three-year vocational qualification. It is also integrated into all vocational subjects and transition skills are developed in cooperation with local employment and economic offices, companies and local youth services. Students are entitled to have support in the design and implementation of individual customised development plans during the studies.

There is no explicit legal framework in guidance for higher education but the student entitlement for individual study plans is included in the legislation for universities and universities of applied sciences. Most universities and universities of applied sciences have career centres for students (see section [Guidance for higher education students](#)).

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

The [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#) is responsible for establishing political guidelines and strategic goals for national labour market policy. The guidance and counselling services of the [Employment and Economic Development Offices](#) are based on three service lines and are mainly targeted at clients outside the education and training institutions:

- a. employment and business services are targeted at clients who have competences for direct placement;
- b. business competence development services are for clients who need upskilling or support in defining their goals and future options;
- c. individuals who need support in assessing or developing their employability skills can have access to supported employment services. The service lines have been developed to meet the evaluated needs of various client groups.

In order to promote active citizenship, inclusion and transition to employment, Finland has established new cross-sectoral one-stop guidance centres (*Ohjaamo-centers*) with low-threshold and outreach services. Starting from 2020 there are around 70 pilot centres in Finland. The service providers from different sectors (national and local employment services, youth services, career practitioners in schools, social and health professionals, and voluntary third sector) are very committed to this new cross-sectoral and networked service model (Felt et al, 2017; Kettunen & Felt, 2020).

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Quality assurance

During the last two decades, the Finnish [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#) has introduced continuous quality development projects at every level of the labour administration, focusing on labour services in general. The principle has been to support regional and local individual and also small-scale quality development and standard-setting projects, including vocational guidance. The criteria for quality standards for all service products were established in 2000-01 and used as a basis clients' follow-up studies and staff training in client services. Some regions/local PES have used their own implementation of career guidance standards, followed up at the regional/local level only (Kangaspunta et al, 2015).

In addition to organisational level client satisfaction measures, there are some national attempts to measure the value of career guidance provision. Since the early 2000's the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has carried customer feedback surveys on main PES services (*Työ- ja elinkeinohallinnon asiakaspalvelukeskus*, ASPA), including guidance services. The aim of the surveys has been to examine the different customer groups' experiences of the services they had taken part in at the employment offices; the general quality of services, access to services and the feedback on different factors of services as well as the monitoring of the development of customer satisfaction from year to year, in order to find out the strengths and to distribute the good working practices. The ASPA results have been systematically used at all levels of the organisation for strategic planning and improvement to PES services (Kangaspunta et al, 2015).

A new prototype for monitoring and assessment of PES guidance services, Working-life relations radar, was implemented in 2014. An individual user can examine her/his own situation on eight dimensions which are identified as crucial elements in the transition to the working life: goals and alternatives, confidence, level of activity, flexibility and adaptability, skills and competences, health, significant others and current material situation. The radar also includes an optional ninth dimension specific for an individual client. This assessment will be carried out by the client at the beginning of the counselling process and a second time in the later phase of the process; this offers a basis for summaries of different client groups. This pilot proposes a new infrastructure for a long-term sustainable feedback mechanism as part of the overall national framework for

quality development and evidence in vocational guidance (Kangaspunta et al, 2015). The tool can be also used for quality development and impact evaluation of the guidance services. Currently Finland is developing a project in which this tool could be integrated into the online feedback mechanism.

To support the implementation of the new core curricula 2014, the [National Agency of Education](#) produced in August 2014 quality criteria for career education and guidance services in schools, including the following themes:

- a. sufficient and comprehensive guidance;
- b. support for active engagement and taking responsibility;
- c. joint ownership of provision by all staff members;
- d. competent and qualified staff;
- e. promotion of equity and equal opportunities;
- f. institutional plan for service delivery;
- g. support for transition phases;
- h. support for choices on education and career;
- i. employability skills and familiarisation with working life;
- j. interactive cooperation in service provision;
- k. marketing the career services;
- l. integrating the quality criteria in local quality development frameworks.

There is no national monitoring on guidance indicating to what extent the quality criteria are reached. Municipalities are required to evaluate their own performance in education annually and guidance is part of this process; while many schools are doing it, the next challenge is to get consistent national data. The [national association of school counsellors](#) also conduct their own surveys and give feedback to policy makers.

Higher education institutes have established a [network](#) and carry out follow-up studies on the placements of their graduates. The institutes have established projects to improve the use of collected data in career services and curriculum development. In addition to the quantitative data on placements, an online service, [töissä.fi](#), collects narratives and career stories from graduates from different sectors on how they have been able to utilise their competences in the labour market.

In connection with the implementation of the Youth guarantee (YG) initiative, Finland has published online [national indicators](#) to monitor the progress of the YG, including unemployment rates, placement, number of NEETs, and well-being. The municipalities can follow their progress using this national reference data. The Finnish Ministry of Employment and the [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) established in 2010 a national lifelong guidance working group whose current mandate is for 2020-21. One of the strategic objectives proposed by the group in 2011 was the establishment of a national quality assurance system for lifelong guidance. In 2015, the National Audit Office of Finland noted that the central administration data on the amount and quality of guidance are relatively deficient, and little is known of the extent or depth of local differences (NAOF, 2015). The Office recommended, that along with a thorough state assessment of guidance, ministries should develop tools suitable for the continuous monitoring of the development of guidance needs, resources, the availability of services and quality assessment. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has designated the [Finnish Institute for Educational Research](#) to collect and conduct research which can be used as an evidence base for regional and national decision-making in lifelong guidance (Kangaspunta et al, 2015). In 2019, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment commissioned and evaluation of guidance services within the PES services to feed the development the national feedback mechanism on guidance services in 2020.

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Career management skills

The [Finnish National Agency for Education](#) draws up the national core curricula, which give guidelines for the delivery of career education and guidance in school settings. According to the national core curricula the beneficiaries of career education and guidance include students, their families, the school and the whole society.

Each school is required to have an institutional plan on the design and delivery of career education and guidance services. The plan must include descriptions on the structure, operating practices, division of labour and staff responsibilities as well as local multi-professional networks. The implementation of career education is a continuum and the current focus is on the design of individual study programmes, learning techniques, self-knowledge, further education, acquisition of career management skills and transition to the labour market. Guidance services are generally provided by school counsellors in cooperation with group advisers. All teachers are expected to instruct their students in study skills (FNAE, 2016). In VET, there is one [ECVET module](#) on the development of career management skills. In addition, career education is integrated into all vocational subjects and the career management skills are developed in cooperation with local employment and economic offices, companies and local youth services (Felt et al, 2017).

In higher education institutes (HEIs) guidance and counselling services vary in quantity and quality. The HEIs have autonomy in designing the services, but they are developing indicators identifying how this process is promoted, supported and monitored as part of the quality assurance systems of the whole organisation. For example, students are invited to use their portfolios in reflecting their own professional competence development and employability skills. Some institutes pay attention to the placement of their graduates as an indicator of the labour market relevance of their programmes. In the employment sector, the public employment services have sub-contracted the delivery of career coaching and job search coaching from external private providers. The acquisition of career management skills and coaching has been included in the labour market training courses for the unemployed receiving benefit (Felt et al, 2017).

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Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Municipalities are generally required to evaluate their own performance in education annually, and guidance is part of this process. The [National Association of School Counsellors](#) also conduct their own surveys and give feedback to policy makers. When schools evaluate the effectiveness of work-experience periods, they collect data from employers. The student unions ([Union of Upper Secondary school students in Finland](#) and the [national Union of Vocational Students in Finland](#)) conduct annual studies on the provision and their feedback receives a lot of publicity. Guidance is also referenced in the annual studies on student well-being and in the [youth barometer](#) of the national employer organisations. Research into career learning needs and outcomes is based on individual thematic studies conducted mainly by the staff members of the training units of career practitioners. The latest national evaluation of career education took place in 2002 and was conducted by the [Finnish National Agency for Education](#). Later on, the city of Tampere in central Finland (about 215,000 inhabitants) has updated this tool and used it in 2004, 2008 and 2012 and 2016 to monitor the guidance services within the local settings (Felt et al, 2017).

The [Academy of Finland](#) is currently funding the development of a research project *Oma Linja*, which tries to identify signals of social exclusion within comprehensive education and develop measures for early intervention. Preliminary results of the project are available on the project website.

In addition to organisational level client satisfaction measures, there are national attempts to measure the value of career guidance provision. Since the early 2000's the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has carried out customer feedback surveys on main PES services (*Työ- ja elinkeinohallinnon asiakaspalvelukeskus*, ASPA), including guidance services. The aim of the surveys has been to examine the different customer groups' experiences of the services they had taken part in at the employment offices; the

general quality of services, access to services and the feedback on different factors of services, as well as the monitoring of the development of customer satisfaction from year to year in order to find out the strengths and to disseminate good working practices. The ASPA results have been systematically used at all levels of the organisation for strategic planning and improvement to PES services (Kangaspunta et al, 2015).

A new prototype for monitoring and assessment of PES guidance services, Working-life relations radar, was implemented in 2014. An individual user can examine her/his own situation on eight dimensions which are identified as crucial elements in the transition to the working life: goals and alternatives, confidence, level of activity, flexibility and adaptability, skills and competences, health, significant others and current material situation. The radar also includes an optional ninth dimension specific for an individual client. This assessment will be carried out by the client at the beginning of the counselling process and a second time in the later phase of the process; it offers a basis for summaries of different client groups. This pilot proposes a new infrastructure for a longer term sustainable feedback mechanism as a part of the overall national framework for quality development and evidence in vocational guidance (Kangaspunta et al, 2015).

In 2015, the National Audit Office of Finland noted that the central administration data on the amount and quality of guidance are relatively deficient, and little is known of the extent or depth of local differences (NAOF, 2015). The Office recommended, that along with a thorough state assessment of guidance, ministries should develop tools suitable for the continuous monitoring of the development of guidance needs, resources, the availability of services and quality assessment. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has designated the [Finnish Institute for Educational Research](#) to collect and conduct research which can be used as an evidence base for regional and national decision-making in lifelong guidance (Kangaspunta et al, 2015). In 2019, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment commissioned and evaluation of guidance services within the PES services to feed the development the national feedback mechanism on guidance services in 2020.

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Career information, ICT in guidance

In Finland, the [Ministry of Finance](#) steers public sector information management, structural development, and joint services and service provision. It also steers the general criteria for information security, prepares information and administrative policies and develops digital administration. Each ministry steers the development of information management and related projects in its own administrative branch.

Public guidance service provision in Finland relies increasingly on online applications and tools. This follows the national strategic objectives in terms of making guidance services more easily available for all target groups to allow access to the services at a time, place and method most convenient to the users. There are several Internet portals developed by the national education and employment authorities, municipalities, different regional actors, and youth information centres, to serve the information, advice and guidance needs of their primary client groups. Mostly these services are available in Finnish and Swedish, often also in English.

The [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) and the [National Agency for Education](#) have the main responsibility to maintain the national level database of education and training provision in Finland. This data is integrated in the [Studyinfo.fi](#), which is the official and up-to-date website with all the information about study programmes leading to a degree in Finland. The service can be used to find different study options and apply for the studies online. For students in VET, there will be an online tool eHOKS ([Henkilökohtaisen osaamisen](#)

[kehittämissuunitelma](#)) for the documentation of individual plans for competence development. This service will include tools for individuals to manage data on upskilling, provide support for transition phases from education to work and from work to education, and to create an interface for transferring personal knowledge within different e-governance systems within the boundaries of the user's consent. The aim is to launch the service by the end of 2019. The *Studyinfo* portal is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture as the learner's online services.

[Kyvyt.fi](#) is an ePortfolio service where users can build and maintain an electronic portfolio. A great variety of tools for producing and saving content can be found using the service. There is no need for material to be saved to the service as the user can use artefacts in their portfolio pages that are located in other cloud services such as YouTube, Google Drive, Prezi, SlideShare, and Picasa. The user documents and reflects their own skills and know-how, for example by collecting and organizing artefacts and by keeping a learning journal. The user creates pages and collections and publishes them to the people they want to. As a social web application, *Kyvyt.fi* offers its users the possibility to network with other users. The service's group feature makes it possible to create and utilize different kinds of peer- and project groups. *Kyvyt.fi* can be integrated to Optima- and Moodle learning environments and users register primarily through their member organisations' learning management system.

[Compleap](#) is an EU-funded project which aims to develop a platform for a flow of modular services for competence development. The conceptual framework will support the creation, evolution and implementation of a structured, digitalised lifelong learner pathway integrating competence mapping, comparing education offer, labour market needs and learning analytics. To find an optimal solution for competence development, it focuses on the needs of diverse groups, such as NEETs, migrants and those who change jobs.

[ePerusteet](#) (eNational Core Curriculum) is an online platform for facilitating the digital creation and publishing of qualifications and local-level curricula. It offers tools to describe and make transparent what kinds of learning paths are available for completing qualifications. The digital format of presenting curricula and qualifications allows the use of their content through an open interface, for example, in digital study materials or learning environments. This online platform enables a flexible and continuous revision of curricula and qualifications, keeping them up to date. Follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of the actions described in the curricula is supported by this online platform.

[Study in Finland](#) (SIF) maintained by the National Agency for Education, is a web portal designed to provide information, resources and tools for those who are interested in studying in higher education institutions in Finland. The content is planned mostly with a view to those people who live outside Finland and who are unfamiliar with the study options, higher education institutions and how to apply to them. One of the main functions of the *Study in Finland* website is to promote English-taught bachelor and master degree programmes offered in Finland. The web portal links the visitor to information sources such as the study programme information platform [Studyinfo.fi](#), direct links to higher education institutions and the immigration services. It also links the visitor to *Study in Finland* social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

[Nuorten elämä](#) (Young life) provides information, advice and guidance for young people in different life situations and directs young people looking for information to their local service provider.

[Maailmalle.net](#) website is targeted at Finnish young people who are looking for international mobility opportunities. The website is maintained by the National Agency for Education and is published in Finnish and Swedish. The website is open to all those interested (without identification) and has information on various mobility opportunities: exchange and degree studies, training, volunteer work and youth exchanges abroad. It also contains young people's stories about their own international experiences.

[Töissä.fi](#) provides information about the working life of graduates from the universities and universities of applied sciences. The website is produced by higher education institutions. Students and graduates can explore what kind of working opportunities could be possible based on their degree and individual learning programmes.

[Foreammatti.fi](#) is an online service which provides labour market forecasts. It offers information about current open vacancies, average salaries in the professions as well as competences valued by employers in job advertisements. The service is targeted at those seeking work, planning to change their career but also at those who are interested in receiving labour market information. For professional use, the paid version offers a more comprehensive information package for career professionals.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment maintains a common open-access platform (a [Marketplace](#)) for recruitment and competence development services for citizens. A pilot webpage was opened in the Autumn 2019. The [TE telephone services](#) provide general advice on employment and economic development services and instructions for using the online services. The telephone services can also advise the clients on the further use of the services provided by the TE Offices or other experts.

[Ohjaustaverkossa.fi](#) (Online guidance) is a new online tool for guidance professionals working in different settings. Within this platform the users have opportunity to present anonymous questions for guidance professionals or create a space for confidential dialogue as a registered user. The pilot phase of this tool was launched in the autumn 2019 to complement the services in the regional one-stop-centres and online TE-services.

The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Employment have a joint high-level working group focusing on the interoperability of existing and future e-services for citizens. The long-term goal is to develop multi-channelled career services for citizens as an integrated element of national e-governance strategies.

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Training and qualifications

Finland has a strongly professionalised system of guidance qualified by international standards. The qualifications of the guidance counsellors at comprehensive and secondary level education, and also of the vocational psychologists, are defined in legislation (628/1998, *Asetus opetustoimen henkilöstön kelpoisuusvaatimuksista*). In addition to the required qualification for teachers (a master degree or a special qualification for vocational-school teachers), all guidance counsellors must have a certificate of the completion of specialist postgraduate diploma in guidance and counselling (60 ECTS). Another option is to take a master's degree programme in guidance and counselling (300 ECTS, which includes the pedagogical training equivalent with 60 ECTS). In 2007, the parliamentary committee on education agreed a [recommendation](#) for a ratio of 250 students per counsellor, to guarantee the entitlement for individual counselling (Felt et al, 2017).

Practitioners are required to participate in in-service training every year. They have the main responsibility for the organisation and implementation of guidance and counselling services. According to the national core curricula and the whole school approach in guidance, every teacher in vocational schools is engaged in guidance activities as part of their teaching duties (FNAE, 2016a). The qualification requirements for counsellors working in higher education or other career experts in TE-offices are not laid down by law.

In 2016 there were 1050 career practitioners working in comprehensive and upper secondary level education and almost 100% had the qualifications required in the legislation (Kumpulainen, 2017).

There has been significant improvement in professionalism during the last decade; in 2016 almost 97% of guidance counsellors had a legally defined qualification for the job. In 2010, 88% of practitioners were qualified. This is due to the increase in training programmes both through national sources and also through targeted ESF-funded training projects for guidance counsellors for adult learning and VET. The training programmes attract applicants. In 2016 only 11% of the applicants were enrolled in training programmes in universities and 24% in training programmes in universities of applied sciences; 84% of the students in 2016 were female (Kumpulainen, 2017).

In 2019, two universities and five universities of applied sciences provided programmes which meet the legally defined qualifications. The annual total intake is between 200-240 students. Namely:

- a. [Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences](#)
- b. [Häme University of Applied Sciences](#)
- c. [JAMK University of Applied Sciences](#)

- d. University of Jyväskylä
- e. University of Eastern Finland
- f. Oulu University of Applied Sciences
- g. Tampere University of Applied Sciences

A prerequisite of a vocational guidance psychologist in the public employment services in Finland is a master's degree in psychology. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment hosts an in-house training unit which provides in-service training for all labour administration staff.

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Funding career guidance

In comprehensive and upper secondary level education, the funding for guidance services is included in the total educational services budget. The budget consists of the national share from the [Ministry of Finance](#) for the basic services and the estimated unit costs for a single student in different age cohorts and different levels of education. Students with special needs have higher unit costs. The municipalities add their own share on top of the national resources.

Guidance services and the production of career information are financed from the government budget both in education institutions and in employment services. Information, guidance and counselling activities are based on legislation related to the Ministries responsible for education and employment services. Some special services provided by employment offices are liable to a fee charged to the private enterprises using them. These services might include counselling, mainly as a part of outplacement services to enterprises (further information in Finnish language is available from the [Finnish National Agency for Education](#)).

The Euroguidance network is financially supported by the European Commission; [Euroguidance Finland](#) receives additional funding from the [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) and the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#).

Sources

Career guidance for school pupils

The [National Agency for Education](#) draws up the core curricula and requires that the principles and division of labour among the different players in guidance and counselling activities are defined locally. The current core curricula (2016a and 2016b) were adopted by the National Agency for Education in 2014. Further information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

In the comprehensive education grades 1 to 6, guidance and counselling is integrated into other subjects and in conjunction with other school activities. Special emphasis is given in grades 7 to 9 where guidance and counselling is integrated into the school timetable as a distinct subject, since basic education graduates are called to make their first career choices by selecting their next education step.

Guidance and counselling are essential from the students', school's as well as society's perspective. Career guidance activities must form a coherent entity throughout the comprehensive education and a continuum to further education and studies after basic education. Guidance and counselling promotes success and progress in studies, completion of studies and effectiveness and impact of the whole education system.

The objective of guidance and counselling is to promote students' personal growth and development so that they can further develop their study skills and social skills as well as to acquire knowledge and skills necessary in their further life. Guidance and counselling supports students in developing skills to make choices in daily life, studies, further education and their own future life based on their readiness, values, situation and interests. With the help of guidance and counselling, students learn to become aware of their own possibilities and have influence on the planning and decisions concerning their own lives. Students should be encouraged to reflect and challenge their own preconceptions about education and careers, and to make their choices without gender bias. Guidance and counselling is provided in cooperation with guardians.

Each school is required to have an institutional plan on the design and provision of career guidance and guidance and counselling services. The plan must include descriptions on the structure, operating practices, division of labour and staff responsibilities in guidance and counselling as well as on the local multi-professional networks which are needed to achieve the objectives of guidance and counselling. The plan should also include descriptions of the cooperation between homes and school, between the school and the working life and description of the practical introduction-to-working life periods. The implementation of the institutional plan should be evaluated systematically. Student's progress is monitored during basic education and in the transition phases to further studies by means of cooperation between teachers and guidance counsellors, and, if necessary, by cooperation with other professionals. In their daily work, teachers should use current and up-to-date information on further studies, and labour market trends as well as keep track of the changes occurring.

Career education acts as a link between the school, community and working life. Guidance and counselling promotes social justice, equity, equality and inclusion and prevents marginalisation from education and employment. The knowledge and skills developed in guidance and counselling contribute to the availability of a skilled labour force, to the balance between skills' demand and skills' supply and to competences' development in the future labour market.

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Coronavirus Update

In Finland, career guidance is an integral part of education. This implies that COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on education apply also on career guidance services in a similar way like other parts of education. The teaching in basic education was organised by means of distant learning until 14 May 2020. The upper secondary level general education is provided at distance until the end of spring semester 2020. Even though teaching was organised in alternative ways, pupils who have a special support decision were provided contact teaching where necessary. However, the Government recommended that, whenever possible, such children should be cared for at home. Students' welfare was organised to the extent that was possible.

In general, schools are prepared to organise opportunities for distant learning. Most of the schools are already using well-established online communication platforms between homes and schools, while students have access to online learning environments to obtain information and upload their assignments. However, schools vary in the availability of equipment and network capacities when students have been moving to distance learning. Teachers and career practitioners have been asked to move quickly to distant learning and they have been forced to have a swift change in their working methods. One additional challenge is the available number of devices at homes, since parents are also working at distance and are sharing the devices with their children. In order to widen access to technology, a group of major companies in technology initiated a campaign, which encourages enterprises to examine if they have any spare laptops they could donate to schools as additional resources for them. That is one solution to the above-mentioned equipment shortage regarding some schools and families face.

Different measures have been already taken in supporting schools in their work. The schools have local teachers specialised in the use of technology and as peer mentors, they assist their colleagues in using online platforms in distant learning. The [National Agency for Education](#) has released a set of guidelines on distance learning and shares examples of good practices on their website. In addition, it has opened an information service, where education providers and schools can ask any questions they may have. Furthermore, companies who are developing online learning solutions have united their forces to give free access to their materials (including career education) and help the teachers to discover how new educational tools can be used in distance or how to complement their traditional way of working.

The career practitioners are sharing actively their expertise in working at distance using their internal communication channels. While taking advantage of the latest technological innovations, the practitioners have encouraged each other to keep in mind that not all the communication has to take place in the Internet; the telephone is a relevant channel that can be used effectively in reaching out with the students

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Guidance for VET participants

Career education and guidance for upper secondary vocational education is a continuum of the services within comprehensive education. The national core curricula cover issues on the design of individual study programmes, learning techniques, self-knowledge, further education, acquisition of career management skills and transition to the labour market. Guidance services are generally provided by school counsellors in co-operation with group advisers. All teachers are expected to instruct their students in study skills (Felt et al,

2017).

From the beginning of 2018 there is one [ECVET module of career education](#) in the national qualification requirement for each three-year vocational qualification. It is also integrated into all vocational subjects and the transition skills are developed in cooperation with local employment and economic offices, companies and local youth services. Students are entitled to have support in the design and implementation of individual customised development plans during their studies. VET providers are required to pay special attention to those students with learning difficulties, absences from school or problems with everyday life. Employment opportunities for special needs students are developed in cooperation with local employment offices, business life and municipal health care and social services.

Please see the description of VET system in Finland [here](#).

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Coronavirus Update

The government specifications of vocational education and training are related to assistive services and aids required for demanding special support and learning. This concerns especially students who need assistance the most. In addition, an exemption provision is no longer necessary for drawing up and updating personal competence development plans.

Guidance for higher education students

In Higher education institutes (HEIs) guidance and counselling services vary in quantity and quality. The [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) regulates the provision of guidance, but each institution also has a level of flexibility in designing its respective guidance methods. Higher education institutes often provide courses to promote employability skills among students. The Universities Act ([L558/2009, Yliopistolaki](#)) and the Act on Universities of Applied Science ([932/2014, Ammattikorkeakoululaki](#)) state that higher education institutes must arrange teaching and guidance in order to support students in graduating in the estimated time period. The acquisition of the employability skills can also be integrated in other courses during the individual learning paths.

The HEIs have autonomy in designing the guidance services, but they are developing indicators identifying how this process is promoted, supported and monitored as part of the quality assurance systems of the whole organisation. The student affairs office is usually the place where students can ask about things linked with their studies, work practice, and student grants. In faculties there are student affairs secretaries who are responsible for students' study plans and for planning, developing and coordinating counselling services.

In the universities of applied sciences (former polytechnics) career centres with career professionals are responsible for guidance and counselling services. Academic tutors and other teachers, along with peer tutors, take part in counselling as agreed in the polytechnic's counselling plan.

Higher education institutes have established a [network](#) and carry out follow-up studies on the placements of their graduates. The institutes have established projects to improve the use of collected data in career services and curriculum development. In addition to the quantitative data on placements, an online service [Töissä.fi](#) collects narratives and career stories from graduates from different sectors on how they have been able to utilise their competences in the labour market.

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Coronavirus Update

The premises of educational institutions, universities, universities of applied sciences, basic art education, as well as civic education and other liberal education institutes will be closed until the end of spring semester 2020, and face-to-face teaching will be mainly suspended (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). Teaching and guidance will be organised as widely as possible in alternative ways, including distance learning, various digital learning environments and solutions and, where necessary, independent learning.

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Guidance for adult learners

As in most European countries there is a growing need for adult guidance in Finland. The guidance services in adult education institutes vary. However, the legislation on adult education includes student entitlements to support in individual study plans and recognition of prior learning. According to the Finnish integration law (1386/2010, *Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä*) immigrants have also the right to an integration plan. This includes defining the individual needs and goals of the immigrant and the services that are needed to achieve the goals. To promote coherence in adult guidance the government implemented a national development programme for adult guidance under the European Social Fund period 2007-14. This included 40 regional projects focusing on adult guidance. There was also special emphasis on qualifying career practitioners in adult learning and 250 teachers obtained 30 ECTS training in basic counselling skills (further information can be found [here](#)).

Within validation of formal and non-formal learning, adults are entitled to a personalised learning plan. Personalisation refers to customer-oriented planning and implementation of guidance, advisory and support measures for a student engaged in preparatory training for a competence-based qualification and a candidate attaining a competence-based qualification. The education provider's task is to attend to personalisation and provide the required expert guidance to the candidate. The education provider must cooperate with the organiser of competence-based qualifications, working life representatives and, if necessary, other experts in the field (Finnish National Board of Education, 2013).

The latest Act (2012) on public employment and business services provides detailed instructions on the purposes and principles underpinning the employment and business services offered by the employment and the economy offices. The career services are organised in three service lines (employment and business services, business competence development and supported employment services) to meet the different needs of various user groups and are multi-channelled. Within this national framework, local offices have some flexibility in determining how they operate and how they use their resources. The key mission in the 2012 reform was to organise the services that meet the evaluated needs of various client groups. The reform covers the overall service delivery; namely, offices, vacancies and job profiles, online services, visual appearance and legislation. In the new legislation the previous separate concepts of *vocational guidance*, *educational advice* and *vocational rehabilitation* were merged into one concept *vocational guidance and career planning*.

Tampereen ammatillisen koulutuskeskuksen toimintamalli opiskelijoiden ohjauksessa ja aiemmin opitun tunnistamisessa ja tunnustamisessa ammattitutkintojärjestelmän viitekehityksessä (guidance and validation within the competence-based qualification system at TAKK) is a Finnish guidance practice established in 1994 by [TAKK Tampere Adult Education Centre](#) (*TAKK Tampereen aikuiskoulutuskeskus*). Its main funding source is the [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) (MEC).

The main model of linkage between validation and guidance as provided at TAKK can be identified as 'integration'. TAKK aims to produce a skilled and competent workforce and to strengthen social cohesion and equity. It provides all activities required by the legislation to obtain a CBQ (competence-based qualification):

- a. the arrangement of the applicant's skills examination (application phase);
- b. the determination of the most suitable vocational qualification and the guidance/support measures provision (acquiring skills and competences for the qualification phase);
- c. the successful completion of competence test(s) (completion of qualification phase).

Depending on the individual, education and training can be offered as labour market training, self-motivated studies or apprenticeship training.

The main target group can be defined as adults in general. Competence-based qualifications are open to all, regardless of their age, work experience or educational background. Participants form a heterogeneous group including low skilled/qualified persons, unemployed, people from different disadvantaged groups (immigrants/refugees), apprentices and people with higher education qualification studying for a VET qualification at TAKK, use the CBQ system. Guidance and counselling at TAKK is provided by various actors: guidance counsellors, trainers, customers advisors/study secretaries and workplace instructors. However, the candidate's responsible trainer has the key role in the coordination and preparation of the 'individualisation' plan (personal study plan), according to the guidelines and principles of TAKK, which are based on legislative requirements.

Sources

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TAKK Tampereen aikuiskoulutuskeskus (TAKK Tampere Adult Education Centre). <https://www.takk.fi/etusivu/>

Guidance for the employed

Guidance for unemployed and employed young people and adults is regulated by the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#), which is responsible for employment, entrepreneurship and labour as well as for immigrant integration policy. Central to the provision of guidance to jobseekers are the [Employment and Economic Development Offices](#) (TE offices) that provide services according to the Government's steering documents and guidelines. Guidance is customer-focused and performance-oriented and aims to serve the needs of individual customers, enterprises and organisations. TE offices are part of the local administration under Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment ([ELY Centres](#)).

Guidance through the TE offices guidance is offered from career guidance practitioners as well as from vocational guidance psychologists. However, employment and career guidance services in Finland are also offered through: regional and national business service organisations ([Enterprise Finland](#), [Team Finland](#)), educational institutions, and private recruitment and career guidance agencies (Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment).

Sources

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Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. <https://tem.fi/en/frontpage>

Team Finland. <https://www.team-finland.fi/en/>

Coronavirus Update

The online services of the Finnish [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#) have a specific section on [additional information](#) on the impact of the coronavirus to the working life.

Sources

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Guidance for unemployed adults

Experts from employment and economic development services help individuals in finding education and training, career choice or career solutions that are compatible with their life situation. Services provided by the [Employment and Economic Development Offices](#) (TE offices) support individuals in all stages of their career:

- a. looking for a job;
- b. thinking about their career choices;
- c. planning how to develop their skills;
- d. considering a career change.

Individuals can use online services or a national helpline or visit a local TE office. The TE offices work together with actors such as municipalities, the [Social Insurance Institution \(Kela\)](#) and various job creation projects, which will increase possibilities of finding a job (further information can be found [here](#)). According to the TE website, the following services are available:

- a. vocational labour market training which can improve vocational skills and enhance the possibilities of finding a job. Individuals can also complete their comprehensive school studies, if the lack of a basic education certificate is a barrier to starting the vocational studies;
- b. labour market training programmes which are open for applications (in Finnish);
- c. entrepreneur training which will be useful if individuals are thinking about starting their own business or have already started one;
- d. integration training that provides immigrants with basic skills needed in vocational education and training or working life and in Finnish society;
- e. self-motivated study on unemployment benefit that may be possible on certain conditions, if no training that is suitable can be found among the labour market training programmes. Studies of this type must always be arranged with the TE office;
- f. apprenticeship training can also be a pathway to obtain a vocational qualification. Individuals can also improve skills by completing some modules of a qualification.

Sources

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Social Insurance Institution of Finland. <https://www.kela.fi/web/en>

Coronavirus Update

Employees who are given a notice of termination will have access to the change security services offered by the Employment and Economic Development Offices (TE Offices) already during the notice period. The services provide support for job seeking as well as coaching and training for re-employment. Further information can be found [here](#).

Sources

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Guidance for older adults

Older adults are entitled to use the mainstream services of the local TE offices (see section [Guidance for unemployed adults](#)).

Guidance for early leavers

In comprehensive education, the national core curricula for pre-primary and basic education include a systematic way of organising support, with a focus on the earliest possible support in order to prevent the emergence and growth of problems. Support for growth, learning and school attendance fall into three categories: general support, intensified support and special support. Everyone is entitled to general support; it is a natural part of everyday teaching and learning processes. Intensified and special support are based on careful assessment and long-term planning in multi-professional teams and on pupils' individual learning plans (FNAE, 2016b) (see section [Guidance for special needs and disabilities](#)).

The [Academy of Finland](#) is currently funding the development of a research project *Oma Linja*. The project aims to identify signals of social exclusion within comprehensive education and to develop measures for early intervention. Preliminary results of the project (also in English) are available on the project website.

Youth workshops support young people under 29 years old in tackling issues related to education and training, working life and life management. The workshop activities are based on learning by doing through coaching and practical work. Young people can contact a workshop directly or through the [TE office](#), social welfare office or their municipal [Ohjaamo](#) advisory service point.

Youth workshop activities are organised by municipalities, associations and foundations, among others. They are available in over 90% of all municipalities in continental Finland (further information can be found [here](#)). The [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) is responsible for developing the workshop activities. The Ministry provides assistance via grants handled by the regional State administrative agencies.

Outreach youth work assists young people under the age of 29 who are excluded from education and working life or who need support in accessing services. Outreach youth work offers young people early support. These activities cover most of the country, but municipalities decide whether or not to organise them. The Ministry of Education and Culture supports the recruitment of social workers for outreach youth work with grants handled by the regional State administrative agencies (further information can be found [here](#)).

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FNAE (Finnish National Agency for Education) (2016b). *National core curriculum for general upper secondary schools 2015*. Oppaat ja käsikirjat 7.

Ohjaamo-centers. https://ohjaamot.fi/en_US/etusivu

Oma linja. <http://omalinja.fi/in-english/>

Guidance for NEET

Actions for NEETs will be followed up during the current ESF programming period under a package of measures titled *Sustainable growth and jobs 2014-2020 Apt competence*. -s. Altogether 63 regional projects focusing on smooth transitions were co-ordinated by the Finnish National Agency for Education in co-operation with the "Zoomi" project.

In 2015-20, Finland is developing integrated guidance services with regional one-stop guidance centres (*Ohjaamo*) within the European Social Fund programme. The centres, part of the Youth guarantee, will give support to young people in transitions aged under 30, and encourage them to remain in education and work. The centres function as an aid for young people until a longer-term solution to the situation is found, or until the young person starts studying or moves into employment. Apart from official bodies, educational institutions and workshops, social rehabilitation and health services, the centres' wide collaborative network includes third sector organisations, voluntary organisations and other bodies that work with young people. They also function as a link to the business community through local companies and trade associations and promote meetings between employers and young people. The young people themselves are actively involved with their centre and can implement various peer-group activities (Kangaspunta et al, 2015).

As a service model, each centre strengthens and simplifies services for young people and eliminates the duplication of activities. Alongside the face-to-face services there is a parallel national development project for integrated all-age online career services. The development of these services is coordinated by the Central Finland ELY Centre through its *Kohtaamo* project. Face-to-face services support existing multi-channel approaches such as the national telephone helpline, the education advisory service provided through the TE Customer Service Centre and the Finnish National Board of Education's portal, *Studyinfo.fi*.

One-stop guidance centres are based on the knowledge, advisory and guidance services of various organisations as well as on the complementary skills and cooperation between social and health care providers. The operating model requires strong partnerships between the various actors and will develop new operating practices and skills in multi-sector management. The fundamental idea of the operation is that the professionals working at a centre, work as employees of their host organisations (including municipality, career and education guidance, educational institution, the Kela benefits service), but are based in the joint centre premises. The labour input into a centre's operation can vary from full-time to collaborative periodic on-duty sessions. The development of the competences of those working at the centre is supported by the **Ministry of Education and Culture** (Kangaspunta et al, 2015).

The operational model of the one-stop guidance centre was merged with the Youth guarantee municipal experiment implemented during 2015-16 through the **Ministry of Finance**. The objective of the municipal experiment is to strengthen cooperation between municipalities and the career and education guidance service to improve the effectiveness of services for young people. In May 2017, the Government decided that the pilots will have a sustainable status alongside the reform of guidance services within the employment sector and allocated national budget funding for the centres starting in 2018 (further information can be found [here](#)).

Sources

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Ohjaamo-centers. https://ohjaamot.fi/en_US/etusivu

Studyinfo.fi (Opintopolku.fi). <https://studyinfo.fi/wp2/en/>

Guidance for young people at risk

The [Academy of Finland](#) is currently funding the development of a research project *Oma Linja*, which aims to identify signals of social exclusion within comprehensive education and to develop measures for early intervention. Preliminary results of the project are available on the project website.

The project will develop a *My path* programme based on research, the purpose of which is to aid transitioning into secondary education. The programme is developed by economists, psychologists, education researchers and an NGO that has long been working with the young from immigrant backgrounds. The project creates research-based practical tools for students and teachers at comprehensive schools, which help young people make their education choices and simultaneously prevent social exclusion. Additionally, *My path* provides policymakers with research information on preventing social exclusion. The programme's tools are intended to be used as part of the basic services in schools.

Sources

Academy of Finland. <https://www.aka.fi/en/>

Oma linja. <http://omalinja.fi/in-english/>

Coronavirus Update

Even though the local youth centres have been closed, they have started organising virtual meetings with youth groups and the [National Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work in Finland](#) (Verke). Verke provides materials on the use of digital media and technology as part of youth work.

Sources

Verke (National Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work in Finland). <https://www.verke.org/verke/?lang=en>

Guidance for persons with disabilities

The Finnish basic education system has been based on the philosophy of inclusion for a long time. Basic education is the same for all. There is no streaming, but children are supported individually so that they can successfully complete their basic education.

The focus is on the earliest possible support to prevent the emergence and growth of problems. According to the national core curricula, support for growth, learning and school attendance fall in three categories: general support, intensified support and special support. Everyone is entitled to general support. It is a natural part of everyday teaching and the learning process. Intensified and special supports are based on careful assessment and long-term planning in multi-professional teams and on individual learning plans for pupils.

If general support is not enough, pedagogical assessment shall be done and a plan for intensified support will be handled in the pupil welfare group of the school. Following this, a learning plan is drawn up for the pupil.

If intensified support is not enough, new and more extensive pedagogical statements on the pupil shall be done. The education provider collects information from teachers and the school's welfare group. Based on this information, the education provider makes an official decision concerning special support. Following this decision, an individual education plan shall be drawn up for the pupil (FNAE, 2016b).

All students in vocational education and training have the right to receive sufficient personal and other educational guidance as needed. Vocational institutions are required to pay particular attention to the counselling and guidance of students with learning difficulties, absences from school or problems with everyday life. Students in need of special educational or student welfare services are provided with an individual education plan. This plan must set out details of the qualification to be completed, the requirements and scope of the qualification, the individual curriculum drawn up for the student, as well as the student welfare services and support required for studying. Vocational special needs education and training is primarily provided in regular vocational institutions with all other students. There are seven separate vocational special schools. These provide special facilities and services to promote vocational education and training primarily for students with the most severe disabilities or chronic illnesses

Sources

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Guidance for immigrants

Under the [Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration](#), which entered into force in 2011, authorities must develop multi-sectoral cooperation as part of the integration process. The [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#) is responsible for the integration of immigrants, integration legislation and promotion of employment among immigrants. In specific, the task of the [Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration](#), which comes under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, is to support immigrants to integrate into the Finnish society. The Centre of Expertise in Integration of Immigrants:

- a. compiles and distributes research, statistical and indicator data as the basis for the planning and implementation of integration and promotes the assessment of effectiveness of the activities;
- b. disseminates good practices and organises events for professionals meeting immigrants as part of their work in which they can strengthen their expertise;
- c. develops useful work processes and cooperation networks.

The [Integration.fi](#) website maintained by the Centre of Expertise in Integration of Immigrants, provides up-to-date information about integration and the reception of refugees.

Furthermore, the TE offices provide early phase integration services specifically intended for immigrants, including:

- a. guidance and advice for immigrants;
- b. an initial assessment;
- c. an integration plan;
- d. integration training.

The National Board of Education and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment have specified possible new implementation models for the integration training of adult immigrants. These training models concern the integration training provided to adult immigrants both as labour market training and self-motivated education, in accordance with the national core curriculum for integration training for adult migrants

[Maahanmuuttajien ohjauspalvelut ja osaamisen tunnistaminen](#) (SIMHE, Supporting immigrants in higher education in Finland services) is a project promoting work-related migration, initially launched in 2016 and funded by the Finnish [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) (MEC). Today, the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences of Helsinki is in charge of the services' organisation, which aims to enhance the identification and recognition of prior learning among highly educated immigrants of different statuses residing in Finland and to make it easier for them to be directed to higher education and/or into labour markets at national and regional levels. The purpose is to ensure that the immigrants' previous studies and degrees are identified and recognised according to national policies, as quickly as possible, so that they can find their way to appropriate education and career paths.

SIMHE services consist of two major parts; the guidance and counselling services provision by email service (entry phase-step 1), by personal guidance discussions (step 2) or by participating in so-called *Guidance generalia lectures*, based on the individual's own needs, situation and preferences, and the recognition of prior learning and competences (RPL, AHOT in Finnish). This permits identification of the participant's skills and competences acquired through previous studies in higher education/study-related work experience in the country of origin and his integration into the Finnish society and labour market. The RPL process, based on the developed process Mapping of competences (*Osaamisen kartoitus*), includes five consecutive phases:

- a. applying (registration);
- b. orientation (group and individual);
- c. in-depth professional discussion with an expert in the specific field of study (individual);
- d. feedback session (group);
- e. personal guidance discussion.

Although some of the methods used in providing guidance and validation services are group-based, the approach towards clients is clearly individual-centred.

The activities provided by SIMHE-services are related to validation stages (from identification to assessment), but no certification phase is included in the RPL. The main ones are implemented by the staff of SIMHE-Metropolia and Metropolia University of Applied Sciences or other education providers-partners:

- a. the [ELY Centre](#) (*Elinkeino Liikenne ja Ympäristökeskus*, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment);
- b. the [National Agency for Education](#) (EDUFI);
- c. the [TE Employment Service Office](#);
- d. the [Ministry of Education and Culture](#).

The main model of linkage between validation and guidance as part of the SIMHE-Metropolia services can be characterised as 'integration', as both elements, guidance/counselling and RPL, are part of the same procedure and are provided by the same organisation.

Guidance for refugees (*Pakolaistaustaisen ohjaus*) project supports refugees in transition to education or working life. This ESF-funded project (2018-20) brings together the different service providers and stakeholders and looks for synergies in the guidance provision with the regional settings. The project organises also in-service training programmes for the service providers.

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Guidance for other groups

Prisons provide training opportunities for inmates and this is based on national legislation on education and training (*Act on imprisonment 23.9.2005/767*). The inmates have opportunities to get guidance on personalised learning programmes according to individual learning goals. The prisons cooperate with local schools on the design and completion of the learning programmes. If the inmate has low basic skills or low skills in Finnish language, the prisons provide also opportunities for upskilling and targeted language education (further information can be found [here](#)). The learning plans are integrated within the personal development plan. Some prisons provide a special training programme *Work and independent living supporting and rehabilitative*, training that lasts from three weeks to six months (Hahtala, 2013). The programme consists of modules on the development of personal learning skills (e.g. learning to learn, communication skills, ICT literature), personal agency (e.g. self-awareness, social skills, basic information of the society, managing daily schedules), employability skills and optional courses based on individual interests.

Sources

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