

Finland

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

May 2005

Title: Finland: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2005

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Finland. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2005. Later editions can be viewed at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Finland

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Finland is a republic which became independent 1917. Finland's republican constitution dates from 1919. It was renewed 1999. The constitution defines the basic rights of citizens and establishes the fundamental principles of legislation, administration, jurisdiction, public finances; national defense, education, religious communities and public offices. According to the constitution, basic education is compulsory and provided free of charge to everyone. The state is also charged with the responsibility to provide or support vocational education and training, general education, higher education and university education.

Finland is a parliamentary democracy with a multi-party system. Legislative power rests in the unicameral parliament of 200 members elected for a four-year term. The cabinet must enjoy the confidence of parliament. In the 2003 general election the Social Democrats received 24.5 %, the Coalition Party 18.6% and the agrarian Centre Party 24.7% of all given voices.

The government is appointed by the president, who is elected by direct, popular vote for a term of six years. In the 2000 president election Finland got for the first time a female president.

Executive powers are vested in different levels of government: central government, regional government and local government. Central government is represented by ministries and central administrative agencies that answer directly to the appropriate ministry. The National Board of Education is one such agency, answerable to the Ministry of Education. Ongoing changes will see these administrative units transformed into expert agencies. Regional government is represented by 6 provinces. One of these, the Åland Islands form an autonomous, demilitarized and unilingually Swedish province of Finland. They consist of more than 6 500 islands and skerries, 6 400 of which are larger than 3 000 square metres.

The main thrust in ongoing campaigns to streamline public administration is towards a leaner central government and greater autonomy at the local level.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Finland covers 338 000 square kilometers and is one of the biggest countries in Europe. The population density of Finland is 17.0 inhabitants/square kilometers. About 83.3 % of the population lives in urban areas.

Table 1.2.1

1991	1996	2001	2003
4 986 430	5 132 320	5 190 102	5 219 732

Finland's population of 5.2 million is divided into three language groups. Around 92.3 % speak Finnish; the Swedish-speaking minority comprises about 5.6 % of the total; and the Sámi-speaking minority 0.03 %. There are two official languages in the country, Finnish and Swedish. In Åland the official language is Swedish. All public services (including education) are available to Finnish citizens in their mother tongue (Finnish or Swedish).

There are two official national churches; the Lutheran Church (comprising 84.9 % of the population) and the Orthodox Church (1.1 %). 12.9 % of the population has no church affiliation.

Table 1.2.2 Age-specific demographic trends

AGE GROUP	1990	1996	2001	2030
0 - 24	1 616 058	1 604 540	1 588 345	1 137 487
25 - 64	2 705 010	2 784 625	2 821 231	2 529 588
65 +	667 347	743 155	780 526	1 389 126

Total	4 986 415	5 132 320	5 190 102	5 290 563
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Source: Statistics Finland

Statistics Finland has forecasted that the population will remain above five million at least until 2030. The proportion of the working-age population will continue to grow at the beginning of the 21st century but after that it will decrease rapidly. In 2030 approximately one fourth of the population will be over 65.

Table 1.2.3 Migration

YEAR	IMMIGRATION	EMIGRATION	NET IMMIGRATION
1991	19 001	5 984	13 017
1996	13 284	10 587	2 707
2003	17 800	12 100	5 800

Finland has relatively few immigrants - circa 1.9 % of the population. The biggest group are persons coming from the former Soviet Union. Approximately one fifth of the immigrants come from the EU.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

The economy and welfare have grown steadily in Finland throughout the period of independence until the 1990's. The strong growth trend has only been broken by the depression in the 1930's and the Second World War, when production declined. After the war, there was another lengthy period of growth, during which time the GDP increased by about 5% a year. At the beginning of the 1990's, the Finnish national economy was hit by the worst depression since the war.

Table 1.3.1 Gross domestic product per capita (at current prices)

YEAR	€
1991	17 643
1996	19 226
2003	27 512

The Finnish economy surged upwards again at the end of 1993, when the annual change in GDP volume became positive. At the same time, Finland started to recover from the collapse of eastern trade caused by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, compensating for it by directing exports to other countries. Membership of the European Economic Area and subsequent integration into the European Union has increased the volume of trade with other Western European countries. The uncertain outlook in the world economy was reflected strongly in Finland in 2001. The economic growth, however, began to pick up in 2002: the GDP grew by 1.4 %.

Table 1.3.2 Unemployment rate

YEAR	MEN	WOMEN	- 25 YEARS	TOTAL
1991	8.0%	5.1%	16.5%	6.6%
1996	14.3%	14.9%	29.7%	14.6%
2001	8.6%	9.7%	19.8%	9.1%
2003	9.2%	8.9%	21.8%	9.0%

In 1990, when Finland's big depression began, there were 2.5 million employed Finns. In 1994 unemployment rate peaked close 17 per cent, though Government increased labour policy training and reduced labour force by other measures. Thereafter economic growth rate has been very high and nowadays there is ca. 2.3 million employed Finns or nine per cent more than in 1994, but a lot less than before the big depression. Therefore Finland owns abundant reserves of employment, because in the long run it is possible to increase Employed labour force by raising low Employment rates back to "normal level".

The economic growth is anticipated to strengthen in 2003 and further in 2004. Annual growth is estimated at three per cent in the next few years. In 2001 the unemployment rate was 9.7 % for women and 8.6 % for men and 9.1 % altogether. The net wealth of Finnish households is at the average level for member states of the European Union. In 2000, Finland's GNP per capita was around 25 500 euros (ca. 22 600 USD).

Table 1.3.3. The average change in consumer price index per year

1991	1996	2003
4.1%	0.6%	0.9%

Finland's road to industrialization started in the 19th century with the harnessing of forest resources. Forests are still Finland's most crucial raw material resource, although the engineering and high technology industries have long been the leading branches of manufacturing. The industrial structure of Finnish exports has changed dramatically over the past decades. The wood and paper industry accounted for well over half of exports less than thirty years ago. Now the paper industry is only one of three major export sectors, the other two being electronics and other metal and engineering. Electronics is a success story in Finnish exports. Its growth in the 1990s is mainly based on mobile phones and other telecommunication equipment. Economic composition by sector is to be found in the following table.

Table 1.3.4. Industrial structure 2003

AGRICULTURE	5.1%
MANUFACTURING	26.3%
SERVICE	68.6%

Table 1.3.5 Employed person by industry (Condensed classifications)

		AGRICULTURE	MANUFACTURING	SERVICE
1991	MEN	11.0%	40.7%	48.4%
	WOMEN	6.6%	16.0%	77.4%
	TOTAL	8.9%	28.7%	62.4%
1996	MEN	9.5%	39.4%	51.0%
	WOMEN	5.3%	13.9%	80.9%
	TOTAL	7.5%	27.3%	65.2%
2001	MEN	7.5%	39.4%	53.1%
	WOMEN	3.7%	13.8%	82.5%
	TOTAL	5.7%	27.2%	67.1%
2003	MEN	6.8%	39.1%	54.1%
	WOMEN	3.4%	12.5%	84.1%
	TOTAL	5.1%	26.3%	68.6%

Table 1.3.6 Employment rates by sex 1991, 1996 and 2003

YEAR	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
1991	71.5%	68.4%	70.0%
1996	64.2%	59.5%	61.9%

2003	68.9.7%	65.7%	67.3%
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If employment rates are reaching evenly normal level during the 50 years, so the employed labour force in Finland will stabilize to around 2.4 million persons. With this labour force it easy to increase by 50 per cent real incomes per before Finland celebrates the 100th anniversary of Independence.

Table 1.3.7 Percentage expenditure on education and training (GNP)

1995	6.5%
1999	5.8%
2002	6.0%

In the 1990s, the expenditure on education and training of the GNP was about seven per cent. At beginning of 2000, the share decreased to six per cent. One reason for the reduction was the decrease of public expenditure since the late 1990s due to the improved economic situation in Finland.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level, % (2002)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-15	35%	43%	22%
FINLAND	25%	42%	32%

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

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with a low level of education (2000, 2002)

FINLAND		
2000	2002	2003
8.9	10.7	

Low level of education: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2 (ISCED 1997)
 Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

The rapid growth and content renewal of know-how and professional requirements, the ageing of the work force, differences in education and training between generations, and the growing number of the retirement-age population require that education policy is weighted towards lifelong learning. An essential element in education policy weighted towards lifelong learning is to create a solid basis for constant learning. Other Important objectives in education and training from the perspective of lifelong learning are:

- to provide young people entering the labour market with better learning skills and the comprehensive knowledge and skills they need for professional mobility, and to raise the level of education among the whole age group
- to increase the adults' educational level and to improve their access to education and training
- to develop the assessment and recognition so that they enable young and adult students to benefit from prior knowledge acquired in working life, civic activities or otherwise
- to offer opportunities for the whole age group leaving basic education to continue studying in upper secondary schools or vocational institutions
- to enhance the quality and appreciation of vocational education and training
- to develop upper secondary vocational education and training into a more feasible alternative to higher education.
- to develop teacher education
- to revise the grounds for educational financing to promote the aims of the education policy geared to lifelong learning

In 2002 three important reforms were launched in order to develop vocational education and training.

Over the next few years, skills demonstrations will be incorporated into all qualifications completed in upper secondary vocational education and training. The aim of the skills demonstrations is to improve the quality and the attractiveness of VET. Skills demonstrations are part of the assessment system in VET. Through skills demonstrations students will show how well they have achieved the objectives of their vocational studies and acquired the vocational skills required by the labour market. The skills demonstrations will be scheduled to run throughout the entire period of education and training and they will be organised in co-operation with workplaces. The objective is to organise skills demonstrations in work situations that are as realistic as possible, for example in connection with periods of on-the-job learning. Skills demonstrations will however only form part of the students' assessments; the school part will still be three years. Skills demonstrations aim to improve and assure the quality of vocational education and training. The pilot projects run from 2000 to 2006.

The performance-based funding model will be introduced gradually starting from 2002. The aim of the performance-based funding model is to improve the effectiveness and quality of VET. It will complement funding based on the operating costs of upper-secondary vocational education and training with performance-based funding. A further objective is to improve the steering effects of the funding system. The evaluation of schools will be based on quantitative indicators structured in four clusters:

- effectiveness (which means indicators on the transition of students from training to working life or continued studies at a higher level),
- processes (indicators on drop-outs and number of those who complete the whole study cycle),
- teaching staff (how well the teachers are already trained and can receive further training)
- and the financial situation of the organiser of VET.

In 2002, The Finnish Government launched a programme to improve the educational level of the adult population for the years 2003-2007. The aim of the programme is primarily to raise the educational level of adults with low education already in working life.

In 2003 the funding will make it possible to train almost 3,500 persons. The aim is that after 2003, there would be funding for training 10,000 persons annually. The programme has been granted 12 million euros for 2003. The funding for 2004-2007 will be left to the next Parliament which will be elected in March 2003.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Education policy is defined by Parliament and Government. In addition to educational legislation, these policy definitions are specified in various development documents and in the state budget. A central development document in the educational sector is the 'Development Plan for Education within the Administrative Field of the Ministry of Education and University Research' ('KESU'), which the Government approves every four years for the year of its approval and for the following five calendar years. The current plan for 2003-2008 was adopted at the end of 2003. The development plan includes development measures for each field and level of education, as well as the main definitions for education and research policy and the allocation of resources.

At the central administration level, the implementation of these policy definitions rests with the Government, the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education.

The Ministry of Education is the highest authority and is responsible for all publicly funded education in Finland. The Ministry is responsible for preparing educational legislation, all necessary decisions and its share of the state budget for the Government.

There are several expert bodies supporting the work of the Ministry. Usually social partners are represented in these bodies.

The National Board of Education (NBE) is a governmental body and functioning under the Ministry of Education. The NBE is a planning and expert body responsible for primary and secondary education as well as for adult education and training (not for institutions of higher education, however). The NBE draws up and approves national core curricula and requirements of qualifications, and evaluates the Finnish education system, with the exception of the higher education institutions. In addition, the NBE assists the Ministry of Education in the preparation of education policy decisions.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AT REGIONAL LEVEL

Finland is divided into six administrative areas called provinces. In each Provincial State Office, affairs falling under the administrative field of the Ministry of Education are conducted by the Education and Culture Department led by the Provincial Counsellor of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Regional Councils (altogether 15) draw up regional development plans in co-operation with the local authorities as well as representatives of economic life and non-governmental organisations. Regional development work also involves the Employment and Economic Development Centres (altogether 15). The functions of the centres include improvement of operating conditions for businesses, support for rural economy, promotion of employment and the functionality of the labour market and, in relation to them, promotion of labour market training. The Ministry of Labour is responsible for the administration and management of labour market training.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

The local authorities (municipalities) are responsible for organising basic education at a local level, and are partly responsible for financing it as well. There is no statutory obligation for the local authorities to organise vocational education and training, but they are obligated to assist in financing it. Vocational institutions are maintained by the local authorities, joint municipal boards (federations of municipalities), the State and private organisations. The local authorities and the joint municipal boards maintain the majority (about 80 %) of vocational institutions.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The responsibility for organisation, development and administration of education rests with an institutional board. Each vocational institution must always have a rector responsible for its operation. The general criteria for the organisation of education, administration, authority and duties of bodies and staff and other necessary matters are determined in the institutional regulations. In addition, institutions providing vocational education and training always have a student body.

Adult education may be provided by a local authorities, joint municipal boards, registered association, or foundations. Vocational adult education and training is usually organised in the same educational institutions as vocational education and training for young people. The responsibility for an institution's activities rests with its board and usually with a head of department or some other person specifically in charge of adult education and training.

In addition, there are Vocational adult education centres, which only organise vocational education for adults. Vocational adult education centres have a board accountable to the education provider and a rector responsible for day-to-day operations. The majority of adult education centres and vocational adult education centres are owned by local authorities or joint municipal boards. Continuing education centres of universities are subordinate to the universities.

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Finnish educational legislation has traditionally been detailed. However, there has been an attempt to develop the legislation, which is based primarily on types of educational institution, towards a general framework act, with the focus of regulation on education instead of institutions.

The legislation governing primary and secondary level education as well as part of the legislation governing adult education were reformed on 1 January 1999. The detailed legislation based on institutions has thus been replaced with more uniform legislation concerning the objectives, contents and levels of education as well as students' rights and responsibilities. The education system has remained unchanged, but the new legislation has substantially increased the independent decision-making powers of the local authorities, other education providers and schools. For example, education providers will decide independently on the institutions to provide education. Regulation of working hours in general upper secondary schools and in vocational education and training has been abolished, and arrangements for working hours are decided locally. Similarly, providers of general upper secondary education and vocational education and training may decide to purchase educational services, which means in practical terms that general upper secondary schools, for instance, may purchase their religious instruction from the local parish. In terms of basic education, the most significant change is the abolishment of the division of comprehensive school into lower and upper stages. However, a comprehensive school place will still be guaranteed to everyone, in accordance with the 'local school principle'.

Vocational education and training and adult education and training are based on following acts: Act 630/1998 and Decree 811/1998 on Vocational Education and Act 631/1998 and Decree 812/1998 on Adult Vocational Education.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The Vocational Education Act provides that special attention should be focused on working life needs in education. Education must be organised in co-operation with representatives of business life and other sectors of working life. The most important channels through which the social partners and representatives of business life can participate in the planning of vocational education and training at a national level are the Adult Education Council, the training committees and the Advisory Board for Educational Co-operation set up by the Ministry of Education as well as the governing bodies and consultative committees of educational institutions.

The Adult Education Council gives statements and proposes motions to develop adult education and training, and prepares reports on the situation of adult education and training. The task of vocational training committees and the Advisory Board for Educational Co-operation is to plan and develop vocationally oriented education and training and to promote interaction between education and working life in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education.

Vocational adult education and training includes a system of qualification committees. These are appointed by the National Board of Education and organised according to what is known as the tripartite principle. Their tasks include supervising and steering the organisation of competence tests, confirming qualifications and signing qualification certificates.

Usually, vocational institutions seek to establish local networks to become involved in regional business life. The board of a vocational institution may include a sufficient number of working life experts from those fields in which the institution provides instruction. Vocational institutions may also have one or more consultative committees. Consultative committee is composed of people representing the institution, its teaching staff, the major labour market organisations of the field and other experts involved in the development of the institution. The task of consultative committees is to promote the activities of the institutions and their co-operation with local working life. In addition, they may also handle curricula and other issues concerning the internal development of the institution.

There are a number of different ideological associations maintaining adult education institutions, which operate in accordance with a certain ideology. In these institutions, social actors are represented on the board differently from the traditional approach.

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

Diagram of education system

According to the Basic Education Act, children permanently residing in Finland are subject to compulsory education. Compulsory education starts in the year when a child becomes seven years of age and ends when the syllabus of basic education has been completed or 10 years after the beginning of compulsory education. The parents or guardians of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that children comply with this obligation. The local authorities are obligated to organise basic education free of charge for school-aged children living within their respective areas. The scope of the basic education syllabus is nine years.

The local authorities are responsible for organising basic education at a local level, and are partly responsible for financing it as well. The task of the local authorities is to offer all children of compulsory school age – including those with mental or physical impairments – an opportunity to learn according to their abilities. Almost all schools providing basic education are maintained by local authorities. Basic level education is also offered by a few dozen private education providers, which have been granted a licence by the Government for this purpose.

Over 90 per cent of those leaving post-compulsory education continue their studies. During the recent years, about 56 per cent continue in the general upper secondary education, about 35 per cent in the upper secondary vocational education and training and about 3 per cent in the voluntary tenth grade. The rest of the school leavers do not continue their studies immediately after compulsory education.

Students start upper secondary education at the age of 16. Usually upper secondary education takes three years. About one fifth of the students in general upper secondary education spend four years completing the schooling. The starting age in higher education varies because all students do not start their studies in higher education immediately after upper secondary education. Only about half of the new university students have accomplished upper general upper education the same year. Polytechnic degrees take 3 ½ to 4 ½ years to complete. The studies at the universities (master's degree) take at least five years.

Compulsory education starts in the year when a child has his/her seventh birthday. Participation in pre-school education is voluntary for children. There are no special admission requirements for pre-school education organised either in day care or in comprehensive schools. The decision regarding children's participation in pre-school education is made by their parents or other guardians. Pre-school education is provided free of charge.

Each local authority may decide whether to provide pre-school education at school, in a day-care or family day-care place referred to in the Act on Children's Day Care or at some other appropriate venue.

Pre-school education provided in conjunction with day care is usually organised at day-care centres. In addition to day-care centres, another relatively common form of day care is known as 'family day care', which refers to day care provided in a private home or in some similar home-like day-care environment ('family day-care homes').

Pre-school education for six-year-olds is provided in connection with basic education either in a separate pre-school group or by teaching pre-school pupils together with those in the first forms of basic education. As from 1 August 2001, the local authorities have been obligated to assign a pre-school place to all children in the year preceding the start of compulsory education.

3-4. PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Compulsory education starts in the year when a child has his/her seventh birthday, unless the child needs special education. Most basic education is provided by municipal comprehensive schools. In addition, there are private comprehensive schools, which are also connected with local authorities. The comprehensive school is a uniform school that lasts nine years. In addition to this, local authorities may provide those who have completed the basic

education syllabus with additional instruction with a scope of 1,100 hours. This '10th form' is voluntary for the pupils and the local authorities decide whether the form is organised. Basic education is free of charge for pupils, including meals, textbooks and other materials.

The subjects included in the curriculum are defined in the Basic Education Act. The Government decides on the overall time allocation by defining the minimum number of weekly lessons per year for common subjects. In forms 1–6, every pupil should basically receive the same education, but schools may focus on different subjects in different ways due to the flexible time allocation. In forms 7–9, both common and elective subjects are included on the curriculum. The curriculum also includes a workplace guidance period. Pupils' parents or other guardians decide which of the elective subjects on offer they will take.

According to the Basic Education Act, special education is to be provided primarily in conjunction with mainstream instruction. If a pupil cannot be provided with instruction in a regular teaching group due to disability, illness, delayed development, emotional disorder or for some other similar reason, s/he must be admitted or transferred to special education. In such cases, special education may also be provided in a special class or at some other appropriate venue. Instruction is given by a special class teacher.

The total number of pupils in basic education in 2001 was approximately 580 000; only 70 pupils did not attend the compulsory education.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

In Finland IVET does not exist at lower secondary level.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

Upper secondary education in Finland is divided into general and vocational education. General upper secondary and initial vocational education and training are primarily free of charge for students and the students are offered a free daily meal; small student fees may be charged for a specific reason with permission from the Ministry of Education. Students have to pay for textbooks and other materials.

In 2001 there were 129 000 students in general upper secondary schools and 160 000 students in upper secondary vocational education and training.

GENERAL

General upper secondary education (non-vocational) provides students with the capabilities to start university or polytechnic studies and vocational education building on the upper secondary school syllabus. General upper secondary education builds on the basic education syllabus. Students in general upper secondary education intended for young people are usually 16 to 19 years of age. The scope of the upper secondary school syllabus is three years and the completion of the syllabus requires the completion of at least 75 courses. The average scope of one course is 38 hours. Upper secondary schools hold the matriculation examination, the completion of which provides general eligibility for further studies at institutions of higher education.

Most providers of general upper secondary education are local authorities. In addition to these, general upper secondary education is also offered by institutions maintained by private organisations (7%) and by the State (2%).

VOCATIONAL

Since 1 August 2001 all programmes leading to upper secondary vocational qualifications take three years to complete and comprise 120 credits. One year of study consists of 40 credits, whereas one credit is equivalent to 40 hours of a student's work. The three-year vocational qualifications give general eligibility for both polytechnics and universities. All upper secondary level qualifications build on the comprehensive school syllabus. Students in vocational upper secondary education and training are mainly aged 16 years or more.

The qualifications can be completed in the form of institutional (school-based) education and training, apprenticeship training or competence-based qualifications.

Students generally apply for vocational education and training through the national joint application system. Selection criteria for vocational education and training usually include the general study record, grades emphasised in the field of study, work experience and various entrance tests. Priority is given to young people without prior vocational education. Students may be selected for education on special grounds through flexible selection.

Those who complete the qualification must have both extensive basic vocational skills for various assignments in their field and more specialised competence and vocational skills required by working life in one sector of the qualification in question. Specialisation within a qualification will be determined by study programmes and qualification titles. All upper secondary vocational qualifications with a scope of 120 credits include a period of on-the-job learning with a scope of at least 20 credits. On-the-job learning is focused, supervised and assessed study carried out in service or production capacities at the workplace.

The curriculum system of vocational education consists of the national core curricula, each institution's individual curriculum and personal study plans. The National Board of Education approves the qualification-specific core curricula and the requirements of each competence-based qualification. These are drawn up in co-operation with employers and employees in different fields, other representatives and experts of economic life as well as teachers and students.

The curriculum includes:

- vocational studies and on-the-job learning supporting these studies (90 credits);
- studies in the native language, the other national language and a foreign language, mathematics and natural sciences, the humanities and social studies, physical education and other art and practical subjects, as well as health education (20 credits);
- free-choice studies (10 credits).

These studies include at least 1.5 credits of student counselling.

Each national core curriculum is drawn up in such a manner that the qualification will provide extensive basic vocational skills for the various assignments in the field and more specialised competence and the vocational skills required by working life in one sector of the qualification. The scope of the core subjects common to all fields is 20 credits.

The core subjects include 16 credits of compulsory studies and four credits of elective studies.

The compulsory subjects are:

- Native language (Finnish, Swedish) 4 credits
- Other national language (Finnish, Swedish) 1 credit
- Foreign language 2 credits
- Mathematics 3 credits
- Physics and chemistry 2 credits
- Social, business and labour-market subjects 1 credit
- Health education 1 credit
- Physical education 1 credit
- Arts and culture 1 credit

Educational institutions providing upper secondary vocational education and training are primarily owned by local authorities and joint municipal boards. Also private organisations and foundations own vocational institutions (19 %). The State owns five institutions providing special education. Most institutions provide instruction in several different fields of vocational education and training, which means that they are now larger and more diverse educational units than previously.

The sectors of education are as follows:

- Natural resources sector;
- Technology and transport sector;
- Business and administration sector;
- Tourism, catering and home economics sector;
- Health and social services sector;
- Culture sector;
- Leisure and physical education sector.

Table 4.3.1. Students in vocational upper secondary education and training 2003

SECTOR	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
NATURAL RESOURCES	4 113	4 299	8 412
NATURAL SCIENCES	2 319	5 749	8 068
TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSPORT	7 661	44 964	52 625
BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION	12 407	6 562	18 969

TOURISM, CATERING AND HOME ECONOMICS	13 771	4 816	18 587
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES	22 761	2 146	24 907
CULTURE	6 901	3 850	10 751
HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION	2 114	553	2 667
OTHER EDUCATION	230	931	1 161
TOTAL	72 277	73 870	146 147

Source: Statistics Finland, National Board of Education

Education in leisure activities and physical education is provided by institutions, which are part of the Finnish adult education system.

Students may freely choose free-choice studies from those on offer either at their own institution or at some other upper secondary level institution and include them in their qualification according to their own interests or vocational orientation; these may also include appropriate work experience. Free-choice studies can be either vocationally complementary or they may increase the number of courses in core subjects to such an extent that they may even enable students to complete general upper secondary school and/or the matriculation examination at the same time as the vocational qualification. They may also focus on personal interests. The scope of the free-choice studies may exceed 10 credits in the qualification. In such cases, the studies must be vocational studies, core subjects or general upper secondary school studies.

The education includes a period of on-the-job learning, during which students familiarise themselves in practical assignments required in the occupation and achieve the core objectives of the occupation as laid down in the curriculum. All 120-credit upper secondary vocational qualifications include a period of on-the-job training with a minimum scope of 20 credits. One of the aims of on-the-job training is to enhance young people's employment opportunities.

The final project may be a set of work assignments, a written paper, report, project assignment, product or equivalent. The final project is focused so as to serve working life needs, provide an opportunity to participate in working life and facilitate transition into the labour market. It may be performed individually, in a group or as a more extensive project. The minimum scope of the project is two credits. In addition to the final projects, institutions may also arrange final examinations.

In vocational education and training, students in need of special teaching or student welfare services due to disability, illness, delayed development, emotional disorder or for some other reason are provided with instruction in the form of special education. A personal plan covering the organisation of education is to be drawn up for each student.

Vocational special institutions provide special facilities and services to promote successful vocational studies. The education is intended for students with severe disabilities or chronic illnesses, but students with no such disabilities are also admitted to free study places. Students apply to the institutions directly and the institutions accept applications throughout the year.

The Vocational Education and Training Act provides that special attention should be focused on working life needs in education. Education must be organised in co-operation with representatives of business life and other sectors of working life. The most important channels through which the social partners and representatives of business life can participate in the planning of vocational education and training at a national level are the training committees set up by the Ministry of Education and the governing bodies and consultative committees of educational institutions. Usually, vocational institutions seek to establish local networks to become involved in regional business life.

In 2002 of comprehensive school graduates went

- 55 % to general upper secondary education,
- 37 % to vocational upper secondary education and training,
- 2 % to comprehensive school's 10th form,
- (6 % did not immediately continue studying).

Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general / vocational), 2000

FINLAND	
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION TOTAL ENROLMENT	292 429
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	55%
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	45%

Upper secondary education: ISCED 97 level 3
 Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Education statistics based on ISCED 97

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Upper secondary education in Finland is divided into general and vocational education. The qualifications can be completed in the form of institutional (school-based) education and training, apprenticeship training or competence-based qualifications.

All upper secondary level vocational qualifications available at educational institutions may be obtained through apprenticeship training (see DI 0403). In addition, it is possible to complete further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications in accordance with the Vocational Adult Education Act.

Apprenticeship training is based on a national core curriculum or the guidelines for the relevant competence-based qualification, according to which the student's individual learning programme is formed. It is drawn up so as to allow for the needs and prerequisites of the workplace and the student. The programme defines the qualification to be completed, the national core curriculum or requirements of the competence-based qualification to be observed in the instruction, the scope of the qualification, central assignments, theoretical instruction included in the training programme, the timing of the completion of studies during the training programme, the instructors responsible for the studies, and other issues relevant to the arrangement of the studies. The student's previous education and work experience must be taken into account and accredited in the learning programme. The learning programme is drawn up by the student, the employer and the local administrative authorities in co-operation, so that it can be appended to the apprenticeship contract when the contract is approved.

The practical training period in apprenticeship training takes place at the workplace in connection with ordinary work assignments. This is complemented by theoretical studies, which may be arranged at institutions providing vocational education and training, at vocational adult education centres or at other educational institutions, where necessary. At the education provider's own institutions, theoretical instruction for apprenticeship training leading to an upper secondary vocational qualification may only be arranged in those fields of education, for which the Ministry of Education has granted a licence to provide education and training.

Apprenticeship training is based on a written employment contract of fixed duration between the employer. An apprenticeship contract can be concluded if the employer and the education provider have agreed on organising apprenticeship training.

A further requirement for approving the contract is that the training place is engaged in production and service activities of sufficient size and that the work equipment is adequate to fulfil the requirements of the training in accordance with the curriculum or the requirements of the relevant competence-based qualification. In addition, the personnel must also be qualified in terms of vocational skills, education and work experience in order to be assigned as responsible instructors of apprentices.

The apprenticeship system requires that the student is no less than 15 years of age at the time of signing the contract and has completed the basic education syllabus or equivalent. In addition, a person, who does not fulfil this criterion but who is deemed by the education provider to have sufficient capabilities to cope with the training, may also be admitted as a student.

People interested in apprenticeship training usually have to acquire the apprenticeship training place themselves; most contracts are signed so that the person interested in apprenticeship training contacts the employer in order to start the training.

The organisation of instruction is not regulated in the apprenticeship training either. However, the training mainly emphasises on-the-job learning and the integration of practical and theoretical instruction. Approximately 70–80% of the time used for learning takes place in the training workplace. The student works and learns in the working environment, where the student's training is entrusted to the responsible on-the-job instructor(s). Theoretical education is mainly provided by a vocational institution or vocational adult education centre.

The apprentice's wages are paid by the employer on the basis of the collective labour agreement in force in the field concerned. The pay varies in different fields, but is in practice about 80% of the wages of a skilled worker in that particular field. The employer is not obligated to pay wages for the time spent in theoretical training, unless otherwise agreed.

In vocational education and training, students in need of special teaching or student welfare services due to disability, illness, delayed development, emotional disorder or for some other reason are provided with instruction in the form of special education. A personal plan covering the organisation of education is to be drawn up for each student. (See DI 0403).

The Vocational Education and Training Act provides that special attention should be focused on working life needs in education. Education must be organised in co-operation with representatives of business life and other sectors of working life. The most important channels through which the social partners and representatives of business life can participate in the planning of vocational education and training at a national level are the training committees set up by the Ministry of Education and the governing bodies and consultative committees of educational institutions. Usually, vocational institutions seek to establish local networks to become involved in regional business life. (See DI 0403).

In 2001 participants in apprenticeship training totalled 17 913 in upper secondary vocational training and 27,408 in additional training.

Table 4.4.1. Students in the apprenticeship training in vocational upper secondary education and training 2003

SECTOR	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	DROP-OUT
NATURAL RESOURCES	551	393	824	94
TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSPORT	788	4 530	5 091	353
BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION	3 565	1 435	3 646	354
TOURISM, CATERING AND HOME ECONOMICS	1 300	344	1 009	142
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES	3 516	403	3 283	159
CULTURE	146	123	225	10
HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION	512	307	959	40
TOTAL	10 378	7 535	17 913	1 152

Source: Statistics Finland, National Board of Education

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

In Finland this level includes specialist vocational qualifications, which are considered competence-based qualifications. There are three levels of competence-based qualifications: initial vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. The initial vocational qualifications completed in the form of competence-based qualifications correspond to those taken in vocational education intended for young people. The further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications are primarily intended for adults – mainly for people skilled in different fields to demonstrate their practical competence and vocational skills. With the further vocational qualifications or specialist vocational qualifications adults can improve their position in the labour market. Further vocational qualifications are considered ISCED 3-level education and specialist vocational qualifications ISCED 4-level education. (See DI 0802).

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

In Finland, institutions of higher education include universities and polytechnics.

According to legislation governing universities, the purpose of universities is to promote independent research and scientific knowledge and to provide the highest education based on this research and knowledge in their particular

fields of study. In their activities, universities must also aim to prepare students to be of service to their native country and all humankind.

The objective of the studies leading to a polytechnic degree is to provide the necessary knowledge and skills for professional expert functions on the basis of the requirements of working life and its development needs. Polytechnics carry out research and development, which serve polytechnic education and support working life. They play an important role in regional development as providers of high-quality education and developers of the economic life of the regions, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises.

The general eligibility for the higher education is an upper secondary qualification. Almost all students (over 90 per cent) at the universities and the majority of the students at the polytechnics have an general upper secondary qualification. The path from upper secondary VET to higher education is clearly less used. About one fifth of the students of the polytechnics have a VET background.

Instruction at institutions of higher education is free of charge. In the university sector, undergraduate students (those on Bachelor's and Master's programmes) pay a small membership fee to the student union every year; in return, they get reduced price meals, health care services and other social benefits. The fee is voluntary for postgraduate students.

UNIVERSITIES

University education is divided into the following twenty fields of study, which are regulated by field-specific decrees pertaining to degrees: theology, humanities, law, social sciences, economics and business administration, psychology, education, natural sciences, agriculture and forestry, sports sciences, engineering and architecture, medicine, dentistry, health sciences, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, music, art and design, theatre, drama and dance, as well as fine arts.

The Finnish matriculation examination provides general eligibility for university education. In addition, those with a Finnish polytechnic degree, post-secondary level vocational qualification or at least a three-year vocational qualification also have general eligibility for university education.

The structure of university degrees has been reformed in almost all fields of study. The new system introduced a 'lower academic degree', usually called the Bachelor's degree, into almost every field. Its scope is at least 120 credits, in other words, three years of full-time study. The minimum scope of the 'higher academic degree', called the Master's degree in most fields, is 160 credits, in other words, at least five years of full-time study (or two years after completing the Bachelor's degree). The scope of the Master's degrees in engineering, architecture and landscape architecture taken at universities of technology is 180 credits. Postgraduate programmes, i.e. those leading to Licentiate and Doctor's degrees, are available for students with a higher academic degree (in some fields, the Bachelor's degree for specific reasons) or a corresponding foreign degree.

POLYTECHNICS

Polytechnics usually offer teaching in a number of different fields. Polytechnic students complete higher education degrees with a professional emphasis: the starting points for the development of these degrees include the requirements and needs of working life and the degrees qualify for different expert functions in working life. The minimum and maximum scopes of polytechnic degrees are mainly three and four years respectively.

In addition to education leading to polytechnic degrees, polytechnics organise adult education. Polytechnics carry out research and development, which serve polytechnic education and support working life. They play an important role in regional development as providers of high-quality education and developers of the economic life of the regions, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises.

On 1 August 2000, there were 29 polytechnics in Finland (18 owned by local authorities and joint municipal boards, 11 private). The Government grants permanent operating licences to the polytechnics. The operating licence granted by the Government to each polytechnic defines the mission of the institution. It determines the fields of education, the location of the institution, the number of study places and the language of instruction. The operating licence therefore defines the maximum number of students at the polytechnic. The annual intake of students for education intended for young people is agreed in consultations on targets and performance between the Ministry of Education and the polytechnics. In terms of adult education, they agree on the average annual number of students in degree-oriented education and specialisation studies.

The general requirement for admission to polytechnics is general or vocational upper secondary education and training. In other words, applicants eligible for polytechnic studies include those who have completed the matriculation examination, general upper secondary school or an upper secondary vocational qualification, or those with a corresponding international or foreign qualification.

Students apply to polytechnics through the joint national application system. The permanent polytechnics determine the principles of student selection independently. Student selection is based on previous study record and work experience and, in many cases, entrance examinations are also arranged.

Polytechnics provide education in the following educational sectors:

- natural resources;
- technology and communications;
- business and administration;
- tourism, catering and institutional management;
- health care and social services;
- culture;

- **humanities and education.**

Studies leading to polytechnic degrees are organised as degree programmes, which may include different specialisation areas. The degree programmes are designed and organised by the institutions and are oriented towards some field of working life requiring professional expertise and development. The Ministry of Education confirms each degree programme, but the institutions themselves design the curricula.

The polytechnic degree programmes consist of basic and professional studies, optional studies, practical training to promote professional skills and a diploma project. The Ministry of Education has usually confirmed the scope of the degree programmes as being equivalent to 140 or 160 credits (3½–4 years of full-time study). One credit is equivalent to about 40 hours of student work; one academic year comprises approximately 40 credits. Full-time students must complete their studies within no more than one year over and above the standard duration of the studies, unless the institution makes a specific exception. The scope of polytechnic post-graduate degrees is 40-60 credits.

The scopes of degrees in polytechnic adult education are as for young people, but the time spent completing the studies is usually less, averaging 2.8 years.

In recent years, polytechnics have strongly developed their teaching methods. The aim has been to increase students' independent and self-motivated study. There are various forms of project and teamwork and studies have also increasingly been transferred outside the institution. The role of the teacher has clearly become more instructor-oriented.

Compulsory practical on-the-job training, worth a minimum of 20 credits, enables many students to combine their diploma project included in the degree programme with hands-on work experience and to apply their theoretical knowledge in real situations. Topics for diploma projects come primarily from real problems in working life and, in addition, they are often commissioned by representatives of working life.

Polytechnics receive extra funding for disabled students in order to organise the teaching and support services they need.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND AND MAIN TYPES OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

Adult education offers citizens the opportunity to obtain education and complete qualifications at any stage of life. During the last few decades, adult education has become an increasingly important part of the national education planning and policy. Educational provision has increased and diversified along with development of financial aid for adult students. The 1980's were a period of development for vocational adult education. In the 1990's, working life and the labour market have changed rapidly and the standards of work assignments have risen. Consequently, lifelong learning has become an important principle, defining the education policy.

In recent years adult education has focused on improving the position of those adults who lack a post-compulsory education. The expansion of formal education has meant a rapid rise in the level of formal qualifications: younger age groups who enter the labour market have better and better qualifications. This has led to educational inequity between generations. Therefore it is important for the older generations that experiential knowledge and skills are recognised.

In general, participation in education and training is high in Finland, and learning is held in high esteem by the population. Correspondingly, the number of adult education institutions is relatively large compared with the population: adult education is provided by approximately 1,000 institutions under the educational administration. Some of them provide education and training only for mature students, but the majority cater for both young and adult students. Adult education and training is also organised in universities and polytechnics as well as in workplaces (in-service training).

Finnish adult education and training have traditionally been divided into two main areas: general adult education and vocational adult education and training.

0502 - PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

Parliament passes laws concerning adult education and training and decides on appropriations for adult education and training within the framework of the state budget. The Government enacts decrees specifying the laws and defines the general principles of educational planning and development in a five-year development plan for Education and Research.

The overall responsibility for the development of adult education and training rests with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is assisted by the Adult Education Council consisting of representatives of different interest groups. The National Board of Education, which is an expert body subordinate to the Ministry of Education, assists the Ministry in preparing decisions on education policy. The Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education regulate certificate-oriented adult education, i.e. education leading to qualifications. The Ministry of Education confirms the qualifications structure, which includes the titles of qualifications. The National Board of Education is in turn responsible for drawing up national core curricula and guidelines for vocational qualifications.

Provincial State Offices, which represent the intermediate level of administration, decide on the allocation of appropriations related to the programme to improve the educational level of the adult population during the years 2003 to 2007.

Adult education organisations are owned by the State, local authorities, joint municipal boards, as well as private organisations, such as associations, foundations and companies. Local authorities maintain the majority of general upper secondary schools for adult students, adult education centres, vocational adult education centres and other vocational institutions.

Institutions under public supervision are regulated according to similar legislation in terms of structure: the Government or the Ministry of Education grants permission to establish educational institutions and decides whether

these will be granted financial support by the State on the basis of educational needs. The majority of adult education organisations in Finland receive support from public funds, irrespective of their form of ownership.

Labour market training is purchased by the employment authorities and the financing is channelled through the Ministry of Labour. Adult employment training falls within the administrative sector of the Ministry of Labour.

It is important to notice that although some institutions provide education and training only for mature students, the majority cater for both young and adult students.

In-service training falls outside public funding and regulation; expenses are usually covered by the employer. In-service training is primarily short-term supplementary training and employees are trained according to the company's own operational strategies. Employees usually receive normal salary for time spent in training and participation in the training is decided by the employer.

The social partners participate in the planning and development of education through representation on various committees:

- the Adult Education Council set up by the Government, which deals with matters concerning the development, research and evaluation of adult education and training;
- the national training committees operating in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, which have been created to develop contacts between vocational education and working life;
- the qualification committees operating under the National Board of Education, which have been established to organise and supervise competence-based qualifications in vocational adult education and are responsible for arranging competence tests, for example;
- the consultative committees operating in vocational institutions, with the task of developing the operations of the institution and its contacts with local working life.

Finns participate actively in adult education. According to a study made in 2000, 54% of the population between 16 and 64 participated in adult education and training. However, there are significant differences in participation rates between different population groups and different parts of the country. Only 37% of people with only compulsory schooling pursued adult studies, while the corresponding figure among the graduate population was 76%. Similarly, 64% of employed persons and only 37% of the unemployed participated in adult education and training. Also a gender divide can be found in the participation rates women being more active in learning than men: 59 % of women and 49 % of men participated in adult education and training in 2000. Regional differences in participation have increased during the 1990's. The most active participation can be found among inhabitants of Southern Finland (57 %) where as the participation rate was only 47 % in the Province of Oulu. Yet another influential factor is the socio-economic status. The greatest difference in participation rate is between the upper-level white-collar workers (84 %) and entrepreneurs (42 %).

0503 - DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

Finland has a comprehensive network of institutions providing adult education and training. Adult education is organised at universities and polytechnics, vocational institutions, vocational adult education centres and special institutions, adult education centres and workers' institutes, folk high schools and summer universities, upper secondary schools for adults, study centres, physical education centres and music institutions, as well as by commercial organisations.

The spectrum of the instruction provided by various institutions as adult education is broad. Adults are offered education leading to initial qualifications, open studies which form a part of certificate-oriented programmes (e.g., open university), and preparatory training for competence-based qualifications. Regardless of the strong ties to working life and the labour market, also the so called liberal adult education has a long tradition in Finland. Liberal adult education offers non-formal (non-certificate-oriented) studies, which provide adults with opportunities to develop themselves without qualification- or occupation-specific aims. Courses in e.g. foreign languages, ICT, physical education, arts and music as well as various social studies are popular among adult population.

GENERAL ADULT EDUCATION

Upper secondary schools for adults provide mature students with a possibility to complete basic education or general upper secondary education. Liberal adult education offers non-formal (non-certificate-oriented) studies, which provide adults with opportunities to develop themselves without qualification- or occupation-specific aims. There are many different general, social and interest-oriented studies, which may be studied at institutions such as adult education centres, folk high schools, summer universities and physical education centres.

General upper secondary schools and adult education centres are mainly municipal institutions. Summer universities are usually private organisations, which are maintained by specifically established associations with members from the region's local authorities, institutions of higher education, student unions and private organisations. Also majority of folk high schools are privately owned, and they may emphasise a particular set of values and ideology and educational objectives. Physical education centres are maintained by support organisations, foundations and other private organizations.

The provision of liberal adult education also includes orientation courses for vocational or higher education in a particular field. At open university, students may complete different modules, but they cannot take a degree. However, students may gain the right to study for a degree after completing usually at least 60 credits' worth of studies included on a degree programme at open university.

VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Vocational adult education and training can be divided into initial and additional and supplementary vocational education and training. The education or training may be either certificate-oriented or non-formal. Certificate-oriented education is regulated nationally. The qualifications in vocational adult education are taken in the form of competence-based qualifications which are presented in detail under the heading "mechanisms/schemes to accreditate prior learning".

Initial vocational education for adults is always certificate-oriented and it is organised in the form of apprenticeship training or institutional training. Adults can study in vocational adult education centres and vocational institutions or follow the initial vocational education study programmes for young people in vocational institutions.

Additional and supplementary vocational training for adults is preparatory training leading to a further vocational qualification or a specialist vocational qualification. It may also be some other type of post-initial vocational training needed for working life assignments. The additional vocational training may be provided in the form of institutional training, apprenticeship training, in-service training or adult employment training.

In terms of the participation rate, in-service training is the most extensive form of adult education. According to studies carried out by industrial organisations, companies have started to invest more in the occupational development of their personnel. In all companies, at least half the salaried employees participate in some form of training.

Most of the vocational institutions and adult education centres are owned by the municipalities. Specialised vocational institutions, on the other hand, are mainly owned by businesses and operate in the sectors of trade and industry.

In adult education, it is also possible to study for the same polytechnic degrees as in education for young people. The time spent to complete a degree is usually slightly shorter, since adult students' previous studies and work experience may be taken into account. Polytechnics also offer open education. Open polytechnics provide the opportunity to study individual study units included in polytechnic degrees. Those who complete a study unit are granted a separate certificate or an extract from the credit record, depending on each polytechnic's own procedures. Open polytechnic studies do not lead to a degree, but if a student subsequently applies for and is admitted to degree-oriented education, completed open polytechnic studies may be recognised as part of the degree.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNEMPLOYED AND IMMIGRANTS

A special form of adult education is labour market training targeted for unemployed people and those in risk of unemployment. The adult employment training is cost-free to the participants and organised by vocational adult education centres and other suppliers of training services. The studies normally include on-the-job practice which complements learning and enhances the chances of employment.

According to the legislation on immigrant integration, which entered into force in May 1999, an individual integration plan must be drawn up for unemployed immigrants. In line with the legislation, the immigrants should be provided with the opportunity immediately upon arrival to start learning Finnish or Swedish or take part in labour market training in order to facilitate their integration into the Finnish society.

Finnish and Swedish courses for foreigners are available at vocational adult education centres, folk high schools, general adult education centres, adult upper secondary schools, the language centres of universities and colleges, and summer universities. Special training is also provided for those who cannot read or write. Remedial language teaching and the services of an interpreter are available to immigrants when needed.

The educational background of foreigners may not be an adequate basis for further studies in Finland. Therefore a special programme has been designed for them as a way of supplementing earlier studies and completing the Finnish basic education. Employment training, either vocational training or orientation studies, is also arranged for immigrant groups. Vocational courses may be initial, continuing or further courses or qualification-targeted courses. Orientation studies may take the form of special courses for immigrants with a specific vocational training, or courses designed for a particular sector.

0504 - ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES

Adults who are economically active may be granted study leave. Study leave is a period, during which the employer has released the employee from carrying out his/her duties according to their terms of employment for educational or study purposes. The employee, whose full-time employment with the same employer has lasted at least one year, is entitled to no more than a total of two years of study leave during a five-year period of employment with the same employer. The employer is entitled to postpone the start of the study leave once for a maximum of six months, if granting the study leave at that time would cause considerable disadvantage to the employer's business. In small enterprises, the beginning of the study leave may be postponed more frequently. The job rotation leave is another form of flexibility allowing for adult learning.

In Finland there are numerous forms of financial support available for adults, such as adult education grant, financial aid for student, vocational training grant, adult education supplement and support to participate in labour market training.

As from the autumn of 2001, those on study leave or on some other form of leave agreed with the employer may receive the adult education grant, which will repeal the current adult study grant and vocational training grant after a transitional period. The amount of the adult education grant is based on the applicant's regular income level prior to the commencement of studies. In addition, students may apply for a government-guaranteed student loan. The adult education grant is granted by the Education and Redundancy Payment Fund and the government guarantee is granted by the Social Insurance Institution. The basic benefit is financed from state funds and the earnings-related benefit is covered by the unemployment insurance fund using compulsory unemployment insurance contributions collected from employers and employees.

Those who started their studies prior to 1 August 2001 can apply for financial aid for students. It is granted to people aged 30–54 who have not studied during the past five years. Aid for adults is granted for a maximum of two years.

In addition to financial aid for adult students, adult students may receive other benefits, such as the vocational training grant and the adult education supplement. Those receiving the vocational training grant must be on study leave (see next paragraph) during the support period and their employment must continue after the studies. The

adult education supplement is granted to those who have been dismissed for financial or production-related reasons. The maximum period for both benefits is 18 months within a two-year period.

The unemployed and those in risk of unemployment may also apply for support to participate in labour market training; it is granted to (mainly vocational) training purchased by the labour authorities, and it aims to improve people's employment prospects or their opportunities to retain their jobs. The training allowance is the same amount as unemployment benefit and it is payable for a maximum period of 500 days. The purpose of this benefit is to provide unemployed people with an opportunity for self-motivated vocational study to complement their previous skills or to acquire a new occupation.

Information about adult education opportunities is widely and easily available on the Internet. Moreover, the labour administration organises careers counselling primarily for adults and those who have already entered working life. Counselling is available through employment offices. The labour administration also organises what is known as career guidance training, which is primarily intended for unemployed people and which aims to guide individuals into suitable training or to working life according to their own needs and abilities.

According to a review on adult learning conducted by the OECD in 2001, it is relatively easy to combine work and learning in Finland. Finnish employers are seen to be "pro-training", at least when it is job-related or vocational, and therefore it is often possible for workers to get access to training during working hours and generally keep their full salary. The cost generally incurred by training opportunities is, thus, fully supported by the employers.

Distance and virtual adult learning in Finland is popular, and eLearning is possible from basic education level to higher education. The National Broadcasting Company has played an essential role in providing radio and television programmes for virtual learning.

0505 - BRIDGING INITIAL AND POST INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A central long-term objective of the Finnish education policy educational planning has been to provide all population groups and regions of the country with equal educational opportunities. One aspect of this equity is the right to education irrespective of age. Increasing overall flexibility and freedom of choice as well as opportunities for individual pathways have been elements in the educational planning. The aim has been to ensure that there are no dead-ends in the education system.

The variety of providers and the fact that many of them co-operate open the way for adults to pick and choose. It is also becoming easier for adults who have left education early to return or for those who have chosen a vocational path to continue their education either to a higher level or to change to a more academic route. One of the keys to this flexibility lies in the competence-based vocational qualification framework.

Mature students can also complete their basic education and upper secondary school at an upper secondary school for adults or a folk high school. Teaching in upper secondary schools for adults mainly takes place in the evenings, because it was initially intended for adults studying while at work. However, day-time instruction has increased. Instruction may also be partially given in the form of distance education or by applying other special forms of instruction.

Most educational institutions essentially active in initial education (universities, polytechnics) develop specific programmes for adults. They are more concentrated, generally take place in the evening or during the weekend, and are based on a specific pedagogy. Universities offer courses to adults with a certain standard of initial education, thus their educational offer could be classified as education aimed at upgrading students' skills.

There are no upper age limits to degree programmes of initial vocational education or higher education. Therefore adults who fulfill the necessary admission requirements can apply to education. The basic requirement for vocational education is completion of basic education or corresponding syllabus, and in the case of higher education, general or vocational upper secondary education. All of these qualifications can be also acquired through adult education.

0506 - RE-EDUCATION AND RE-TRAINING NEEDS DUE TO LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY

Finnish society is facing a major structural change. Like many European countries, Finland has a rapidly greying population. Another important factor for the structural change is the concentration of workforce in the largest growth centres. The Government is making efforts to anticipate and meet the changing needs of the labour market.

According to the estimates by the Ministry of Labour, both the changing sectoral structure and internal trends within each sector indicate that there will be a growing demand for special skills. In practice, this will be reflected in a rise in various expert jobs and caring occupations. The changing job structure and growing demands for special skills underline the importance of education and training in meeting these needs. Adult education must be expanded to take in the entire adult population, the most urgent primary need being to raise the educational level of those without any basic vocational training. The number of jobs suited to poorly education workers with outdated skills has already declined.

THE PARLIAMENTARY ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A Parliamentary Adult Education Committee, appointed in March 20001, submitted its final report to the Minister of Education and Science in February 2002. In its report, the Committee outlined an adult education and training strategy and major actions to be taken up to 2010.

The Committee expressed its concern over that fact that even if the level of education has been constantly growing among the Finnish adult population, the increase in education and training has not been evenly distributed among all population groups. This has resulted in a significant difference in the level of education between older and younger generations. As regards secondary qualifications, there is a particularly large difference between the age brackets 55-64 and 45-54. About half of the population over 55 years of age are untrained and only one third in the 45-54 age bracket. In younger age groups, 84% of young men and 87% of young women have at least upper secondary qualifications. This disparity is seen in the labour market as larger jobless rates in the older, less trained age groups.

Further changes are foreseen in labour demand over the next ten years. Demand is expected to grow in knowledge-intensive fields and fall in manufacturing and construction. This change makes special demands on the education and training provision, including adult education. Growing use of information and communications technology and

the provision of many services on the internet require new kinds of skills from citizens, which will add to training pressures. Adult education has also an important role in promoting citizenship skills, social cohesion and learning capabilities.

The results obtained and the proposals put forward by the Committee are extensive. The foremost objective is to translate lifelong learning into concrete action and to secure opportunities for all adults to learn and study irrespective of their basic education, employment status, place of residence or age.

CITIZENSHIP SKILLS IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

The action programme "Citizenship Skills in the Information Society" forms a part of the National Strategy for 2000-2003 Education, Training and Research in the Information Society.

The development of information and communication technologies is rapidly changing occupational structures and job descriptions. The increase and changes in the demand for knowledge and skills, the ageing of the work force, differences in educational levels between the generations, and the increasing proportion of senior citizens have emphasised the importance of lifelong learning.

Media literacy and information technology skills have become basic skills needed in working life and basic requirements for full membership of a democratic society. They also widen the opportunities for self-development. At the same time, previously separate learning environments, the home, the school, and the workplace, are merging into lifelong learning that covers the entire life-span of people and various fields of life.

In order to achieve the objectives of lifelong learning and an information society based on civic equality, an extensive programme was launched to familiarise citizens with new ways of the information society, and to improve media literacy, and information and communication technology skills of citizens.

According to the strategy, citizenship skills in an information society must meet the needs of a networking, constantly changing and internationalising way of life. These citizenship skills are:

- Technical skills,
- Communication skills,
- Skills in acquiring and using information,
- Consumer skills, and
- Influence on information society policy.

Applying the idea of self-motivated learning and a variety of different learning programmes and learning environments, the aim is to reach all population groups, with special focus on those who outside the education system and staff development and training: namely ageing population, adults who not actively employed, as well as special-needs groups.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITH REGARD DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Government's new five-year development plan for education and research for the years 2003-2008 is currently under preparation. As part of this preparation process a project has been set up to consider the quantification of educational provision until 2008. The quantitative development targets for educational provision, including adult education and training, will be defined in the new development plan that will be published by the end of 2003.

The State will increase its investment in raising the educational attainment of the adult population. According to a Decree enacted in January 2003, state subsidies will be granted for promoting continuing employment and career advancement of adults with at most a secondary education. The subsidies aim at alleviating the labour shortages expected upon the retirement of the baby boomer generations. Subsidies are intended, for instance, for organising training leading to a vocational qualification or further vocational qualification.

As a continuation to the recommendations by the Adult Education Committee, the Ministry of Education has nominated a one-man committee to study how reasonable are the fees for adult education, how adequate is the livelihood during studies and how to make the taxation of adult education clearer. The aim is to find ways of safeguarding the citizens' equal rights to seek education and training improving their skills and expertise. The work of the committee should be finalised by (mdi) mid-October.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - GENERAL BACKGROUND

Teacher qualifications for general and vocational institutions were harmonised at the beginning of 1995. The same minimum of 35 credits of pedagogical studies is required of teachers for all types of educational institution, including basic and subject studies in education, subject didactics and teaching practice. These studies are part of all teacher education and they may be completed either in university departments of teacher education or at vocational teacher education colleges. Generally speaking, teachers have first acquired vocational education in their own subject field before the pedagogical studies.

Rectors at vocational institutions have undergone the same initial education as teachers; in addition to holding a higher academic degree, they are required to be qualified to teach in vocational education and training, to have sufficient work experience as teachers and to have obtained a qualification in educational administration (at least 15 credits) or sufficient knowledge of educational administration in some other way.

Since 1996, vocational teacher education has been organised at vocational teacher education colleges operating in conjunction with polytechnics. Continuing teacher training is provided by universities, vocational teacher education colleges and private education providers.

The job description of vocational teachers changed along with reform of vocational education and training at the turn of the millennium. This reform also saw the introduction of focused and supervised on-the-job learning periods, which are compulsory to all fields of study. The responsibility for implementation of these periods rests with teachers at vocational institutions working in co-operation with on-the-job instructors.

Over the next few years, skills demonstrations will be incorporated into all upper secondary vocational qualifications. Through the skills demonstrations, students demonstrate how well they have achieved the objectives set in their respective VET programmes. Both skills demonstrations and on-the-job-learning play a central role in the continuing training of VET teachers.

Based on the results of evaluation and anticipation efforts, the Ministry of Education has presented objectives and recommendations for the development of initial and continuing teacher education and training. Universities and polytechnics are required to develop pedagogical studies so as to ensure that studies provide teachers with the right skills to work at different levels of education with learners of different ages. They must also be given the opportunity to obtain experience of co-operation across institutional borders during their studies. The development of teaching practice should take account of the long-term process of growing into teachership, which requires personal support and guidance.

0602 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Teacher training is provided as follows:

- Training of core subject teachers
- Training of teachers of vocational studies
- Training of teachers providing special education
- Training of student counsellors at vocational institutions
- Continuing education and training

TRAINING OF CORE SUBJECT TEACHERS

Core subject teachers at vocational institutions and polytechnics have the same education as subject teachers in general education. Teacher education at universities is usually incorporated into a Master's degree, but the pedagogical studies for teachers may also be completed separately after completion of a degree. Those wanting to become subject teachers apply to the respective university faculties or degree programmes according to their main subject, following the usual procedure for higher education studies. Those admitted to a degree programme and aiming to be subject teachers will then separately apply for subject teacher education. Admission to subject teacher education is based either on aptitude tests alone, or on aptitude tests and the applicant's study record. Several universities have ongoing experiments, where people apply directly for subject teacher education.

If a person does not apply for subject teacher education, s/he can also graduate as a subject teacher by taking separate pedagogical studies for teachers upon completion of an academic degree. In addition, the applicant must pass the aptitude test.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF VOCATIONAL STUDIES

Depending on the type of institution and teaching subject, teachers are required to have either 1) an appropriate higher academic (Master's) degree; 2) an appropriate polytechnic degree; or 3) the highest possible qualification in their own occupational field, at least three years of work experience in the field and to have completed pedagogical studies with a scope of at least 35 credits.

Vocational teacher education is always completed after completion of a degree. The aim of the education is to provide students with the skills and knowledge to guide the learning of different kinds of students and to develop their own field of teaching, taking developments in occupations and working life into account.

Students may complete the education in one academic year by studying full-time or flexibly, e.g. while working, as multiform education in 1 to 3 years and link their studies to the development of their own teaching methods and the working environment of the institution.

Since 1st August 1996, Finnish vocational teacher education has been organised at vocational teacher education colleges operating in conjunction with five polytechnics. Vocational teacher education in Swedish is provided by the Faculty of Education at the Åbo Akademi University, as is other teacher education in the Swedish language. There are no specific teacher training schools for vocational teacher education; instead, teaching practice takes place at different educational institutions.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS PROVIDING SPECIAL EDUCATION

The admission requirements for vocational special needs teacher education include qualifications required of vocational institution teachers and at least one year of teaching experience at a vocational institution.

Vocational teacher education colleges offer special needs teacher education with a scope of 35 credits, which qualifies teachers to work as special needs teachers at vocational institutions. Most special needs teachers work at vocational special institutions.

TRAINING OF STUDENT COUNSELLORS AT VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In addition to teaching staff, vocational institutions and polytechnics also have student counsellors in vocational education and training.

The admission requirements for vocational student counsellor education include qualifications required of vocational institution teachers and at least one year of teaching experience at a vocational institution.

Vocational teacher education colleges organise student counsellor education with a scope of 35 credits, which qualifies teachers to work as student counsellors at vocational institutions. The students familiarise themselves with the underlying social factors involved in student counselling as well as with various areas and methods of

counselling both within their own institutions and in co-operation with other organisations. In addition, people fulfilling the qualifications requirements set for student counsellors in general education are also qualified to work as student counsellors at vocational institutions. In general education, student counsellors are required to have completed a Master's degree with education as the main subject and the pedagogical studies for teachers included in the main subject or completed separately, as well as student counsellor studies.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Teachers at vocational institutions have compulsory continuing education and training in most fields of study, comprising up to five days per year in some fields. In addition, teachers participate in self-motivated continuing education and training.

At present, the key topics in continuing education and training for teachers at vocational institutions include on-the-job learning and skills demonstrations. Continuing teacher education and training related to on-the-job learning provides teachers with capabilities to plan and implement on-the-job learning as a teaching method through familiarisation with the foundations of on-the-job learning, practical activities at on-the-job learning places, assessment and quality assurance of on-the-job learning and the steering and supervision systems of on-the-job learning. Teachers may also participate in training intended for on-the-job instructors (cf. section 4, 'Training of trainers/trainers at the workplace' below).

Teachers' up-to-date knowledge of working life and their ability to maintain working life contacts form the basis of functioning as a teacher in vocational education and training and are part of teachers' extended job description. Consequently, the improvement of knowledge of and co-operation with working life is also a key starting point in the development of vocational teacher education.

Training for Specialists in Competence-based Qualifications is related to competence-based qualifications for adults. Each provider of competence-based qualifications ensures that at least one of the assessors of competence tests is a qualified Specialist in Competence-based Qualifications, i.e. has completed the 15-credit training in the development of competence-based qualifications approved by the National Board of Education. The objective of this training is for professionals operating within the system of competence-based qualifications to become experts in the organisation of competence tests and in the assessment of vocational skills in the field of the qualification they represent through active development work.

This training is mainly intended for educational staff operating within adult education and training and in the organisation of competence tests, who have completed pedagogical studies for teachers with a scope of at least 35 credits or who have obtained equivalent knowledge.

0603 - TRAINING OF TRAINERS/TEACHERS AT THE WORKPLACE (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND CVET IN ENTERPRISES)

On-the-job instructors guide the performance of learning assignments, answer students' questions and give feedback on the assignments. Feedback and assessment of the learning outcomes are among their most important tasks. Pedagogical skills, a broad vision and good teamwork skills are therefore important. Instructors must constantly improve their supervision skills. The educational administration has been able to provide courses for instructors.

The training is generally given at vocational institutions or vocational adult education centres. It is mostly funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and based on the core curriculum defined by the National Board of Education. The training is primarily intended for employees and experts at the workplaces, but teachers may also participate. The scope of the training is two credits.

In apprenticeship training, each workplace appoints an instructor to guide and supervise the student's work. Responsibility for continuing training for workplace instructors is with providers of apprenticeship training.

0604 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OUTSIDE ENTERPRISES)

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

A central development document in the educational sector is the 'Development Plan for Education within the Administrative Field of the Ministry of Education and University Research' ("KESU" see DI 0301), which the Government approves every four years for the year of its approval and for the following five calendar years. KESU defines the education policy guidelines and it is a central document in field of the education and training. The current KESU for 2003-2008 was adopted at the end of 2003. The KESU includes development measures for each field and level of education, as well as the main definitions for education and research policy and the allocation of resources.

Quantitative skills anticipation information is used when the new KESU is prepared. The important skills anticipation work is carried out by the National Board of Education, based on the Project to Anticipate the Quantitative Educational Needs in Vocational Education and Training (MITENNA). The MITENNA was implemented by the National Board of Education with support from the Ministry of Education and the European Social Fund. The objective was to acquire the statistical and other information necessary for anticipation and to create a calculation model that could be applied to anticipation, which would utilise this material. On the basis of the results, a national forecast of educational needs was produced, stemming from the needs of working life.

With the aid of the calculation model, forecasts of needs for vocational education and training for 2001-2005 were derived from the forecasts of changes and natural wastage in the total labour force, extending to the year 2010. These forecasts were then presented for different fields of study and levels of education in qualification-oriented initial vocational education and in higher (polytechnic and university) education.

Although the MITENNA is over, the quantitative anticipation work continues at the National Board of Education based on the MITENNA model. The forecast have been extended to the year 2015. A new feature is also that the forecasts are drawn up in cooperation with regional authorities.

The quantitative skills anticipation information is also provided by the Labour Force 2020 Project coordinated by the Ministry of Labour. The main aim of the Labour Force 2020 Project is to anticipate the economic development and the need of the labour force between years 2000 – 2020.

The important governmental bodies for skills anticipation are the training committees of different fields and the Advisory Board for Educational Co-operation. The task of the training committees and the Advisory Board is, among other tasks, to monitor, evaluate and anticipate the development of vocationally oriented education and training and competence required in working life in their own field.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

In institutional vocational education and training, studies have traditionally been organised in year classes. However, the aim has been to discard this tradition and the tendency is towards providing students with advancement opportunities that are as individual as possible.

In adult education competence based qualification is a flexible form to take a qualification. Adult students may demonstrate their vocational skills in the competence-based tests regardless of how and where they have acquired the skills.

Cooperation between different levels of education has increased in Finland since the 1990s. Cooperation between basic and vocational education mainly takes the form of guidance and information provision with career counselling and a one-week workplace guidance period in the ninth form as the central elements. Working life contacts are increased by the reformed core curriculum of the additional and voluntary 10th form, according to which pupils can focus on vocational studies more than before.

Interaction between general upper secondary schools and vocational education has also increased. The background is the legislative reform that took effect in 1999 and that obliges education providers to cooperate with other education providers. This was the basis for the so-called youth school experiment in which students had a wide variety of choice in selecting studies offered by other educational institutions.

The institution designs its education and training together with other local institutions. Thus students can include study modules from other fields and from general upper secondary schools and upper secondary vocational institutions into their qualification.

There is some unofficial cooperation between vocational institutions and polytechnics, as most polytechnics are actually former vocational institutions. Cooperation between vocational institutions and universities has traditionally been rare. Studies at an institution may be linked to local economic and working life, for example, by using representatives from these fields as external lecturers and by compiling projects of different scope and emphasis together with them. This provides students with the opportunity to participate in planning and development projects, which serve working life needs.

In addition, all 120-credit upper secondary vocational qualifications include a period of on-the-job training with a minimum scope of 20 credits. One of the aims of on-the-job training is to enhance young people's employment opportunities.

The board of a vocational institution may, in addition to the teaching staff, students and other staff, also include a sufficient number of working life experts from those fields in which the institution provides instruction.

Vocational institutions may have one or more consultative committees. The Consultative Committee comprises people representing the institution, its teaching staff, major labour market organisations in the field and other experts involved in the development of the institution. The task of consultative committees is to promote the activities of the institutions and their co-operation with local working life. In addition, they may also handle curricula and other issues concerning the internal development of the institution.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

The curriculum system of vocational education consists of the national core curricula, each institution's individual curriculum and personal study plans.

The National Board of Education approves the qualification-specific core curricula and the requirements of each competence-based qualification. These are drawn up in co-operation with employers and employees in different fields, other representatives and experts of economic life as well as teachers and students.

The national core curricula constitute a legal norm for educational institutions. The national core curricula for upper secondary vocational requirements of competence-based qualifications are common to education and training for young and adult students.

The national core curricula provide the framework for curricula. The detailed contents and methods of studies are defined in each institution's individual curriculum, which is drawn up by the institution on the basis of the relevant core curricula. The institutions organise their instruction as they see fit, and they may take local and changing needs into account. The aim is that the institution designs its education and training together with other local institutions so that students can also include study modules from other fields and from general upper secondary school in their qualification.

The students are provided with personal study plans, on the basis of which they themselves can decide partially as to what, when, how and in which order they study. Creating options and opportunities for individual advancement has been the aim of the development of curricula in recent years.

There are various ways of promoting students' opportunities for organising their studies individually. The modular qualification structure increases flexibility and options and makes it easier to get credit for earlier studies. The qualifications consist of large modules, which the students may partially choose themselves and complete in the manner best suited to them.

The core curricula and the requirements of the competence-based qualifications include the following common emphases: internationality, promotion of sustainable development, utilisation of technology and information technology, entrepreneurship, high-quality and customer-focused activity, consumer skills and management of occupational health and safety. In addition, the core curricula and the requirements of the competence-based qualifications include the following core skills: learning skills, problem-solving skills, interaction and communication skills, cooperation skills and ethical and aesthetic skills.

Teachers themselves may choose the methods that they apply in order to achieve the objectives defined in the curriculum. Key factors include flexible teaching arrangements, a wide range of working methods and teaching not

tied to year classes, integration of theory and practice as well as co-operation and interaction between institutions in the planning and implementation of instruction. The curriculum includes:

- vocational studies and on-the-job learning supporting these studies (90 credits);
- studies in the native language, the other national language and a foreign language, mathematics and natural sciences, the humanities and social studies, physical education and other art and practical subjects, as well as health education (20 credits);
- free-choice studies (10 credits).

The education includes a period of on-the-job learning, during which students familiarise themselves in practical assignments required in the occupation and achieve the core objectives of the occupation as laid down in the curriculum.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

In the mid '90s educational institutions in Finland were given greater powers to decide about their own activities. The National Board of Education formulated core curricula on the basis of which comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools and vocational institutes draw up their own curricula. Generally speaking, training providers, qualification committees or educational institutions approve the qualifications: there is no national quality assurance body which approves the qualification at national level.

In terms of the validation/accreditation of formal, non-formal and informal learning this decentralization in practice means that individual educational institutions are given a great deal of freedom in applying the framework provided by the legislation in practice. There is also separate legislation on the validation/accreditation of formal, non-formal and informal learning at universities and polytechnics, which fall within the remit of the Ministry of Education.

In its general definition, 'accreditation' means that a student can compensate for some of the studies required for a given ongoing qualification with studies, practical work or working experience acquired elsewhere. The legislation makes this the student's subjective right to some extent.

In vocational education and training, the accreditation is increasingly used and it has become an established practice. Accreditation is used in order to shorten study times and avoid overlapping of studies. In vocational education and training, the accreditation is closely linked to student assessment.

Accreditation is based on the Act on Vocational Education (630/1998). This allows for studies to be arranged to some extent differently if the student is already considered to possess some of the necessary knowledge and skills in the curriculum. Furthermore, students are entitled to be accredited with studies completed elsewhere provided that the objectives and main content of these studies conform with the curriculum.

Where students transfer from one qualification to another or from general upper secondary school to vocational upper secondary education and training, they shall be accredited for at least the completed core subjects and free-choice studies. Of the entire general upper secondary school syllabus, at least core subjects and free-choice studies shall be accredited.

Summer jobs and previous work experience shall be accredited, provided that the competence acquired through these is determined to conform with the objectives of the curriculum.

The educational institution shall compare conformance of studies with the curriculum in terms of objectives and core contents. Where necessary, the correspondence of competence shall be verified by means of different skills demonstrations. Accreditation shall be promoted by developing various forms of assessment to facilitate it.

Where a student's creditable previous studies or studies completed simultaneously at some other educational institution compensate for a whole study module, the grade shall be included on the certificate. If the grading scale is different, the conversion formula for grades shall be applied. The name of the educational institution that awarded the grade shall be transferred to a note on the certificate. Where no grade has been awarded for studies completed elsewhere, separate assessment shall be arranged.

According to the 1999 school legislation, all education providers are obligated to cooperate with other education providers in the region, and the curriculum must provide students with individual choices concerning studies, also taking advantage of the instruction offered by other education providers. Students also have the right to be accredited for their previous studies at other institutions when the objectives and key contents of the studies are in line with the curriculum (Act 630/1998 on Vocational Education and Act 631/1998 Adult Vocational Education).

The educational legislation contains separate provisions on general upper secondary education and vocational education; contacts between these two sectors are built through regional networking. In practical terms, these contacts primarily comprise students' subject choices and the joint development of instruction.

The objective of upper secondary vocational education and training is to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to acquire vocational competence and to provide them with the potential for self-employment as well as further studies. In Finland the qualification requirements of the occupations are restricted quite seldom. Therefore employers have a considerably authority to decide on which qualifications they prefer.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

In an administrative context, the term 'validation' refers to assessment, validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The strategy for validating non-formal and informal learning is stated in the legislation and can be grouped into three validation practices: skill tests, the validation related to the access to formal education and accreditation

Skills tests. The legislation permits the comprehensive, upper secondary and initial vocational education qualification to be acquired in tests not dependent on how the competence was acquired. It also allows for vocational skills testing (initial vocational qualifications, vocational qualifications and special vocational qualifications) and language testing.

Regulation of access to formal education. The legislation allows for application to formal education even without the previous education or training normally required.

Accreditation. In its general definition, 'accreditation' means that a student can compensate for some of the studies required for a given ongoing qualification with studies, practical work or working experience acquired elsewhere. The legislation makes this the student's subjective right to some extent.

Furtherance of the possibilities already embodied in the legislation has been incorporated into the national education policy positions at strategy level expressed in two documents referred to earlier, i.e. the Development Plan for Education within the Administrative Field of the Ministry of Education and University Research 1999-2004 and Finland's National Action Plan for Employment (NAP) — In accordance with the EU's Employment Guidelines.

According to the Development Plan, "the assessment and recognition of knowledge and know-how will be developed to enable young and adult students to benefit from prior knowledge acquired in working life, civic activities or otherwise".

According to the Finnish NAP for Employment approved by the Government in accordance with the EU Employment Guidelines 2000, one way of boosting employment is to devise methods for assessing and recognizing knowledge and know-how to enable adults to benefit in their studies from skills acquired earlier in working life, civic activities and otherwise. The first steps towards this end were taken in 2001.

The expansion of formal education has meant a rapid rise in the level of formal qualifications: younger age groups who enter the labour market have better and better qualifications. This has led to educational inequity between generations. Therefore it is important for the older generations that experiential knowledge and skills are recognised.

In order to ensure the recognition of learning and competencies, Finland has developed a fairly effective system of competence-based qualifications. For this purpose the programmes of further vocational qualifications are composed of modules. The qualification is awarded when all the modules have been taken. The qualifications are taken in the form of competence-based qualifications which allow for adult students to demonstrate their vocational skills regardless of how and where they have acquired the skills.

The candidate can take the constituent tests either (after) during formal training or without training, on the strength of competence gained elsewhere, e.g. in working life. The tests are based on national standardised field-specific qualification guidelines.

There are three levels of competence-based qualifications: initial vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. The initial vocational qualifications completed in the form of competence-based qualifications correspond to those taken in vocational education intended for young people. The further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications are primarily intended for adults – mainly for people skilled in different fields to demonstrate their practical competence and vocational skills. Participation in an (examination) competence test is subject to a fee.

Although taking part in competence(-based examinations) tests does not require formal preparation, many participants acquire preparatory training, in which they are provided with individual learning programmes. Initial vocational education provides preparation for initial vocational qualifications and additional and supplementary vocational training prepares for further and specialist vocational qualifications.

Another form of accrediting prior learning is the national language proficiency test system, which was developed at the beginning of the 1990's. The system enables all adults to have their language skills tested officially regardless of where and how they have acquired the skills. The national tests are arranged twice a year in nine languages (English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Russian, Sami, Spanish and Swedish). By (2001) 2002, nearly (15,000) 20 000 tests had been taken in all.

In polytechnic adult education, the time spent to complete a degree is usually slightly shorter than in regular polytechnic education, since adult students' previous studies and work experience may be taken into account. Completed open polytechnic studies may be recognized if the person enters to degree-oriented polytechnic education. Correspondingly open university education may be accredited in degree studies. In most fields, there is a specific "open university track", which gives the right to study for a degree upon completion of a required number of credits at an open university.

The National Board of Education (NBE) is the focal point for recognition of foreign qualifications. The national contact points of NRP, ENIC and NARIC, all of which are international information networks promoting the recognition of foreign qualifications, are located at the NBE. The professional recognition of qualifications concerns the recognition of the professional competence the qualification confers. In Finland, the decisions of professional recognition are made at the National Board of Education. The academic recognition of qualifications involves either having foreign studies recognised as part of Finnish qualifications or gaining eligibility for further studies in Finland. All decisions of academic recognition are made at higher education institutions.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The Finnish educational guidance system is arranged through co-operation between educational and labour administrations. The main responsibility for educational guidance lies with the educational administration. The labour administration complements it in terms of career choices by providing careers counselling services that are open to everyone. Educational guidance is governed by school legislation (Upper Secondary Schools Act 629/1998 and Degree 810/1996 and Act 630/1998 and Degree 811 on Vocational Education).

The number of lessons used for student counselling is decided by the Government in connection with the time allocated to lessons. The objectives and contents of student counselling are determined in the national core

curricula approved by the National Board of Education. Each education provider decides on the practical implementation of student counselling and on the resources available for personal counselling. Careers counselling within the labour administration is governed by the Manpower Services Act (1005/1993).

Co-operation between the educational and labour administrations takes place on a national level. In addition, co-operation between these branches of administration is also carried out at regional and/or local levels. The forms of co-operation are agreed between educational institutions, local employment offices and sometimes other parties. Such third parties to this co-operation are often units of the relevant Provincial State Office responsible for the joint application procedure.

In addition to the educational and labour administrations, there are also private operators in the field of educational guidance in Finland, including labour market organisations, associations of student counsellors and student unions. The Economic Information Office, maintained by employers' organisations, produces plenty of guidance materials presenting working life and occupations and provides training for student counsellors.

Educational guidance aims to support, help and guide pupils so that each pupil performs as well as possible in his/her studies and is able to make correct and appropriate decisions concerning their education and career choices. Educational guidance provides the abilities necessary for career choices, working life and further education.

In vocational education and training, educational guidance aims to provide students with support for drawing up their personal study plans and making the related choices. Students also receive information on the effects of their choices on vocational competence, further studies and job placements. Educational institutions organise counselling and guidance services for students to support their entry into working life and promote and follow job placement. Students can also receive special support when they apply for education.

Plenty of computer-based information on educational and career opportunities is available in Finland. The labour administration maintains occupational and educational databases and local employment offices have information service units that are also used by young people. The National Board of Education runs the 'Koulutusnetti' Internet database and the EDU.fi portal. In addition, it publishes educational guidebooks for educational choices at upper secondary and higher education levels on an annual basis and is responsible for the joint application systems for the upper secondary level and polytechnics at a national level. The Ministry of Labour, in turn, maintains educational and vocational information services intended for those applying for education and training.

The 'Koulutusnetti' database is a nationwide web-based service built for the use of different counselling and guidance organisations and for those applying for education and training. The service contains up-to-date information on educational opportunities at different levels and in different fields of study (www.oph.fi).

EDU.fi is an educational portal for non-academic education and training in Finland. It is published by the National Board of Education. The portal gathers together services categorised according to the different levels, fields and themes of our education and training system. Through the portal we provide a gateway also to servicers by other actors in Finland or abroad. (www.edu.fi)

Opintoluotsi [Stydy Pilot]: Opintoluotsi's aim is to help people to find information on education and training and its availability in Finland. Opintoluotsi helps people to discover and use education and training opportunities in a way that suits their individual needs (www.opintoluotsi.fi).

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

In the field of vocational education and training, the target groups are young people as well as adults. As described in Data Island 0901, there are numerous ways in which people can access career guidance and counselling services.

In vocational education and training, the qualification shall include at least 1.5 credits of student counselling. In addition, each student shall have the right to receive sufficient personal and other necessary educational guidance as part of their studies. In particular, each educational institution shall attend to the guidance of students faced with study difficulties (such as dyslexia), absences from education and training or difficulties related to life management.

Student counselling shall be implemented so as to ensure that students

- receive enough information on their education and training prior to its start and during it;
- receive information and experience of working life, entrepreneurship and occupations;
- familiarise themselves with and are provided with the opportunity for international contacts, study and work;
- receive support in regard to any possible problems related to their study and lives.

Students selected for vocational education and training shall be provided with information on the qualifications to be completed, the composition and contents of the studies involved, as well as the studies they may choose from other educational institutions according to their needs. Students shall be supported in making their choices. Students shall be provided with a personal study plan in accordance with their choices. When drawing up personal study plans, special attention shall be focused on those students, who have difficulties related to study or living during basic education or at the beginning of vocational education and training.

All staff shall participate in the guidance of students, but the main responsibility for planning rests with the student counsellor. In order to ensure the success of student counselling, co-operation shall be carried out internally between the experts within each educational institution, with students and their homes, between different educational institutions and with outside experts.

Vocational institutions shall develop their careers and recruitment services in co-operation with local employment offices and economic life and shall also promote students' access to employment and further education.

The labour administration has a wide training and vocational information service, the purpose of which is to support appropriate educational choices and job placements in different fields as well as to promote vocational development by disseminating information on educational opportunities, the content of work assignments and occupations, as well as on the labour market. In addition, the labour administration organises careers counselling primarily for adults and those who have already entered working life. Counselling is available through employment offices. The labour administration also organises what is known as career guidance training, which is primarily intended for unemployed people and which aims to guide individuals into suitable training or to working life according to their own needs and abilities.

The labour administration provides guidance and counselling services for employed, unemployed and disadvantaged people as well as young people and adults. The labour administration has a wide training and vocational information service, the purpose of which is to support appropriate educational choices and job placements in different fields as well as to promote vocational development by disseminating information on educational opportunities, the content of work assignments and occupations, as well as on the labour market. In addition, the labour administration organises careers counselling primarily for adults and those who have already entered working life. Counselling is available through employment offices. The labour administration also organises what is known as career guidance training, which is primarily intended for unemployed people and which aims to guide individuals into suitable training or to working life according to their own needs and abilities.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

In addition to teaching staff, vocational institutions and polytechnics also have student counsellors in vocational education and training.

The admission requirements for vocational student counsellor education include qualifications required of vocational institution teachers and at least one year of teaching experience at a vocational institution.

Vocational teacher education colleges organise student counsellor education with a scope of 35 credits, which qualifies teachers to work as student counsellors at vocational institutions. The students familiarise themselves with the underlying social factors involved in student counselling as well as with various areas and methods of counselling both within their own institutions and in co-operation with other organisations.

In addition, people fulfilling the qualifications requirements set for student counsellors in general education are also qualified to work as student counsellors at vocational institutions. In general education, student counsellors are required to have completed a Master's degree with education as the main subject and the pedagogical studies for teachers included in the main subject or completed separately, as well as student counsellor studies.

In-service training for student counsellors is offered mostly by the universities, polytechnics, Provincial State Offices, National Board of Education and the National Centre for Professional Development in Education (OPEKO).

The other important professionals dealing with guidance and counselling are the career psychologists, who mainly work at the employment agencies. The career psychologists are required to have a master's degree in psychology.

Every year, the Ministry of Labour organises specialist training (40 days) and other in-service training for career psychologists. A number of career psychologists also participate in academic post graduate training at the universities. In addition, they participate, on a voluntary basis, in training on therapy and on-the-job guidance organised by different organisations.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

Generally speaking, the Ministry of Education is responsible for education and training in Finland. The exception is labour market training, for which the responsibility belongs to the Ministry of Labour.

The responsibility for educational funding and construction of schools is divided between the State and the local authorities or other education providers. In addition to their own funding, local education providers are entitled to receive a state subsidy for the establishment and operating costs of their institutions. The funding criteria are the same irrespective of ownership.

The vocational education and training are mostly financed by the state and municipals or federations of the municipalities.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SCHOOL-BASED VET

In 2003 the majority of vocational institutions were maintained by local authorities and joint municipal boards. A few of these (about 18%) were maintained by private organisations. The funding criteria are uniform irrespective of ownership.

The state subsidy for operating costs is granted on calculatory grounds, which are confirmed annually per pupil, lesson or other unit. The state subsidy is calculated to cover 57% of the operating costs. The most significant factor influencing the amount of state subsidy is the student quantity. Due to the calculation method, the municipal contribution will follow the students throughout the country, wherever they choose to study. The municipal contribution is determined as a proportion of the calculatory educational costs of the entire country per each inhabitant of the municipality. The state subsidy is payable to the education provider according to the student-specific unit price. The state subsidy is not earmarked to be used for a particular purpose. In addition, some vocational institutions are awarded performance-based funding.

Vocational education and training has gone through some structural changes: institutions have joined together to form larger, multi-field institutions, and some vocational education and training have been developed into a new tertiary level education track, namely polytechnics. In 2003 the total operating costs of vocational institutions amounted to 1061 million euros. The average unit costs per student in 2003 were 8 228 euros. Providers of

vocational education and training receive state subsidies to help with their operating costs on the basis of an institution-specific calculatory unit price. The unit prices are scaled per provider, allowing for the cost differences between various fields of education. In addition, factors such as the educational task and provision of special education are taken into account separately for each institution. Training institutions can also sell services and receive income from this.

Instruction is usually free of charge at all levels of education. Basic education is completely free of charge for the pupils, but with higher levels of education, students may have to pay for study materials, meals and transport.

Students receive financial aid for full-time post-basic studies lasting at least two months. Student financial aid is payable for studies at upper secondary schools, folk high schools, vocational institutions, polytechnics or universities through to doctorate level. Financial aid is also available for study abroad. The ordinary student financial aid comprises a study grant, a housing supplement and a government-guaranteed student loan. In addition, there is an adult study grant for mature students, which is determined on different criteria.

In 2002 performance-based funding was granted to the first vocational institutions. The amount granted was 2.5 million euros. The Ministry of Education decides on awarding the performance-based funding. The allocation of performance-based rewards distributed in 2002 was based on the performance-based funding index, which has been combined from the following indicators:

- 1) Effectiveness (job placement and further studies)
- 2) Processes (dropping out, % ratio of qualification certificate holders to entrants and utilisation rate of licence to provide education and training)
- 3) Staff (formal teaching qualifications and staff development)

When the performance-based funding index is calculated, indicators are assigned different weights of importance.

When the performance-based funding index is calculated, indicators are assigned different weights of importance, as shown in the table above.

Table 10.2.1. Indicators of performance-based funding for upper secondary vocational education and training in 2002

INDICATORS	WEIGHT OF INDICATOR IN 2002	
EFFECTIVENESS	Job placement	38.9%
	Further studies (in higher education)	16.7%
PROCESSES	Dropping out	13.1%
	% ratio of qualification certificate holders to entrants	8.7%
	Utilisation rate of licence to provide education and training	4.4%
STAFF	Formal teaching qualifications	11.9%
	Staff development	6.3%
TOTAL		100.0%

Click on the link below to see the flow of funding through the school-based IVT institutional structure.

[Flow of funding through the school-based IVT institutional structure](#)

APPRENTICESHIP

In terms of the apprenticeship system, the State is responsible for fully covering funding: the state subsidy accounts for 100% of the unit price confirmed by the Ministry of Education. The unit prices are confirmed separately for upper secondary and additional vocational training. Each year, the Ministry of Education confirms the quotas for additional training per area and language group.

In 2003 participants in apprenticeship training totalled 17,913 in upper secondary vocational training and 27,403 in additional training.

In the year 2003, the total expenditure on apprenticeship training amounted to about EUR 117 million. The total costs of upper secondary apprenticeship training stood at approximately EUR 59 million, accounting for roughly 50 per cent of the total expenditure. The total costs of additional apprenticeship training in 2003 amounted to around EUR 58 million.

The costs per student of apprenticeship training leading to upper secondary vocational qualifications stood at about EUR 4,700 in the year 2003. The costs of additional training per student amounted to about EUR 2,900. The amount of training compensation paid to the employer is agreed upon separately for each apprenticeship contract

before the contract is approved. The apprentice's wages are paid by the employer on the basis of the collective labour agreement in force in the field concerned. The pay varies in different fields, but is in practice about 80% of the wages of a skilled worker in that particular field. The employer is not obligated to pay wages for the time spent in theoretical training, unless otherwise agreed.

Click on the link below to see the flow of funding through IVT apprenticeship training.

[Flow of funding through IVT apprenticeship training](#)

OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES: INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS

The purpose of the 'inno-shop' (innovative workshop) projects is to mobilise those young people who are about to leave comprehensive school and other young people without vocational education or training to participate in education and training. In addition, the project endeavours to prevent students from dropping out of qualification-oriented vocational education and training. The development of inno-shops started back in 1998, when 28 innovative workshop projects were launched to run up until August 2001, with funding from the ESF and the Finnish Government. In 2000 and 2001, 39 new development projects were launched with funding from the ESF and the Government, which continued until the summer of 2003.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

The Act on the Financing of Educational and Cultural Provision also covers most educational institutions providing adult education and training. Each year as part of the budget, the Ministry of Education confirms the maximum number of lessons or other performance indicators for each type of institution and the education provider is then granted state funding for the adult education operating costs.

Funding for the operating costs of basic education, upper secondary vocational education and training and general upper secondary education (upper secondary school) arranged for adults is granted along the same lines as for the corresponding education for young people. The local authorities participate in funding certificate-oriented adult education and training along the same lines as apply to youth level education.

A system for funding vocational additional training has been applied since the beginning of 2001. Such training is for example training preparing for vocational and special vocational qualifications as well as language proficiency tests. The education provider receives funding from the state as state subsidies and institutions offering liberal adult education, polytechnics and universities as subsidies from the Provincial State Offices.

Provincial State Offices, which represent the intermediate level of administration, decide on the allocation of appropriations related to the programme to improve the educational level of the adult population during the years 2003 to 2007. The prime aim of the programme, which has been granted 12 million euros in 2003, is to raise the educational level of adults with low educational attainments.

State funding for the operating costs of non-formal adult education is granted according to specific funding criteria for each type of institution. The local authorities have no statutory obligation to participate in covering these costs.

It is also possible for the institutions providing adult education to receive discretionary state subsidy for investments depending on the decision of the Ministry of Education and within the limits of the state budget.

Vocational adult education centres (a total of 43) and national specialised vocational institutions (8) receive operating subventions for education provided as chargeable services, which account for 10 % of the average operating costs in the three previous years

Vocational institutions may arrange upper secondary vocational education and training for adults. The financing system of adult education and training is similar to that of upper secondary vocational education and training for young people. Adult education in polytechnics observes the same principles as other polytechnic education. Music institutions provide young people and adults with basic and vocational education and training in music.

In addition, vocational education is provided by liberal adult education institutions. Folk high schools are maintained by private organisations and foundations, local authorities and joint municipal boards. Adult education centres are mostly maintained by local authorities. Study centres are maintained by private organisations and foundations.

In 2000, about 56 % of gainfully employed people participated in in-service training. Generally speaking, the enterprises are themselves responsible for how much they invest in in-service training.

In 2001, the average training costs of industrial enterprises were equivalent to 3.2 % of the wages and salaries paid. Over a corresponding period of time (in 2000), employers in the private services sector spent a sum equivalent to 1.9 % of their payroll costs on in-service training. This data is based on educational needs surveys conducted by the Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers (TT) and the Employers' Confederation of Service Industries (PT) among their members (TT data covers 2001, while PT data covers 2000).

The total in-service training costs in the member enterprises of the TT and the PT amounted to about EUR 400 million and about EUR 135 million respectively. TT's sum total includes wages and salaries paid during training periods, which accounted for 44 % of all costs according to a 1998 survey. Wages and salaries paid by the PT's member enterprises are not included in the training costs.

According to the business enterprises that responded to TT's educational survey, public support for staff development accounted for 6.7 % of total costs in 2001. The proportion was the same in 1998, when forms of support mentioned included EU support for training projects, support for company-owned educational institutions, jointly purchased training, compensation for apprenticeship training costs, provincial funding for training and employment subsidies for employers. According to PT's 1998 educational needs survey, 22 % of the business enterprises that participated in the survey had received external funding, mainly from apprenticeship centres and, for structural-change-type training, from the European Social Fund. In 2002, total training costs in the private service sector were about EUR 257, which was equivalent to 3,4 % of the wages and salaries paid.

Some sectors of trade and industry maintain their own institutions, which are called 'Institutions for Specialised Training' (Ammatilliset erikoisoppilaitokset). These institutions (42 in 2002) receive a state subsidy, which is included in the funding figures for central government above. In addition the financing of Institutions for Specialised Training is composed of funding from the owner, the revenue from selling products and services and from trainee fees.

Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (all enterprises), by type of cost (1999)

	TOTAL COSTS	DIRECT COSTS	LABOUR COSTS OF PARTICIPANTS
EU-15	2.3	1.4	0.8
FINLAND	2.4	1.3	1.1

Total costs: sum of direct costs, staff time costs and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements
Direct costs: costs of CVT courses

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, 2nd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS)

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The targets of training for the unemployed are to balance the supply and demand of the labour force, to meet the demands of the labour force and to prevent unemployment. Within the framework of the state budget allocation, the labour administration acquires employment training mainly for the unemployed and for those under threat of unemployment. Training for these groups is provided by Adult Vocational Training Centres, IVT institutions, universities and other providers of training.

There is a dual system for organising and funding training for the unemployed in Finland. The training is mainly provided by institutions supervised by the Ministry of Education and funded by the Ministry of Labour. The regional and local labour administration, under the Ministry of Labour, are responsible for purchasing training courses for the unemployed from a variety of training providers. The Ministry of Labour allocates the budget to the Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres (Työvoima- ja elinkeinokeskus). These district organisations fund employment training directly, they also allocate money to the Local Labour Offices (työvoimatoimisto) to acquire training locally.

In addition to the state institutional funding structure for training the unemployed, employers can also contribute to the financing of employment training on a joint basis with the labour administration. This kind of co-financing arrangement can be used when a company is restructuring its production and needs to hire personnel with new skills and/or needs to re-train its existing staff. The employer and the local labour office negotiate on the level of co-funding for the required training courses. The joint purchasing of employment training by the labour administration and employers represents a minor share of total employment training.

The benefits received while attending employment training follow the pattern of normal unemployment benefits. The benefits include training grant or labour market grant plus maintenance and accommodation reimbursement. The training grant is divided into basic and income-based shares.

In 2002 the expenses of labour market training were 159 billion euro. In 2002 circa 26 000 persons participated in the labour market training.

EU programmes have brought a new element to national employment policies. The Objective 3 programme of the European Social Fund is a development programme to seek, experiment with and produce new solutions and to disseminate good practices to Finnish labour, industrial and education policies. The programme emphasises

- the coping of the ageing workforce at work and the promotion of its retention at work;
- the development of working communities to match the level of technological development better;
- breaking down the gender-based division of work on the labour and education and training markets;
- the prevention of unemployment and exclusion;
- the prevention of labour force bottlenecks;
- increasing the introduction of innovative operating methods based on lifelong learning;
- the development of training models stemming from working life.

The total budget of the programme for the period 2000–2006 amounts to EUR 1,510 million, of which the EU share accounts for EUR 410 million. National funding comes from the national budget (EUR 540 million) and from the municipal sector (EUR 85 million). In addition, private funding totals an estimated EUR 460 million. The objective of the programme is to provide work and training for about 250,000 people.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

In Finland, vocational education and training are primarily financed through public funds. This will continue to be the main form of funding in the future as well, although there are also ongoing discussions about increasing the share of financial contributions from employers and individuals.

Decentralisation of educational administration has been a key line of education policy since the 1990's. Education policy decision-making powers have been increasingly distributed from central government to education providers. This also applies to funding: education providers have relatively extensive powers to decide on the use of their funds.

In recent years, attention has also focused on the effectiveness and quality of vocational education and training. A new key initiative in this area is the performance-based funding system that became effective in 2002.

Funding received from the European Union has diversified the funding model for vocational education and training. EU funding is mainly used to finance development projects related to upper secondary and additional VET. In addition, EU aid is allocated to training intended for unemployed people.

A key source of EU funding is the ESF Objective 3 programme. Some funds are also channelled through the Leonardo da Vinci programme. In all, EU funding accounts for quite a small proportion of the total funding of upper secondary and additional VET and training for the unemployed.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

The concept of lifelong learning is declared to be one of the main principles underlying the development of Finnish education (see DI 0701). Its specific aims reflect the above-mentioned challenges and are geared to improving the following in terms of lifelong learning: the basic educational level of young people in the transition from school to working life; the basic educational level of the middle-aged; learning ability at all ages; learning opportunities available to senior citizens; formal recognition of skills and knowledge obtained outside education institutions; developing the co-operation between education and training and world of work; educational information and counselling; the criteria for funding education institutions; prevention of exclusion; recognition of learning difficulties and the enhancement of teaching skills.

The process of European integration will bring Finland ever closer into the international economic and political community. Globalisation has a significant impact on education and research. This means growing challenges for people's general education, cooperative and interaction skills, language proficiency and cultural knowledge.

The objective of internationalisation within vocational education and training is to improve the quality of education and training and to make Finnish education and training and working life known in other countries. The aim is to increase the international readiness of the teachers (particularly language skills), to improve the conditions for the students mobility, to increase the number of study periods and on-the-job learning periods abroad and to participate actively in European cooperation.

In the field of VET, Finnish educational institutions and organisations have actively participated in the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme. Finland is a member of the Cedefop and Eurydice networks, and the National Reference Points for Vocational Qualifications (NRP). Finland also has cooperation with the European Training Foundation.

Finland is involved in educational cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic Countries as well as Russia. In addition, Finland has concluded bilateral cultural exchange agreements. For instance, between Finland and Germany, there are annual exchange programmes for teachers, experts and students in VET.

The National Board of Education is responsible for the recognition the foreign qualifications and developing transparency of qualifications at national level.

The NRP (National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications) as well as the ENIC (European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition) and NARIC (Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres) are international information networks which promote the recognition of foreign qualifications. The Finnish NRP and ENIC/NARIC function at the National Board of Education. They provide information on:

- the recognition of foreign qualifications
- Finnish and foreign vocational and academic qualifications
- documents promoting international mobility such as the Diploma Supplement, Certificate Supplement and Europass
- international cooperation in the recognition of qualifications

The Finnish NRP serves as a contact point for vocational qualifications. The ENIC/NARIC serves as an information centre for higher education qualifications and their recognition. The Finnish NRP gives information on:

- Finnish vocational qualifications
- the recognition of EU/EEA vocational education in Finland
- other European NRPs which provide information on vocational qualifications and their recognition in their respective countries

The Finnish NRP provides services to holders of vocational qualifications, students, providers of education as well as the authorities in Finland and abroad.

The European instruments of transparency aim to increase the international mobility of students and professionals. The most central instruments of transparency are the Certificate Supplement, the European Network of NRPs, the European CV and the Europass.

The European Certificate Supplement contains a detailed description of the qualification acquired by the holder of a vocational certificate. It is issued by the awarding authorities and provides information mainly on:

- the skills and competences acquired;
- the range of occupations accessible;
- the awarding and accreditation bodies;
- the level of the certificate;
- the different ways of acquiring the certificate;
- the entry requirements and access opportunities to next level education.

Certificate Supplements on Finnish vocational qualifications are posted at the pages of the National Board of Education in Finnish, Swedish, and English.

A European Network of National Reference Points for Vocational Qualifications is currently being established in the EU/EEA member states. The purpose of the network is to improve and encourage the exchange of information on vocational qualifications and their recognition.

The European curriculum vitae gives a comprehensive standardised overview of education attainments and work experience of an individual. It is complementary to the certificate supplement. The European CV provides information on language competences, work experience, education and training background and additional skills and competences acquired outside formal training schemes. Sample European CVs in Finnish and Swedish are posted at the pages of the National Board of Education. Sample CVs in other European languages can be found on the CEDEFOP home pages.

The Europass Training document is intended for students undergoing vocational training at any level, including higher education and apprenticeship training. The Europass describes and documents the student's education and the European training period included in it. The Europass has been printed in EU/EEA languages, and its form is the same in all EU/EEA countries.

The Europass can be used to document European training periods of all lengths that include practical work. The period can be completed at an educational or training establishment, or in the business sector with a private or public employer.

The Europass can be used in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

Pro Europass - Apprentices across the Border is a Leonardo da Vinci pilot project, which promotes apprenticeship training in Europe through Europass Training and the establishment of a transnational network. The contractor of the project is the Apprenticeship Training Centre of the City of Helsinki, Finland and the co-ordinator is Amiedu Professional Training Center, Finland. Partner organisations include companies, training institutions, apprenticeship training offices, chambers, trade unions, labour unions and research institutes from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Norway. The purpose of the project is to develop practical tools to assist the users of the Europass Training document: apprentices, trainees, teacher-trainers and training bodies as well as enterprises and on-the-job trainers. The material will be posted at the following site: <http://www.amiedu.net/europass/>.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The objective of internationalisation within vocational education and training is to improve the quality of education and training and to make Finnish education and training and working life known in other countries. The aim is to increase the international readiness of the teachers (particularly language skills), to improve the conditions for the students mobility, to increase the number of study periods and on-the-job learning periods abroad and to participate actively in European cooperation.

Growth into internationality is one of the seven common emphasised objectives mentioned in the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Vocational Education and Training. The objective of the growth into internationality shall be for students to manage in a multi-cultural environment and to be tolerant and capable in languages, in order to be able to participate in student exchanges and to find placements in the internationalising labour market.

In upper secondary vocational education and training, the compulsory language subjects are native language (Finnish, Swedish) (4 credits), other national language (Finnish, Swedish) (1 credit) and foreign language (2 credits).

It is also stated in the core curriculum that the student can complete part of his or her on-the-job-learning abroad. This opportunity is given under the 1999 school legislation. According to the law, education providers are obligated to co-operate with other education providers in the region, and the curriculum must provide students with individual choices concerning studies, also taking advantage of the instruction offered by other education providers. Students also have the right to be accredited for their previous studies at other institutions when the objectives and key contents of the studies are in line with the curriculum (Upper Secondary Schools Act 629/1998 and Act 630/1998 on Vocational Education). In practice, this means that studies taken abroad can be included into person's studies.

In addition, student counselling shall be implemented so as to ensure that students familiarise themselves with and are provided with opportunity for international contacts, study and work.

The National Board of Education has produced Certificate Supplements and model certificates for vocational qualifications. They have been produced in Finnish and Swedish, and translated into English, German and French.

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