

# Finland

## VET in Europe - Country Report

2009

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**Author:** ReferNet Finland

**Abstract:**

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

1. General context – framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development – objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. Legislative and Institutional framework – provision of learning opportunities
4. Initial vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Matching VET provision with labour market needs
8. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
9. Financing – investment in human resources
10. National VET statistics – allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2009 and its reference year is 2008. Similar overviews of previous years can be viewed at:

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/)

More detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also be found at:  
[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/analysis.asp](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/analysis.asp)

**Keywords:**

vocational education and training (VET) systems; initial vocational training; continuing vocational training; lifelong learning; VET policy development; financial crisis and VET policies; VET legislative and institutional frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal education; teachers and trainers; anticipation of skill needs; vocational guidance and counselling; VET financing mechanisms; allocation of national VET programmes; national and international qualification systems.

**Geographic term:**

Finland

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## 1. GENERAL CONTEXT – FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

### 1.1 POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Republic of Finland became independent in 1917. Its constitution dates from 1919 and was renewed in 1999. The constitution defines the basic rights of citizens and establishes the fundamental principles of legislation, administration, jurisdiction, public finances; national defence, education, religious communities and public office. According to the constitution, basic education is compulsory and provided free of charge to everyone. The state is charged with the responsibility to provide or support vocational education and training, general education, higher 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 4-year term. The cabinet must enjoy the confidence of parliament. In the 2007 general election the Social Democrats received 21.4%, the Coalition Party 22.3% and the agrarian Centre Party 23.1% of votes.

The government is appointed by the president, who is elected by direct, popular vote for a term of 6 years. In 2006, Ms *Tarja Halonen* was elected for the president for the second term.

Executive powers are vested in different levels of government: central, regional and local. 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 divided according to 6 provinces: one of them, the *Åland* Islands, forms an autonomous, demilitarized and Swedish-speaking province. It consists 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 local level.

### 1.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Finland covers 338,000 square kilometres and is one of the biggest countries in Europe. Population density is 17.0 inhabitants/square kilometre. About 83.3% of the population live in urban areas.

TABLE 1: THE POPULATION IN FINLAND		
2002	2005	2009 (EUROSTAT ESTIMATE)
5,236,611	5,276,955	5,325,115

Source: Eurostat

90.9 % of the population speak Finnish, 5.4 % speak Swedish and 0.03 % speak Sámi. Other languages are spoken by 3.6 % of the population. Finnish and Swedish are the two official languages. All public services (including education) are available in Finnish or Swedish.

There are two official national churches; the Lutheran Church (80.7 % of the population) and the Orthodox Church (1.1%). 16.9 % of the population has no church affiliation.

TABLE 2: AGE-SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS				
AGE GROUP	2000	2008	2015	2025
0-24	1,595,341	1,549,779	1,532,522	1,528,404
25-64	2,808,576	2,884,467	2,792,712	2,703,268
65 +	777,198	892,068	1,129,537	1,394,172
TOTAL	5,181,115	5,326,314	5,454,771	5,625,844

Source: Statistics Finland

Statistics Finland has forecasted that the population will increase during the first half of the century. The proportion of the working-age population will continue to grow at the beginning of the 21st century, but after that it will decrease slowly. In 2025 almost 1/4 of the population will be over 65.

TABLE 3: PROJECTED OLD-AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO %											
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
EU 27	25.9	28.3	31.1	34.2	38.0	42.1	45.4	48.0	50.4	52.5	53.4
FINLAND	25.7	31.7	36.8	40.6	43.9	45.7	45.1	45.5	46.6	47.5	49.3

Source: Eurostat

In Finland the old-age dependency ratio according to Eurostat will increase more rapidly than the EU average till the 2030's, but after that the increase will slow down compared with the EU average.

### 1.3 ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

During the economic upswing in the late 1990's and the early 2000's the economic growth in Finland was one of the fastest in the EU. Especially the technology industry developed gainfully. The annual growth of GDP was over 6 % in 1997 and in 2007 still over 4 %.

The total number of employed in Finland is more than 2.5 millions. The structure of employment is very much similar to the EU average. The trend that shows diminishing numbers of employed in primary sector and manufacturing is continuing. Especially the important export industry sector, forest industry, is struggling on the global market.

TABLE 4: EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%)									
YEAR	2002			2005			2007		
AGE GROUP	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
TOTAL	44.8	82.5	60.7	40.5	82.1	62.6	44.6	83.7	64.2
ISCED 0-2	27.4	70.5	50.7	23.8	69.6	50.8	25.9	70.8	51.0
ISCED 3-4	61.9	80.8	62.3	58.4	80.7	63.9	64.2	82.3	65.1
ISCED 5-6	81.8	89.9	74.8	86.6	88.1	75.4	78.5	89.4	76.5

Source: Eurostat

The Finnish labour market faces two major challenges. The transition from school to work, especially from higher education to work, is too slow. The average age of higher education graduates is essentially higher than in most EU countries. In Finland the number of retirees is already bigger than that of the new employees entering the labour market. Therefore the national policy is to prolong the careers of senior employees.

TABLE 5: GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA (AT CURRENT PRICES)	
YEAR	EUR
1995	18,778
2000	25,555
2005	29,997
2008	35,041*

\* provisional value

Source: Statistics Finland

The growth of GDP per capita had been steady from the end of the recession in the first half of 1990's till the current global economic crisis.



TABLE 6: TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2005								
ISCED 2-4 TOTAL			ISCED 2-4 GENERAL EDUCATION			ISCED 2-4 VOCATIONAL ED.		
IN MILLION EUR PPS	AS % OF GDP	AS % OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE	IN MILLION EUR PPS	AS % OF GDP	AS % OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE	IN MILLION EUR PPS	AS % OF GDP	AS % OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE
3 579,3	2.6	5.2	2 095,6	1.5	3.1	1 483,7	1.1	2.2

Source: Eurostat

Finland cannot base its economy on natural resources. Therefore the well-educated people have been seen as a major resource for development and growth. Even if education is the second biggest sector in the state budget, the investments on education are moderate compared with several EU countries. At the same time as Finland invests on education, the state tries to make the use of funding as effective as possible.

#### 1.4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

TABLE 7 : EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN FINLAND BY AGE GROUP IN 2006, %						
AGE GROUP	LESS THAN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED 0-2)	UPPER SECONDARY GENERAL (ISCED 3)	UPPER SECONDARY VOCATIONAL (ISCED 3)	POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED 4)	TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED 5B)	TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED 5A AND 6)
25-34	14.6	12.8	31.6	4.3	5.8	31.1
35-44	15.5	5.1	33.7	4.4	19.3	22.0
45-54	19.9	3.5	37.8	3.6	18.6	16.6
55 +	51.9	1.7	24.7	0.7	10.7	10.3
25-64	22.0	5.7	33.9	3.3	14.7	20.4

Source: Statistics Finland

The educational attainment of age groups between 25-54-year-olds is high in international comparison. The educational attainment among the 'big age groups,' born after the Second World War, is much lower than among the younger generations because there was not enough supply of formal education and training for these people from the 1950's to the 1970's. The investments on higher education in recent decades can be seen in the numbers of tertiary education graduates among 25-34-year-olds.

TABLE 8: GRADUATES IN ISCED 3-6 BY FIELD OF EDUCATION AND SEX						
	2002			2006		
	ISCED 3 VOCATIONAL	ISCED 4 VOCATIONAL	ISCED 5-6	ISCED 3 VOCATIONAL	ISCED 4 VOCATIONAL	ISCED 5-6
MALES	44,5	49,6	38,5	46,4	46,7	37,4
FEMALES	55,5	50,4	61,5	53,6	53,3	62,6

Source: Eurostat

In Finland, females are the majority on all levels of education except basic education and doctoral studies. Almost two thirds of tertiary graduates are females and clearly over 50 % of vocational education and training graduates on ISCED levels 3 and 4 are females.

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 18-24 WITH AT MOST LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION AND NOT IN FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EU 27	17.1	16.6	15.9	15.5	15.2	14.8
FINLAND	9.9	8.3 (b)	8.7	9.3	8.3	7.9 (p)

b) Break in series

p) Provisional value

Source: Eurostat

Compared with the EU average the early school leaving is not a big problem in Finland. The aim of the educational policy is to secure study places for the whole age group of 16-year-olds who pass the basic education. The national joint application system for upper secondary studies is a tool which helps to rationalise the student selection procedures.

There are essential gender differences in the proportions of school leavers. Girls tend to continue their studies immediately after the basic education more often than boys.

TABLE 10: YOUTH EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVEL - PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 20 TO 24 HAVING COMPLETED AT LEAST UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION									
	2002			2005			2007		
	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES
EU 27	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.9	78.1	80.8	75.5
FINLAND	85.8	89.0	82.6	83.4	85.7	81.0	86.5	88.0	84.8

Source: Eurostat

The proportion of those who have completed at least upper secondary education is increasing in Finland. One reason can be that more emphasis has been put on the youth in the risk of being excluded from education or working life.

TABLE 11: LIFE-LONG LEARNING (ADULT PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING) - PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 25-64 PARTICIPATING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING OVER THE FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY									
	2002			2005			2007		
	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES
EU 27	7.2	7.8	6.6	9.8	10.5	9.0	9.5	10.3	8.6
FINLAND	17.3	20.0	14.5	22.5	26.1	19.0	23.4	27.5	19.4

Source: Eurostat

In Finland the participation of adults in education and training is essentially over the European average. According to Labour Force Survey the participation rate has increased in recent years, but according to Adult Education Survey the level of participation in 2006 has stayed on the same level as in 2000.

## 1.5 DEFINITIONS

### GENERAL EDUCATION - *YLEISSIVISTÄVÄ KOULUTUS; ALLMÄNBILDANDE UTBILDNING;*

Education which is mainly designed to lead participants to a deeper understanding of a subject or group of subjects, especially, but not necessarily, with a view to preparing participants for further (additional) education at the same or a higher level. Successful completion of these programmes may or may not provide the participants with a labour-market relevant qualification at this level. These programmes are typically school-based. Programmes with a general orientation and not focusing on a particular specialisation should be classified in this category.

In Finland general education refers to the 9-year basic education common to all children and general upper secondary education.

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED 1997", Paris, November 1997; Finnish National Board of Education.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - *AMMATILLINEN KOULUTUS; YRKESUTBILDNING;*

Mainly designed to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade or class of occupations or trades. Successful completion of such programmes leads to a labour-market relevant vocational qualification recognized by the competent authorities in the country in which it is obtained (e.g. the Ministry of Education, employers' associations, etc.).

In Finland vocational education refers to school-based vocational upper secondary education and training provided by VET institutions and adult education centres as well as apprenticeship training and competence-based qualifications.

*Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED 1997", Paris, November 1997; Finnish National Board of Education.*

## TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Technical education is a synonym to vocational education

## TERTIARY EDUCATION - KORKEAKOULUASTEEN KOULUTUS; UTBILDNING PÅ HÖGSKOLENIVÅ;

In Finland, a prerequisite for admission to tertiary education is the upper secondary graduation. Tertiary education takes at least two years. In Finland tertiary education includes polytechnics bachelor's degrees, university bachelor's and master's degrees, specialist's degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, general staff officer and recently abolished vocational college education.

*Source: ISCED 1997, Finnish Implementation Manual 2000*

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is a synonym to tertiary education.

## POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

These programmes straddle the boundary between upper secondary and post-secondary education. They are often not significantly more advanced than programmes at upper secondary level but they serve or broaden the knowledge of participants who have already completed a programme at upper secondary level. In Finland there is one qualification, specialist vocational qualification, which falls into this category. The specialist vocational qualifications are always taken as competence-based qualifications in which the student must demonstrate that he or she masters the most demanding tasks in the vocational field in question.

*Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED 1997", Paris, November 1997; Finnish National Board of Education.*

## TRAINING

Training is in an education system context a synonym to education.

#### INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING - AMMATILLINEN PERUSKOULUTUS; GRUNDLÄGGANDE YRKESUTBILDNING;

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) is defined as training undertaken typically after full-time compulsory education (although it may start before) to promote the acquisition of the necessary knowledge, skills and competences for entry to an occupation or group of occupations. It can be undertaken purely within a school-based and/or work-based environment. Initial vocational education and training also encompasses adult education in Finland. It includes apprenticeship training.

*Source: Glossary of the EknowVET database; Finnish National Board of Education.*

#### CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING - AMMATILLINEN JATKO- JA TÄYDENNYSKOULUTUS; YRKESINRIKTAD TILLÄGGsutBILDNING;

Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) can be broadly defined as professional or vocational development through education and training undertaken typically after one has completed initial vocational education and training (IVET). It can be provided and undertaken at the initiative of public authorities, social partners, sectors, enterprises, individuals as well as a range of voluntary and community organisations. It also includes learning on-the-job not synonyms, much of which can be classified as non-formal or informal learning. It may lead to certification.

Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) thus relates to the further professional, vocational or personal development of people. It can take place in a societal, industrial sector and/or in a specific organisational or company context.

*Source: Glossary of the EknowVET database*

#### SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMMES - KOULUMUOTOINEN KOULUTUS; SKOLBASERAD UTBILDNING;

In school-based programmes instruction takes place (either partly or exclusively) in educational institutions. These include special training centres for vocational education run by public or private authorities or enterprise-based special training centres if these qualify as educational institutions. These programmes can have an on-the-job training component, i.e. a component of some practical experience at the workplace.

*Source: UOE data collection on education systems, Volume 1, Manual, Concepts, definitions and classifications*

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING - OPPISOPIMUSKOULUTUS; LÄROAVTALSUTBILDNING;

Systematic, long-term training alternating periods in a school or training centre and at the workplace; the apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.

*Source: Terminology of vocational training policy, Cedefop.*

### CURRICULUM - *OPETUSSUUNNITELMA; LÄROPLAN;*

Curriculum is a plan on the arrangement of teaching. In Finland the Finnish National Board of Education stipulate the core curricula which form the framework of local curricula done by the schools themselves or education providers.

*Source: Finnish National Board of Education*

### QUALIFICATION - *TUTKINTO; EXAMEN;*

Qualification is a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

*Source: EQF, 2006*

### SKILLS - *TAIDOT; FÄRDIGHETER;*

The ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

*Source: EQF, 2006*

### COMPETENCES - *OSAAMINEN; KOMPETENS;*

The proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/ or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

*Source: EQF, 2006*

## 2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OF VET

#### 2.1.1. NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY

The Finnish society is built on knowledge and creativity and values such as equity, tolerance, internationalisation, gender equality and responsibility for the environment. Everyone has an equal right to participate in education according to their abilities and in keeping with the principle of lifelong learning.

The Government adopts a plan for development of education and university research within the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education every four years to cover both that year and the following five calendar years. On 5 December 2007, the Government decided on future development policies by adopting a resolution on the Development Plan for Education and Research for 2007-2012, which is based on the objectives set for education and science policy in the Government Programme. Implementation of the plan will be evaluated in 2010. The plan is a comprehensive strategy for the sector and thus the expression of the lifelong learning policy.

#### 2.1.2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAIN VET POLICY AREAS

Over the next few years, priorities for development include guaranteeing equal opportunities for education and training, high quality of education and training and availability of skilled labour, developing higher education and safeguarding competent teaching resources. A specific priority will be to enhance the quality of basic and higher education. Development of basic education will be supported by an additional investment of EUR 80 million over the current Government term. The aim will be to reduce group sizes and reinforce remedial teaching and special needs education. The development of group sizes especially in basic education will also be monitored on a regular basis, while improving the opportunities of teachers and other staff to systematically upgrade their competencies.

Universities and polytechnics will continue to be developed in keeping with the dual model, which is based on different degrees, degree titles and professional tasks. Special objectives for higher education include improvement of the student/teacher ratio and reform of performance management to underline the quality of education. Measures for structural development of higher education institutions are specified in the action plan published in the spring of 2008. The process of amending the Universities Act is in progress and the new proposal is due to be submitted for discussion by Parliament in the spring of 2009.

Another aim is to raise the proportion of people holding vocational qualifications or tertiary degrees among younger age groups (25-to-34-year-olds) from the current 73% to 88% by 2020. This would mean that those with vocational qualifications and tertiary degrees should account for 46% and 42%, respectively, of the relevant age groups.

Achieving these targets requires an even higher proportion of young people completing their basic education to move on to upper secondary school and vocational education and training. It is necessary to reduce the time lag between completion of the upper secondary

school matriculation examination and the start of higher education studies. Also drop-out rates should be decreased considerably.

The system of adult education and training will be overhauled. Its challenges are related to adults without any vocational training, on the one hand, and adult education opportunities for tertiary degree holders, on the other. Administrative division of work and financing will also be revised.

According to the Development plan those intending to study for a different vocational qualification of the same level will be encouraged to apply for adult education programmes, such as preparatory training for competence-based qualifications, adult education in polytechnics or Master's programmes at universities. Continuing education at universities will be developed to provide a genuine alternative to education leading to a qualification.

The matching of vocational education and training and the needs of working life has been improved by expanding on-the-job learning, by constantly reforming and developing initial and competence-based qualifications and through performance-based funding. The matching of education and training with the needs of working life must be further strengthened particularly by expanding and developing on-the-job learning.

The government has decided in the development plan that the vocational qualifications system will be developed as an entity in view of the competence needs of the world of work and individuals, so that qualifications comprise general vocational and sector-specific competencies.

The matching of initial vocational qualifications with the world of work will be improved, so that they produce the field-specific vocational competence required by working life and broad vocational skills and competence for further studies.

The flexibility of the vocational qualifications system will be increased by diversifying the possibilities to include modules of other vocational qualifications in initial vocational qualifications. Measures will be taken to ensure that increased optionality will not reduce the vocational competence produced by the qualifications.

During the Development plan period, possibilities for obtaining initial vocational qualifications will be diversified by allowing completion of a qualification producing the vocational competence required by working life one module at a time. However, the primary objective should always be the completion of an entire qualification. The effectiveness of the distribution of lesson hours at upper secondary schools will be evaluated, and the assessment of linguistic oral skills will be developed. Another aim is to further develop the system of student financial aid by means, such as abandoning means-testing based on spousal income when granting housing supplement.

Prerequisites for broad-based basic research and applied research will be improved, and core funding and competitive funding for universities will be increased. The target for doctoral degrees will be maintained at current levels (the target for 2008 was 1,600 doctorates, while the actual figure for 2006 stood at about 1,400). An increasing proportion of doctoral degree holders should be employed outside the university system in research and other tasks.

Education providers will have the obligation to ensure that their staff regularly receives continuing education to improve their professional skills. The Ministry of Education will launch a broad network project for developing the quality of the working conditions of teaching and educational staff.



Teachers' continuing education will be made more systematic and regional cooperation in continuing education will be promoted. Resources for government-funded teaching staff training will be increased. The supply will emphasise work community-specific training and diverse support for developing institutions. Resources will be allocated to the national and regional networks for developing continuing education and institutions. Training for the management of institutions will be developed. The evaluation of quality and effectiveness will be integrated into the monitoring of continuing education.

Further and continuing education for teachers will focus on education that:

- enables the introduction of participatory, active and operational working methods and different learning environments,
- improves teachers' capabilities to face different learners,
- develops the skills required in a multicultural society and the teaching of immigrants, and
- develops online learning skills.

In addition, issues related to immigrant education and multiculturalism as well as entrepreneurship and links with the world of work play a more prominent role in the new Development Plan.

### 2.1.3. CURRENT DEBATES

The major current issue in Finnish VET is the preparation of a comprehensive reform of adult education and training. On broad basis nominated working group has launched its interim report which pronounces the major development issues in Finnish VET at the moment. The working group raises the question of financing of CVET, it should be performance-based. Also the financial support of the students should be renewed and simplified.

The workplace learning is, especially during the economic crisis, an important tool for development of skills needed in the future. The role of apprenticeship training is becoming more important at all levels of education. The model of apprenticeship training adapted to higher education has been brought to debate. Also the role of social partners in development of workplace learning should be strengthened.

The debate on analysis and forecasts of skills needs is an essential factor on the VET policy agenda as well as the guidance and counselling of underrepresented and vulnerable groups.

## 2.2 THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN TOOLS

The government decided in the Development plan that the National Qualification Framework will be launched in 2010 at the latest. The Ministry of Education appointed a working group which has a term until to the end of June 2009.

The Working group shall make a proposal of NQF and describe the skill levels. It has to describe the principles according to which the qualifications should be placed on EQF levels. In addition it has to make a proposal on the maintaining, updating and development of NQF. It has to describe how quality assurance will be arranged.

The recently launched system of skills demonstrations in IVET aims to more clearly show the skills learned in education and training. The skills demonstrations should secure and strengthen the quality of IVET, unify the student assessment throughout the country and improve the transition from school to work.

The Finnish Europass Centre has been active in promoting the adoption of Europass by the world of education and the world of work. International mobility is seen as central in Finnish education policy and thus tools that promote, facilitate and make mobility and its results more transparent have been welcomed. The objective is to transfer the dissemination and promotion of the European mobility document to local and regional level. The Europass Centre cooperates closely with educational institutions, employment centres and EURES employment centres. The Europass documents are widely used in the education institutions.

Supporting of European mobility of VET students and graduates is one of the aims of Development plan. The state funding reserved for the internationalisation of education and training aims at supporting the internationalisation according to the objectives set in the core curricula and the creation of international cooperation networks. When the funds are granted, priority is given to projects that are carried out with EU partners and that support the following development areas:

- preparing for the implementation of EQF and ECVET
- on-the-job learning and assessment abroad
- opportunities for peer learning
- teachers on-the-job learning periods abroad
- guiding and supporting individualisation of studies
- developing international cooperation in quality assurance
- learning about entrepreneurship in other countries.

The main feature of the mobility of VET students is that students travel from Finland more often than foreign students come to Finland.

TABLE 1: VET STUDENT MOBILITY FROM AND TO FINLAND 2002-2006					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
FROM FINLAND	3 682	4 569	4 076	4 492	4 492
TO FINLAND	1 500	2 200	1 847	1 838	2 059

## 2.3 POSSIBLE PROJECTIONS OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS ON VET POLICIES

### 2.3.1 THE FORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS ON VET

The attractiveness of VET has increased in recent years and, at the moment, there are no signs that the trend would change. In spring 2009 the number of applicants for education in general, but especially for VET, was still increasing.

The current statistics show that the participation in in-service training organised by employers increased at least until 2006. The number of layoffs has risen to over 3 per cent of the labour force. Also redundancies have increased. This means that the participation in education and training seems to decrease in absolute numbers, but, at the same time, the share of adult training participants increases, because some companies invest in further training instead of laying off their staff or making them redundant.

### 2.3.2 THE MEASURES ALREADY TAKEN OR ENVISAGED TO BE TAKEN AS RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

In midterm the government assessed the results of its programme and set up new aims for tackling the challenges of the economic crisis. The government proposed that the adult education will be developed in such a way that the flexibility of labour market is improved and the risk of structural unemployment decreased. The government aims at better anticipating labour market changes, increasing the productivity and meeting labour market needs. The government also plans to improve the opportunities of those unemployed who apply for self-motivated education and training so that they would have similar benefits as those in labour market training. The amount and continuity of guidance should be taken into account so that the chain from basic education to working life remains unbroken.

A particular challenge in Finland is the transition from upper secondary level to higher education. The aim is to speed up this transition among new general upper secondary graduates. The application system will be reformed with the help of universities and polytechnics so that the electronic application system and the matriculation examination will be utilised more effectively in the future. Entrance examinations will be developed to better meet the application process, and the exam material will be announced only after the matriculation examination. Education institutions are asked to give their acceptance and leave their proposals by the end of 2009.

The government proposes that in-service training should be improved among adults with higher education qualifications in order to direct more intakes that lead to qualifications to younger age-groups. The proposals to reform the student financial aid system will be given by the end of 2009. The intent is to encourage full-time studying. In addition, work practice of higher education students will be developed in order to improve their employment.

The Preparatory instruction and guidance for VET (Ammattistartti) along with other preparatory VET studies will be further developed. Also on-the-job training will be developed in VET. The aim is to secure upper secondary education for every basic education graduate. National recommendations for the principles and procedures of recognising prior learning will be prepared in concert with education providers, higher education institutions, working life actors and other stakeholders.

The Ministry of Education has decided to increase the number of initial VET study places. According to existing data of the national joint application system, one fifth of the applicants for upper secondary VET remained without a study place in spring 2009. Therefore it has been essential to increase initial VET intakes.

In order to alleviate the economic down-turn, the In-service Training Reform Board (AKKU) has introduced various proposals for years 2009-2011. Some of them have been taken into account in the first additional budget proposal for 2009. Additions comprise some 30 million euros, of which 11 million goes to the Ministry of Education and 18.6 millions to the Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

If worsening employment is followed by a rapid decrease in the demand of apprenticeship training in particular sectors and in small companies, the unit price for organising additional vocational education in apprenticeship training will be temporarily increased in order to improve employers' abilities to take and train apprentices.

A temporary language training programme for immigrants will be put into effect in 2009-2011. According to studies and programmes on immigration employment and training, lack of language training as well as long waiting lists for language courses are the main hindrances in getting employed or continuing studies.

In order to secure the jobs of those most vulnerable to the unsteady labour market, study prospects will be improved among part-time employees. This will be encouraged by giving adults 'adjusted' student financial aid.

There will be an enquiry on whether employers can be encouraged, for example by means of taxation, to offer in-service training instead of temporary layoffs or redundancies. By means of labour market training and the training offered by educational authorities, an effort will be made to increase know-how and avoid layoffs and redundancies.

### 3. LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK – PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

#### 3.1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IVET

The legislation governing primary and secondary level education, as well as part of the legislation governing adult education was 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 student 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.

Vocational upper secondary education and training is governed by the Vocational Education Act (630/1998) and Decree on Vocational Education (811/1998). The Act concerns initial vocational education for both young and adult students and the available qualifications. A special Act on the Financing of the Provision of Education and Culture (635/ 1998) covers all funding for all levels of education except universities.

Statutes governing apprenticeship training are incorporated into the acts and decrees issued on vocational education, vocational adult education and the financing of educational and cultural provision. In addition, apprenticeship training is also governed by the provisions of other statutes on working hours, annual leave, safety at work and labour protection with regard to employees. Parts of these statutes also apply to the on-the-job learning periods in vocational upper secondary education.

The Vocational Education Act 630/1998 stipulates that the aim of Finnish upper secondary vocational education and training is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to gain vocational expertise, as well as the capabilities to find employment or to become self-employed. In accordance with the provision of the Vocational Education Act 630/1998 and the Government Resolution 213/1999, upper secondary vocational education and training provides students with extensive basic vocational skills for various assignments in their field and more specialised competence and vocational skills as required by working life in one sector of the qualification.

Legislation that governs polytechnics is the Polytechnics Act (351/2003) and Polytechnics Decree (351/2003), which came into force August 2003. The Decree on the System of Higher Education Degrees also covers polytechnic degrees. The Ministry of Education confirms the degree programmes. The law on the trial polytechnic postgraduate degrees was confirmed 13 July 2001 and it came to force 1 January 2002 ( 645/2001). Since August 2005, the postgraduate degrees have been based on permanent legislation and all polytechnics are offering polytechnic Master's degrees in Finland.

The polytechnics act (351/2003) approved in 2003 clarified the status and functions of polytechnics. The role of the polytechnics in the education system is now defined so that the polytechnics, jointly with universities, form the institutions of higher education. The

functions of polytechnics are specified by legislation as teaching, research, development as well as regional and local development. Adult education is also emphasised in the Act: by investing more extensively in adult education, the polytechnics take part in developing the rapidly changing world of work and will thus be able to respond to the changing requirements and needs for development in professional skills.

Polytechnic Master's degrees are intended for people who have completed a polytechnic degree or another applicable Bachelor's level degree and have obtained at least three years of work experience in their field after the completion of the degree. Polytechnic Master's degrees are determined on the basis of working life needs and implemented in line with the objectives of adult education.

The Universities Act (645/1997) and Decree (115/1998) include provisions on the mission of the universities, research and instruction, organisation and administration, staff and official language, students, appeals against university decisions and students' legal protection.

University legislation was amended 1 August 2005. The changes included establishing a two-cycle degree structure, clarification regarding the responsibilities and functions of the universities and developing university administration.

The Finnish Universities Act is currently under reform. The draft law will further extend the autonomy of universities by giving them an independent legal personality, either as public corporations or as foundations under private law. At the same time, the universities' management and decision-making system will be reformed. The Government is planning to submit its proposal for a new Universities Act to Parliament in the spring of 2009. If passed, the new law will replace the Universities Act of 1997. Also the legislation concerning the polytechnics is being renewed in convergence with the new university legislation.

Legislation on higher education degrees comprises the Decree on the System of Higher Education Degrees (464/1998) and the Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004). This decree stipulates, for example, the objectives and scope of university degrees, their general structure and content, as well as the distribution of educational responsibility between different universities. The degree renewal will be carried out during the 3-5 year transition period (depending on the field of education) during which degrees in accordance with both the old and the new system can be completed.

Statutes governing Swedish-language higher education include the Act (1354/1990) and Decree (1287/1991) on the Co-ordination of Swedish-language Higher Education. Statutes applicable to staff include the Decree on the Qualifications and Duties pertaining to University Posts (309/1993) as well as the Act (856/1991) and Decree (1581/1991) on Filling the Vacancies of Professor and Associate Professor at an Institution of Higher Education.

In addition, there are statutes concerning fees and charges and statutes on the international recognition of degrees and the qualifications for posts provided by degrees. Financial aid for university students is governed by the Act (65/1994) and Decree (260/1994) on Financial Aid for Students.

Teachers' salaries are agreed nationally as part of collective agreements for state and municipal civil servants for the educational sector, which are concluded at intervals of 1-3 years. A new salary system has been implemented for education staff since 2007. The aim of the new system is to improve the performance of the municipalities, motivate staff and to ensure the competitiveness of municipal salaries. Earlier salaries were based on the

number of teaching hours and years of service. In the new system the salaries are based on the tasks and their requirements and the results of the work, the professionalism of the staff and work experience. In addition a bonus can be paid based on the result of the institution. Extra duties, such as being responsible for the language laboratory, are also compensated. There is also room for local flexibility in the salary system. The Trade Union of Education hopes that employers, that is, local authorities, would make more frequent use of this opportunity to pay their employees more than the minimum salaries determined in national agreements.

### 3.2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET

#### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Education policy is defined by Parliament and the 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 2007-2012 was adopted at the end of 2007.

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 Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) is a governmental body and functions under the Ministry of Education. The FNBE 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 FNBE 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 FNBE 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).

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

The local authorities (municipalities, altogether 348) 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 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.

## ROLE OF THE EU IN VET INSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the preparation and follow-up of matters relating to education and vocational training, youth, culture, audiovisual matters within the sphere of authority of the Ministry, copyright, recognition of degrees (Finnish National Board of Education), and sports in the European Union. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education is responsible, together with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, for the preparation and monitoring of matters relating to research and development in the European Union.

## STRUCTURAL FUNDS

The Ministry of Education is the authority responsible for the projects in its sector partially financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The Ministry of Education cooperates with different Ministries; e.g. the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, which coordinates the European Social Fund; and the Ministry of the Interior, which coordinates the European Regional Development Fund.

In the sector of the Ministry of Education, the European Social Fund ESF finances projects relating to education and employment. Several ESF projects in the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education are linked with projects financially supported by the European Regional Development Fund, which makes them more diverse and wide-ranging.

## LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME

Leonardo da Vinci is the European Union programme for vocational training.

The main aim of the programme is to support mobility and development projects in the vocational training sector, and to internationalise vocational training at all levels from initial vocational training to the polytechnic and university level. Business and working life also take an active role in the programme.

The European Commission is responsible for the implementation.



### 3.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) and Decree on Vocational Adult Education (812/1998) govern the upper secondary vocational qualifications completed in the form of competence-based qualifications, as well as further and specialist vocational qualifications, preparatory training for further and specialist vocational qualifications and other types of upper secondary level additional vocational education and training.

The main objective of the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) is to maintain and enhance the vocational skills of adult population, provide the adult students with capabilities to employ themselves, develop the world of work, promote employment and support lifelong learning. In addition, the aim of the Act is to encourage adults to take qualifications or parts (modules) of the qualifications. For other legislative framework see also 3.1.

### 3.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

#### ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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 Finnish 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 Finnish 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 Finnish National Board of Education is in turn responsible for drawing up national core curricula and guidelines for vocational qualifications.

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

#### ROLE OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Provincial State Offices, which represent the intermediate level of administration, decide on the allocation of appropriations related to the '*Noste*' programme to improve the educational level of the adult population during the years 2003 to 2007. The *Noste* Programme is a five-year (2003-2007) additional action programme for education and training targeted at those adults aged between 30 and 59 who have only completed basic level education. The training programmes within the *Noste* programme must be finished by the end of 2009.

## ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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.

## ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

Central labour market organisations have the following roles as partners and supporters of adult education and training:

- The social partners participate in the planning and development of education through representation on the following committees:
  - The Council of Lifelong Learning (until May 2009 the Adult Education Council) set up by the Government. The scope of the new Council is broader than the previous Adult Education Council's covering not only matters concerning adult education, but also all educational levels from vocational education to higher education including on-the-job learning and liberal and general adult education;
  - the national education and training committees operating in conjunction with the Finnish National Board of Education, which have been created to develop contacts between vocational education and training and working life;
  - the qualification committees operating under the Finnish National Board of Education, which have been established to organise and supervise competence tests in vocational adult education and training (in the competence-based qualification system);
  - the consultative committees operating in vocational institutions, with the task of developing the operations of the institution and its contacts with local working life.
- The central labour market organisations have so-called training agreements in the different main sectors. These are part of the field-specific collective agreements, regulating the terms of in-service training. The first training agreements were signed in 1971.
- The labour market organisations may maintain their own adult education institutions like other organisations and associations.

## ENTERPRISES

Enterprises support and organise adult education and training by:

- paying for in-service training and organising company-specific training for personnel;

- maintaining specialised vocational institutions;
- organising apprenticeship training;
- covering some adult employment training costs;
- offering training places for young people and adults studying at vocational institutions;
- financing part of their personnel's self-motivated training by granting paid leave and by paying some training costs;
- granting study leave for the self-motivated study of the personnel.

## ROLE OF CVET PROVIDERS

Institutions with licences to provide education may provide upper secondary and additional vocational education and training for adults. Vocational institutions have established special adult education programmes or units. The vocational qualifications to be taken are the same in adult education and training as for young people. The further and specialist qualifications are meant for adults.

There are 43 vocational adult education centres, most of which are owned by local authorities, with financing based on sales of services. Traditionally, education organised by vocational adult education centres has mainly consisted of adult employment training (labour market training). Vocational adult education centres also provide upper secondary vocational education and training leading to qualifications, as well as additional training and in-service training. The theoretical studies in apprenticeship training may also be organised at vocational adult education centres.

Polytechnics may provide professional specialisation studies with a scope of 20 - 40 credits. In certain circumstances, the Ministry of Education may confirm a more extensive scope for these studies. The specialisation studies are extensive continuing education programmes supplementing the degree system, which are provided for people with a university degree, a vocational post-secondary qualification or a vocational higher education degree, or for others with sufficient aptitude for study.

In recent years, polytechnics have developed their provision of open education. Open polytechnics offer the opportunity to study individual study units included in polytechnic degrees. Polytechnic postgraduate degrees provide practically oriented education and training aimed at mature students.

All universities have their own continuing education centres. Commercial services provide most of their financing. In addition, these centres may have several affiliates operating outside the university town. Continuing education centres organise vocational continuing education for individuals already holding an academic degree and provide and co-ordinate open university education in co-operation with university departments and different adult education organisations.

## ROLE OF THE EU

*See 3.2.*

## 4. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 4.1 BACKGROUND TO THE INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

According to the Basic Education Act (*Perusopetuslaki*), children must attend education from the age of 7 for 10 years. Parents/guardians are required to ensure that children comply with this obligation. Local authorities are obliged to organise basic education free of charge for children living within their area (including those with special needs). The compulsory schooling consists of single structure comprehensive school. 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 grade' is voluntary for the pupils and the local authorities decide whether the grade is organised.

After completing basic education, a young person can continue studying or enter working life. It is not considered advisable to move into working life immediately. Instead, one of the objectives of education policy is to provide the whole each age group with upper secondary education free of charge. If schooling is continued, a choice is usually made between general upper secondary school and vocational education and training.

Over 90% of those leaving post-compulsory education continue their studies. During recent years, about 51% continue in general upper secondary education, about 41% in upper secondary VET and about 2% in the voluntary 10th grade.

General upper secondary education builds on the basic education syllabus. The scope of the general upper secondary school syllabus is 3 years. The upper secondary school syllabus should be completed within a maximum of 4 years, unless a student is granted a continuation of the completion period for a legitimate reason. At the end of general upper secondary education, students usually participate in the national matriculation examination, which provides general eligibility for higher education. Upper secondary schools select their students autonomously on the basis of criteria determined by the Ministry of Education.

The objective of general upper secondary education is to promote the development of students into good, balanced and civilised individuals and members of society and to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary for further studies, working life, their personal interests and the diverse development of their personalities. In addition, the education should support and provide the student with skills for lifelong learning and self-development in later life.

The scope of upper secondary level vocational qualifications taken after basic education is 3 years (120 credits). Even if the education and training mostly takes place in institutions, all qualifications include at least 20 credits (approx. 6 months) of instruction in the workplace. Vocational qualifications may also be completed as apprenticeship training, which also contain courses arranged in the institutions. In Finland, most of the apprentices are adults. Majority of the youngsters complete their IVET studies in the school-based education.

Furthermore, upper secondary vocational qualifications may also be obtained through competence tests independent of how the vocational skills have been acquired. Those who complete competence-based qualifications are usually adults. Like other vocational adult

education and training, competence-based qualifications are governed by a separate act. It is also possible to apply for vocational upper secondary education and training upon completion of general upper secondary schooling.

For the purpose of organising education and training, the Ministry of Education grants the permission to education providers, determining the sectors of education in which they are allowed to organise education and their total student numbers. The education providers determine which vocational qualifications and which study programmes within the sectors of education will be organised at their vocational institutions.

The education providers are mostly municipalities or federations of municipalities. The State provides special needs education in five institutions and runs the Educational Centre of the Saami Area in Lapland (Saamelaisalueen koulutuskeskus).

The majority of vocational institutions (usually VET institutions) are maintained by local authorities, joint municipal authorities and the state. 39.5% are maintained by private organisations but only 20% of students study in institutions maintained by private organisations. Funding criteria are uniform irrespective of ownership.

Private vocational institutions operating under the Vocational Education and Training Act are steered by the Ministry of Education, receive government subsidies and have the right to award official qualification certificates.

Other private educational institutions do not have the right to award qualification certificates. In Finland there are, however, a number of private educational institutions, e.g. in the service sector. They do not receive public funding even if they fall under the supervision of the consumer authorities.

Education providers have a statutory duty to evaluate their own operations and participate in external evaluation. The purpose of evaluation is to collect information in support of education policy decisions, information-based guidance and performance management. The purpose of evaluation is to bring about continuous improvement of the quality of education, training, research and other activities. Evaluations relating to education and training are carried out at local, regional and national levels. Finland also participates in international reviews.

The expert body in evaluation of general, vocational and adult education is the Finnish Education Evaluation Council, which functions as a network of experts. The duties of this independent Evaluation Council include evaluation of education, training and learning, development of evaluation and promotion of research into evaluation and assessment. Evaluation activities support the Ministry of Education, education providers and educational institutions.

There is no separate inspection department for schools in Finland. The steering of the education is decided by the Government and the Ministry of Education. However, many things have been entrusted to the providers of education. Their activities are steered through the national core curricula and objectives laid down in legislation. Feedback concerning the operations of the education system is collected by means of statistics and evaluations. The information thus gained steers education.

The Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training has been adopted in 2008 by the Ministry of Education to support and encourage VET providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their operations. The recommendation is based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in vocational education and training and it forms an important part of Finland's implementation of the Copenhagen

process measures. The recommendation has been prepared by the Finnish National Board of Education working in cooperation with VET providers, representatives of the world of work and business as well as students.

The purpose of the Quality Management Recommendation is to provide a framework for long-term development of quality management in all types of vocational education and training. The recommendations can be applied to vocational education and training implemented in different ways: initial VET and further and continuing training, competence tests and training preparing for competence-based qualifications, as well as curricular or school-based VET, special needs VET and apprenticeship training. In addition, the recommendations have been prepared so that they can be applied at both VET provider and individual unit levels and they are relevant to users at different stages of quality improvement.

Universities and polytechnics evaluate their own education, research and artistic provision and undertake impact analyses. They are assisted by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC), which is an independent expert body assisting universities, polytechnics and the Ministry of Education in matters relating to evaluation. The Council is attached to the Ministry.

Evaluation findings are used in the development of the education system and the core curricula and in practical teaching. They and international comparative data also provide a tool for monitoring the realisation of equality and equity in education.

FINHEEC also makes recommendations to the Ministry of Education concerning centres of excellence in education based on proposals submitted by the universities and polytechnics. The evaluation of research is the responsibility of the Academy of Finland, which designates centres of excellence in research. Centres of excellence in artistic activities are nominated by the Arts Council of Finland.

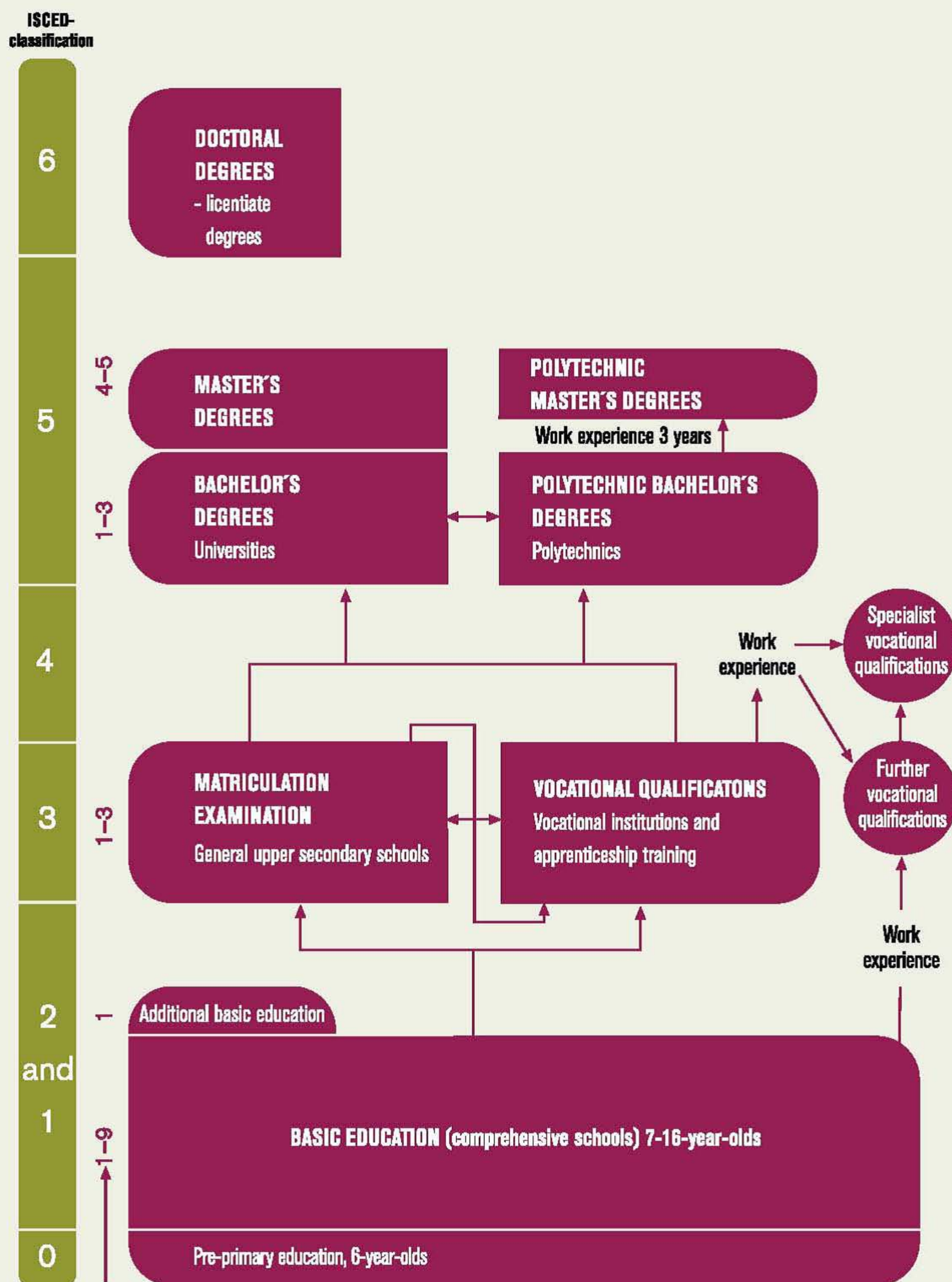
Universities are currently developing their quality assurance systems in order to enhance quality and improve international comparability.

## DIAGRAM

Finnish Education System



# THE FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM



Duration  
in years

## ISCED-classification

- 0 Preprimary education
- 1 Primary education or first stage of basic education
- 2 Lower secondary or second stage of basic education
- 3 (Upper) secondary education
- 4 Post secondary nontertiary education
- 5 First cycle of tertiary education
- 6 Second cycle of tertiary education

## 4.2 IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

In Finland IVET does not exist at lower secondary level.

## 4.3 IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL / ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
Initial vocational qualification	Primary sector and utilities Manufacturing Construction Distribution and transport Business and other services Non-market services	ISCED 3	90 credits vocational;  20 credits general;  10 credits free-choice subjects (can be either or)	Minimum 20 credits on-the-job learning	120 credits (=3 years)	Work, General upper secondary, Further voc. qual., Specialist voc. qual., Polytechnics, Universities

Students in vocational upper secondary education and training are mainly aged 16-25 years. The school-based education system means full-time studies for three years at a vocational institution. Education and training of compulsory studies is primarily organised in year classes. In other cases, students follow their individual study plans.

Applicants, who have completed the basic education syllabus or a corresponding earlier syllabus, may be admitted as students to education and training leading to an upper secondary vocational qualification. More precise student admission criteria are determined by the Ministry of Education. The criteria include previous study record in basic education or general upper secondary education (average grade of all subjects and grades emphasised in the relevant field), work experience and entrance or aptitude tests.

Education providers may ignore the order of scores in student admission for individual student-related reasons ("flexible selection"): applicants deemed by the education provider to have sufficient capabilities to complete the education and training may also be admitted as students.

People who have accomplished the matriculation examination and general upper secondary education also have the opportunity to complete an upper secondary vocational qualification.

Admission as a student requires a good state of health, so that it does not form an obstacle to participation in the education concerned.



Admission procedure will take place through the joint application system, which is an electronic process maintained by the Finnish National Board of Education.

Students are free to choose which educational institution they apply to. If a person does not gain admittance to the school of his or her first choice, other possible schools are considered.

IVET is primarily free of charge for students; a small amount of student fees may be charged for a specific reason with permission from the Ministry of Education. Students have to pay for textbooks, work clothes and other materials.

The Government decides on the general goals of vocational education and training, the structure of qualifications, and the core subjects. The Ministry of Education decides on the studies and their scope.

Vocational upper secondary qualifications and study programmes are defined in a Ministry of Education decree. The fields of education are as follows:

- Humanities and education;
- Culture;
- Social science, business and administration;
- Natural sciences;
- Technology, communication and transport;
- Natural resources and the environment;
- Social services, health and sport;
- Tourism, catering and domestic services

Vocational upper secondary education and training in humanities, education and sports is mainly provided by liberal adult education institutions.

There are altogether 52 vocational upper secondary qualifications and 119 study programmes in them. The qualifications provide the students with a wide variety of basic skills as well as more specialised skills in some areas.

The curriculum consists of the national core curricula, each education provider's curricula and individual study plans. The Finnish National Board of Education approves the qualification-specific core curricula and the requirements of each competence-based qualification. These are drawn up in cooperation with employers and employees, other representatives and experts of economic life as well as teachers and students. The curricula are based on a learning outcomes approach. The key competences of lifelong learning will be included into core curricula of IVET. The curriculum combines extensive basic vocational skills for various assignments as well as more specialised competence and vocational skills. Specialisations are determined by the study programmes chosen. For example, the vocational curriculum in logistics is divided into study programmes for transportation services and storage services, which in turn have their respective qualification titles, driver and warehouse operative.

The Finnish National Board of Education decides on the national core curriculum for each vocational qualification, determining the composition of studies and objectives, core

contents and assessment criteria for study modules. It also includes provisions on student assessment, student counselling, on-the-job learning, special education and training, educational arrangements for immigrants and apprenticeship training. The content of local curricula is defined in the national core curriculum as well.

The national core curricula are drawn up by the Finnish National Board of Education in cooperation with employers' organisations, trade unions, the Trade Union of Education and student unions. They are dealt with by National Education and Training Committees, which are tripartite bodies established for each occupational field by the Ministry of Education for a term of three years at a time to plan and develop vocational education and training. Local tripartite bodies as well as other representatives of working life take part in the curriculum work as advisers and consultants. Local curricula are approved by the boards of education providers.

The national core curricula constitute a legal norm for educational institutions. Their purpose is to reflect the objectives of education policy, to determine the requirements for nationally uniform vocational competence and the capabilities for learning to learn and functioning as a citizen. In addition, the core curricula must also function as the basis for the evaluation of national learning outcomes.

The national core curricula for upper secondary vocational qualifications and the requirements for competence-based qualifications are common to education and training for young and adult students. The scope of the qualifications is 120 credits (40 credits per year and 1 credit is equivalent to 40 hours of study).

A curriculum includes

- vocational studies and on-the-job learning which vary according to the qualification (90 credits; min. 20 credits on-the job);
- core subjects, common to all qualifications (20 credits, out of which 16 are compulsory and 4 are optional). These are studies in
  - the native language;
  - the other national language and a foreign language ;
  - foreign language ;
  - mathematics ;
  - physics and chemistry ;
  - social, business and labour-market subjects ;
  - health education; physical education;
  - arts and culture; environmental studies;
  - ICT; ethics, other cultures;
  - psychology and entrepreneurship;
- free-choice studies, which vary (10 credits).

These studies include at least 1.5 credits of student counselling and a final project with a minimum of 2 credits.

Students may choose from a range of free-choice studies available either at their own or another institution. Free-choice studies can be either vocationally complementary or supplement core subjects to enable students to complete general upper secondary school and/or the matriculation examination at the same time as the vocational qualification.

Qualifications can be completed in the form of school-based education and training, apprenticeship training or competence-based qualifications (these allow adult students to demonstrate their vocational skills regardless of how and where they have acquired them). All qualifications include a period of on-the-job learning with a minimum scope of 20 credits. On-the-job learning is focused, supervised and assessed study carried out in service or production capacities at the workplace. The objective is to familiarise students with real working life to enhance their employment opportunities.

Vocational skills demonstrations were introduced as a way of assessment in August 2006 and they mostly take place during the periods of on-the-job learning.

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.

Vocational special institutions provide facilities and services for students with severe disabilities or chronic illnesses. Students with no such disabilities are also admitted. Students apply to the institutions directly and the institutions accept applications throughout the year.

The Vocational Education and Training Act provides that working life is a focus within education. Education must be organised in cooperation with representatives from enterprises and labour unions. The most important channels through which the social partners participate is in the planning of VET through the national training committees set up by the Ministry of Education and the governing bodies and advisory councils of educational institutions. Usually, vocational institutions establish local networks to become involved in regional business life.

The method of instruction is not regulated. Teachers themselves may choose the methods that they apply in order to achieve the objectives defined in the curriculum. At present, the emphasis is on student-centred working methods, development of students' own initiative and entrepreneurship, their sense of responsibility and the importance of learning to learn. Key factors include flexible teaching arrangements, a wide range of working methods and teaching not tied into year classes, integration of theory and practice as well as cooperation and interaction between institutions in the planning and implementation of instruction. In order to integrate instruction into larger modules, it is possible to use methods of joint teaching and project work, which bring together the objectives of several study modules. Further, eLearning is the area of priority in the development of new teaching methods.

On-the-job learning is a learning method building on the objectives of the curriculum. It aims at taking the needs of both the student and the workplace into account as broadly as possible. The student can establish a personal contact with real work and, correspondingly, the workplace gets the opportunity to influence education and training and, in due time, gains employees better prepared for practical work than before. The aim is to ensure vocational skills that stem from working life needs and to promote students' employment opportunities, as well as to facilitate the recruitment of skilled labour into enterprises and other workplaces.

The students' knowledge and skills are assessed and the students are given feedback on their progress at sufficiently regular intervals both during and after the studies. The students' acceptable performances are graded on the following scale: excellent (3), good

(2) and satisfactory (1). Free-choice studies may, with the consent of the student, be given a pass mark without indicating a grade.

The national core curricula contain criteria for student assessment.

Assessment is conducted by the teachers and, for on-the-job learning periods and vocational skills demonstrations, the teacher in charge of the period or demonstration together with the on-the-job instructor, workplace instructor appointed by the employer or the demonstration supervisor. The assessment must guide and motivate the students as well as develop their abilities in self-assessment.

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

There are various ways of promoting students' opportunities for organising their studies individually. Recognition of prior learning aims to shorten the duration of education and to avoid overlaps in education. The modularity of the qualifications, in turn, increases options; the qualifications consist of large modules, which the students may partially choose themselves and complete in the manner best suited to them. The modular qualification structure increases flexibility and options and makes it easier to get credit for earlier studies and competence. The modular structure also makes it easier to supplement the qualifications.

Teachers work together with the students to draw up individual study plans, on the basis of which the students themselves can partially decide when, how and in which order they study. As the aim is to study without division into year classes, the institutions provide students with opportunities to progress according to their individual abilities and according to their individual study plans in different groups. Instruction may be organised flexibly also in the evenings or during the weekends as well as in the summer time.

Instruction not tied to year classes requires effective student counselling, as students do not necessarily have their own class or group and drawing up personal study plans may be demanding and complicated.

Certification in vocational education and training and the content of the certificate are regulated by the National Board of Education and governed by the Vocational Education Act. Passed performances are graded on the scale excellent (3), good (2) and satisfactory (1). In Institutional vocational education and training students are awarded a qualification certificate upon the completion of all the studies required for the qualification. The certificates are awarded by the education provider / vocational institution.

In Finland the core curricula for 52 qualifications in IVET will be reviewed during 2008-2010. The curricula will, as the present introduced in 2001, be based on a learning outcomes approach. Theory and practice are studied and assessed together within the same study unit and a common one mark in the certificate. Knowledge, skills and competence are included in the objectives. Further, the curricula will be made compliant with the EQF.

The upper secondary vocational education and training provide students with extensive basic vocational skills for various assignments in their field and more specialised competence and vocational skills as required by working life in one sector of the qualification. This enables those who are qualified to find placements in working life in all

economic sectors, to perform various tasks in their field in changing conditions, and so to develop their vocational skills throughout their lives.

TABLE 13: STUDENTS IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION 2006							
	TOTAL ISCED 3	ISCED 3 GENERAL	%	ISCED 3 PRE- VOCATIONAL	%	ISCED 3 VOCA- TIONAL	%
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	22205390	10723395	48	1185480	5	10296515	46
FINLAND	341204	118111	35	-	-	223093	65

Source: Eurostat

During recent years about 50 % of youngsters leaving compulsory education continue their studies in general upper secondary education, about 40 % in upper secondary VET and about 3 % in the voluntary 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The figure of vocational education (65%) in table 13 includes also adult students studying in programmes leading to vocational or further vocational qualifications.

The popularity of vocational education and training has increased slightly since the early 2000s. This is due to determined work done by various actors. The following facts explain the change: 1) The upper secondary vocational education and training has been developed towards the world of work during the last decade; 2) There has been several campaigns organised by the Ministry of Education and social partners to improve the image of vocational training; 3) Skills competitions, like SkillsFinland, organised yearly, WorldSkills 2005 in Helsinki and EuroSkills have also increased the popularity of vocational education and training. On the other hand many youngsters feel that some academic professions offer lower level of employment and salary than vocational education qualification.

#### 4.4 APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL / ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
Initial vocational qualification	Primary sector and utilities Manufacturing Construction Distribution and transport Business and other services Non-market services	ISCED 3	15 % general, 85 % vocational subjects	20 % school-based, 80 % work-based	2-4 years based on personal study plan	Work, General upper secondary, Further voc. qual., Specialist voc. qual., Polytechnics, Universities
Further vocational qualification	See above	ISCED 3	general subjects are integrated into the vocational subjects	20 % school-based, 80 % work-based	4-12 months based on personal study plan	Work, General upper secondary, Specialist voc. qual.,
Specialist vocational qualification	See above	ISCED 4	general subjects are integrated into the vocational subjects	20 % school-based, 80 % work-based	4-12 months based on personal study plan	Work, General upper secondary

Apprentices must be at least 15 years of age at the time of signing the contract and have completed the basic education syllabus or equivalent (or be approved by the education provider to have sufficient capabilities to participate).

In apprenticeship training, the employer pays the student a wage for the apprenticeship period. The pay varies in different fields, but is usually approximately 80% of the wages of a skilled worker in that particular field. The employer is not obliged to pay wages for time spent in theoretical training, unless otherwise agreed. The theoretical studies of apprenticeship training are free of student fees and for the time they spend in theoretical studies, students may receive daily allowance, family allowance as well as financial

support for transportation and accommodation expenses. The State is responsible for all these costs.

Apprenticeship training is one form of arranging vocational education and training, which has become popular in recent years. The provider of apprenticeship training (a local authority, joint municipal authority, registered association or foundation) is also responsible for managing apprenticeship training and supervising the apprenticeship contracts. Formal vocational education and training comprises vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and special vocational qualifications. Qualifications of all three levels may also be completed as apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training is available to both adults and young people. (for curriculum development and characteristics of the curricula see sections 4.3 and 5.1.2). Apprenticeship training is based on a national core curriculum or the requirements 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. It defines the qualification to be completed, its scope, central assignments, theoretical instruction included, timing, the instructors responsible and other issues relevant to the qualification arrangement.

The students' 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 cooperation, so that it can be appended to the apprenticeship contract when the contract is approved.

The apprenticeship training is based on a written working contract of fixed duration between the apprentice and the employer, and the practical training periods take place at the workplace in connection with ordinary work assignments. These contracts are based on agreements between employers and education providers. 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.

The training emphasises on-the-job learning and the integration of practical and theoretical instruction. Approximately 70-80% of the time is spent in the training workplace under the responsibility of an on-the-job instructor(s).

To be able to participate in apprenticeship training, enterprises must be engaged in production and service activities of sufficient size. The necessary work equipment for apprentices must be available as must be the necessary personnel to be assigned as responsible instructors of apprentices.

In terms of financing the apprenticeship system, the State is responsible for fully covering funding: the statutory government transfer accounts for 100 percent of the unit cost confirmed by the Ministry of Education.

The student's performance in on-the-job training and in theoretical studies is assessed with the following scale of grades: excellent (3), good (2) and satisfactory (1).

Assessment of initial vocational qualifications governed by the Vocational Adult Education Act follows the scale used in initial vocational education. Conversely, assessment of further and specialised vocational qualifications applies the scale of pass/fail.

In apprenticeship training, students proceed according to the individual learning plan drawn up on the basis of the national core curriculum or the requirements for the competence-based qualification. The qualification consists of functional modules relevant to occupational proficiency. The studies for the qualification may either be conducted all

at once or in smaller parts. The apprenticeship contract is terminated when the training is completed or the contract is cancelled. The trainee and the employer may cancel the apprenticeship contract immediately by mutual agreement. The contract can be cancelled unilaterally when the employer closes down the business, goes bankrupt or dies. With the consent of the provider of education, the apprenticeship contract may also be cancelled on grounds that would justify termination of an employment contract in accordance with the Contracts of Employment Act. The provider may, after hearing both parties, discontinue the apprenticeship training if the provisions of law or the relevant apprenticeship contract are not adhered to in the training arranged in the workplace.

Students are awarded two certificates: 1) *Certificate of participation in training* and 2) *Qualification Certificate (tutkintotodistus/examensbetyg)*.

The certificate of participation in training is given by the education provider. The assessments of the employer and the institution organising the theoretical education are included in the certificate. The qualification certificate is given by the provider of education or, if the certification is based on the competence-based system, by the Qualification Committee.

The apprenticeship training provides students with vocational skills and competences to access the labour market in all economic sectors and fields.

The number of participants in apprenticeship training has traditionally been relatively low in Finland, but student volumes have increased considerably in recent years as a result of increased Government inputs. The number of students more than tripled during the period 1994-1999. In 2007 some 62,000 students took part in apprenticeship training.

#### 4.5 OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Other types of IVET programmes are available for both young people and adults in the form of workshop training. They were originally introduced in the 1980s to combat youth unemployment, but since the 1990s their target group has grown to include adults although the focus remains on the unemployed. Workshop activities try to address problems faced by those at risk of social exclusion who are already excluded from the labour market.

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL / ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
"Workshop"	Primary sector and utilities Manufacturing Construction Distribution and transport Business and other services Non-market services	–	Majority vocational	Mostly work-based	Much variation 6-12 months	Vocational education; work



The workshops offer young people and adults practical work-related training as well as guidance and support for managing their own lives. As a labour market tool, they are not part of the education system and do not automatically lead to formal qualifications. The workshop programme offers subsidised employment and practical training, rehabilitative work-related activities, job coaching, training cooperation, individual counselling, preventive work among substance abusers and apprenticeship training.

The workshops do not have official status recognised by law and, consequently, no detailed statistical data on their activities exists. It has been estimated that some 70% of clients are young people, while adults account for the remaining 30% each year. According to estimates for 2008 made by the *Työpajayhdistys* association, the total volume of workshop clients is 10,000 -20,000/year and the number of workshops is 250. Most workshops are owned by municipalities and they are primarily funded by municipalities and the labour administration.

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

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL / ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
Specialist vocational qualification	Primary sector and utilities Manufacturing Construction Distribution and transport Business and other services Non-market services	ISCED 4	general subjects are integrated into the vocational subjects	Mostly totally work-based training, based on personal study plan	0-12 months, based on personal study plan	Work, general upper secondary

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET in Finland is available for specialist vocational qualifications, which are considered competence-based qualifications (see 5.1.2). Specialist vocational qualifications are primarily intended for adults - mainly for people skilled in different fields to demonstrate their practical competence and vocational skills in the skill tests. With specialist vocational qualifications adults can improve their position in the labour market.

The majority of students participate in preliminary training in order to complete the competence tests. Preliminary training is organised for instance in the adult education centres and in VET institutions.

#### 4.7 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Institutions of higher education include universities (*yliopisto*) and polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulu*). General access requirement to higher education is an upper secondary qualification. Over 90% of students at universities and 70% of students at polytechnics have a general upper secondary qualification. The path from upper secondary VET to higher education is less used, only about 20% of polytechnic students have a VET background. Instruction at institutions of higher education is free.

##### UNIVERSITIES

According to legislation, the purpose of universities is to promote independent research and scientific knowledge and to provide the highest education in their fields of study. Universities must also aim to prepare students to be of service to their country and humankind.

University education is divided into 20 fields of study, which are regulated by field-specific decrees: 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.

Access is available through the matriculation examination. In addition, those with a polytechnic degree, post-secondary level vocational qualification or at least a 3-year vocational qualification also have general eligibility.

The structure of university degrees has been reformed in almost all fields of study. The new system introduced the Bachelor's degree into almost every field (at least 180 ECTS and 3 years of full-time study). The Master's degree is worth 120 ECTS and at least 5 years of full-time study (2 years after completing the Bachelor's degree). Postgraduate programmes, i.e. those leading to Licentiate and Doctor's degrees, are available for students with a higher academic degree or a corresponding foreign degree.

Adult education at universities is provided by their own continuing education centres, the first of which were founded in the 1970s. Nowadays all universities have their own continuing education centres. Commercial services provide most of their financing. In addition, these centres may have several affiliates operating outside the university town.

Continuing education centres organise vocational continuing education for individuals already holding an academic degree and provide and co-ordinate open university education in cooperation with university departments and different adult education organisations. In addition to continuing education centres, some universities have separate open university units.

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. However, the required number of credits varies by university and subject.

## POLYTECHNICS

Studies leading to a polytechnic degree provide the knowledge and skills for professional expert functions. Polytechnics carry out research and development and 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. Polytechnics usually offer courses in a number of fields with a professional emphasis. Degrees tend to take 3-4 years to complete. Polytechnics also organise adult education.

There are 29 accredited polytechnics in Finland (18 owned by local authorities and joint municipal boards, 11 private). The operating licence granted by the Government to each polytechnic defines the mission of the institution, the fields of education, the number of study places and the language of instruction.

Enrolment criteria are the achievement of general or vocational upper secondary education and training (i.e. 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. 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:

- humanities and education;
- culture;
- social sciences, business and administration;
- natural sciences;
- technology, communication and transport;
- natural resources and the environment;
- social services, health and sports;
- tourism, catering and domestic services.

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 210-270 ECTS (3½-4 years of full-time study). 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. Polytechnic post-graduate degrees are worth approximately 60-90 credits.

Polytechnics have developed their teaching methods 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 30 ECTS, 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.

In recent years, polytechnics have developed their provision of open education. Open polytechnics offer the opportunity to study individual study units included in polytechnic degrees. Polytechnic postgraduate degrees provide practically oriented education and training aimed at mature students. Polytechnic master's degree programmes provide

practically oriented education and training aimed at mature students. The Polytechnic Master's degree is at the equal level with the University Master's degree.

At universities student assessment is based on continuous assessment. In most cases, students are assessed on the basis of written examinations at the end of lecture series or larger study units, but there are also oral examinations. In addition, students write e.g. seminar papers. For the Bachelor's and Master's degrees, students write theses. At art academies, the thesis may take the form of an artistic production, such as a concert, a play or some other performance, which also includes a written part. Completed studies are entered into the university's electronic register.

University-specific decrees include provisions on legal protection for students, in addition to which universities usually have more specific regulations concerning examinations, legal protection for students and the assessment of studies. Students must also be given the opportunity to obtain information on general assessment criteria and the way they have been applied to them as well as to request correction and, thereafter, appeal to the relevant faculty's (or corresponding unit's) legal protection board.

Each polytechnic gives regulations and instructions on student assessment in its degree regulations. Students have the right to know how assessment criteria are applied to them and to see their graded examination papers or other performance records. A student not satisfied with the assessment may request correction. The polytechnics also have autonomy in deciding on the assessment of practical training.

Upon completion of all the studies required for a degree, the student may apply for a degree certificate. The certificate is awarded by the university or faculty and the form of the certificate is decided by the university. The university must, on request, also provide students with a certificate for the studies they have completed while still continuing on the degree programme. Students will also receive an appendix of the qualification certificate (called Diploma Supplement). Each student's study credits are registered on the credit record, of which the student may request a transcript, where necessary. The qualification certificates generally only contain the average grades for the different subjects as well as the grading for the theses.

The polytechnics grant students a degree certificate when they complete a degree. On request, students may also be granted a certificate for the studies they have completed while still continuing on the degree programme.

On request, polytechnics may also grant a diploma supplement intended especially for international use for people who have completed a polytechnic degree or studies. The supplement includes the necessary information on the institution as well as studies and credits referred to on the degree certificate and their level and status in the education system.

TABLE 14: PARTICIPATION RATES IN HE BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION - 2006							
	TOTAL ISCED 5-5-6	ISCED 5A	%	ISCED 5B	%	ISCED 6	%
EU (27)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
FINLAND	308,966	286,706	93	115	0	22,145	7

Source of information: Eurostat

## 5. CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

### 5.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

#### 5.1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

The Finnish adult education policy is designed to provide a wide range of study opportunities for the adult population. The main objectives of CVET and adult education are:

- to enhance the knowledge and skills of the adult population
- to increase educational opportunities for groups that are under-represented in adult learning, and to promote equality and active citizenship
- adults' opportunities to maintain and develop their competencies are particularly improved in working life with a view to promoting the objectives of occupational mobility, longer careers and a higher employment rate

Current adult education policy is based on the work of Parliamentary Adult Education Committee which completed its work in February 2002. The Committee set 4 general objectives which were used to derive concrete proposals for action. The general objectives were as follows:

- self-development will become the lifestyle of an increasing number of Finns and working communities will develop into learning organisations;
- adult education and training will provide skilled labour for all employee levels and for all occupations;
- methods will be developed so as to provide adults with high-quality opportunities for self-development; and
- adult education and training will be used to uphold and reinforce participatory democracy, prevent social exclusion and support active citizenship

These general objectives were used to derive the following development areas:

- all citizens would have the opportunity for training for 1 to 2 weeks each year and for more thorough upgrading of their competence every 10 to 15 years;
- to provide adults with sufficient educational opportunities at all levels, organising education and training with due consideration given to the pedagogical and other learning conditions of adults who were often gainfully employed;
- promotion of equality in adult learning, in particular, through the action programme for adults with a low level of initial education;
- reinforcement of teaching methods and counselling and the development of new learning environments and virtual education, development of recognition of learning and investment in the competencies of teachers and trainers;
- development of social benefits for adult students and retention of fees charged for adult education and training at a reasonable level.

## LEGISLATION

The Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998), effective as from the beginning of 1999, governs the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students.

The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) stipulates about the upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications taken as competence tests irrespective of the method of acquiring the vocational skills, as well as for the preparatory training for these tests. In 2006, changes were made to this Act in regard to preparatory training for competence-based qualification, individual plans of students, completing qualifications and contracts for arranging competence tests.

The 2004 Act on National Certificates of Language Proficiency (964/2004) and the Decree on National Certificates of Language Proficiency (1163/2004) provide citizens with the opportunity to test their language skills through language proficiency tests.

Adult education is also provided by universities, polytechnics and continuing professional development centres. Universities are governed by the Universities Act (645/1997) and the Universities Decree (115/1998) while Polytechnics are governed by the Polytechnics Act (351/2003) and the Polytechnics Decree (352/2003). Universities, polytechnics and institutions providing liberal adult education have the freedom, within the framework of the legislation, to autonomously decide the manner of organising adult education. The performance of universities and polytechnics is regularly evaluated by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC).

## FINANCING

Qualification-oriented adult education and training is co-funded by the government and the local authorities; the exception is degree education at universities, which is totally financed by the government. Training leading to further and specialist qualifications is mostly publicly funded but may charge reasonable fees. The state funds 90 % of the costs of certificate-oriented additional vocational training. Where training is organised as in-service training, the state covers 50 % of the costs.

The purpose of state funding is to guarantee the largest possible provision without burdening the students with high fees. About 10 % of the Ministry of Education main class in the state budget is allocated to adult education and training. About 40 % of this funding is channelled into vocational adult training and apprenticeship training, a third into adult education at higher education institutions and one fifth into liberal adult education.

Employers purchase in-service training for their staff from adult education institutions and firms. The labour administration purchases a great deal of different training for unemployed people and for those at risk of unemployment.

Because of the economic crisis, the Government allocated in February 2009 supplementary allowances for the following purposes:

- 4 million euros (400 student working years) to continuing vocational education to educate staff with no initial VET or with out-of-date VET;
- 3 million euros (1,000 student places in 2009-2011) to further education at polytechnic level and
- 1 million euros to apprenticeship-type further studies at university level.

## CVET AND THE LABOUR MARKET

In IVET and in the competence-based qualification system the qualifications have been designed and are developed in co-operation with working life representatives (employers and employees) and teachers. The number of qualifications and study programmes and the skills requirements involved are bound to the needs of the world of work.

### 5.1.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL CVET

#### EXISTING LEVELS OF QUALIFICATIONS

Adults can study for a comprehensive school-leaving certificate and the matriculation examination or parts of them in flexible arrangements geared to the employed.

The VET sector offers competence-based qualifications of three different levels: upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. The upper secondary vocational qualifications completed in the form of competence-based qualifications correspond to those taken in vocational education and training intended for young people. For a vocational qualification, the mature student demonstrates the level of the knowledge and skills required for a given occupation; for further qualification vocational skills required of a skilled worker; and for a specialist qualification the knowledge and skills needed for the most demanding work assignments in the field.

There are no formal training requirements for competence-based qualifications. An adult taking a competence test relies on knowledge and skills acquired in former training, in working life and in leisure pursuits, but most candidates participate in some preparatory training. The competence-based qualifications are supervised by qualification committees representing employers, employees and teachers.

Adult education is one of the basic tasks of polytechnics and adults can complete the same Bachelor degrees as young people which are exactly the same as those provided for young people. The only difference is in pedagogical approach which is more tailored to adults and also course organisation to reflect that adults cannot always study full-time.

In 2002, Finland launched a trial project for postgraduate polytechnic degrees '[...] based on requirements set by polytechnic degrees and development of working life, to provide sufficient basic knowledge and skills as well as the abilities to function in working-life development and other assignments requiring special expertise'. The programmes are open to those who have completed an appropriate polytechnic degree or some other appropriate higher education degree and who have at least 3 years of post-degree work experience in the relevant field.

Polytechnics also provide adult education that does not lead to degrees. The Open Polytechnic provides individual parts of education leading to polytechnic degrees. Polytechnics also provide professional specialisation studies mainly for those who have already completed a polytechnic degree.

Polytechnic education may be provided by local authorities, joint municipal boards or registered associations or foundations with a licence. They receive state subsidies.

Education leading to Bachelor's and Master's academic degrees is not provided separately for young people and adults; instead, people of all ages study the same degree programmes. Nevertheless, universities organise separate Master's programmes mainly



intended for those who have already completed a higher education degree. These programmes give credit for previous higher education level studies allowing for taking a new degree in less time than the standard duration.

Universities also provide specialisation studies to complement the degree system and promote professional development. Universities offer other forms of continuing education, which are usually implemented by continuing education centres operating in conjunction with them.

Open University studies are open to all participants irrespective of their educational background. Subject to certain conditions, Open University students are also entitled to apply for full-degree studies.

All universities are state-owned and receive funding directly from the state budget.

#### MAIN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS/PROVIDERS

The Finnish adult education and training system is the result of a historical process. It is not the result of consistent decisions for effecting structural changes, but each adult education organisation has emerged to satisfy specific educational needs. Hence, each adult education organisation has its own aims, mode of operation and target group.

Vocational adult education and training can be divided into upper secondary and additional vocational education and training. The education or training may be either certificate-oriented or non-formal. Upper secondary vocational education and training is certificate-oriented, whereas additional vocational training may be both.

Educational institutions and other corresponding education providers involved in adult education and training may be divided into the following groups:

General and interest-oriented:

- General upper secondary schools for adults
- Folk high schools
- Adult education centres
- Study centres, and educational organisations
- Physical education centres
- Institutions providing basic art education, like music institutions
- Summer universities

Vocational:

- Vocational adult education centres
- Specialised vocational institutions
- Continuing education centres of universities
- Polytechnics
- Home economics counselling organisations
- Organisations for crafts and design

Others:

Commercial organisations



## MAIN CHARACTERISTICS/ELEMENTS OF THE CURRICULA

The reform of 52 core curricula in IVET will be implemented during 2008-2010. The curricula will, as the present 2001 curricula, be based on a learning outcomes approach, similarly to the further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. The key competences of lifelong learning will be included into core curricula of IVET.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

In certificate-oriented additional vocational training (and in initial training preparing for competence-based qualifications), the key quality assurance mechanism comprises the respective qualification requirements, and sees whether they are met. Responsibility for organising and supervising competence tests rests with qualification committees which contain social partner representatives to ensure that qualifications are designed in accordance with the requirements of working life.

The Vocational Education Act and the Vocational Adult Education Act oblige education providers to evaluate their educational provision and its effectiveness and to participate in external evaluations of their operations. Responsibility for external evaluations rests with the Evaluation Council for Education and Training. Similar provisions apply to polytechnics and universities.

The Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training has been adopted in 2008 by the Ministry of Education to support and encourage VET providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their operations. The recommendation is based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in vocational education and training and it forms an important part of Finland's implementation of the Copenhagen process measures. The recommendation has been prepared by the Finnish National Board of Education working in co-operation with VET providers, representatives of the world of work and business as well as students.

[http://www.oph.fi/julkaisut/2008/quality\\_management\\_recommendation\\_for\\_vocational\\_education\\_and\\_training.pdf](http://www.oph.fi/julkaisut/2008/quality_management_recommendation_for_vocational_education_and_training.pdf)

The purpose of the Quality Management Recommendation is to provide a framework for long-term development of quality management in all types of vocational education and training. The recommendations can be applied to vocational education and training implemented in different ways: initial VET and further and continuing training, competence tests and training preparing for competence-based qualifications, as well as curricular or school-based VET, special needs VET and apprenticeship training. In addition, the recommendations have been prepared such that they can be applied at both VET provider and individual unit levels and they are relevant to users at different stages of quality improvement.

## MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN FORMAL EDUCATION BY LEVEL OF QUALIFICATIONS

No specific admission requirement has been set for adult education. In general, all students are required to have completed the nine-year compulsory education. What comes to competence tests, no formal admission requirements can be set since completing the competence-based qualification is independent of the way competence has been acquired.

As a rule, the entrance requirement for the applicant to general upper secondary school for adults is to have reached the age of 18. Instruction organised at summer universities is open to all; participants are selected in the order of registration.

Each institution providing adult education decides autonomously about the admission requirements, and there are no national guidelines.

The specialisation studies at polytechnics are extensive continuing education programmes supplementing the degree system, which are provided for people with a university degree, a vocational post-secondary qualification or a vocational higher education degree, or for others with sufficient aptitude for study.

The largest component in initial vocational qualification (which also adults can take) is vocational studies. The overall extent of the qualification is 120 credits, comprising 90 credits of vocational studies, 20 credits of general core subjects and 10 credits of free-choice studies. In further qualifications and specialist qualifications the proportion of vocational competences is even bigger; usually all the modules of the qualification are related to the vocational competences and there are no separate general modules.

The duration of preparatory training leading to competence-based qualifications varies individually based on the personal study plans made for each adult. On average adults study appr. 1½ years when completing the initial vocational qualification (young students need 3 years), and ½ - 1½ years when completing further vocational qualification and specialist vocational qualification.

A new Decree 488/2008 came into effect at the beginning of August 2008, but it will be applied from the beginning of August 2009. According the new Decree acceptable performances in IVET are graded on the scale of excellent (3), good (2) and satisfactory (1). In the school-based system the qualification certificates are awarded by the education provider/vocational institution. In the vocational upper secondary education for adults the same certificates are used as for young people. In further and specialist vocational qualifications the certificates are different and assessment applies the scale of pass/fail.

At universities, student assessment is based on continuous assessment. In most cases, students are assessed on the basis of written examinations at the end of lecture series or larger study units, but there are also oral examinations. In addition, students write e.g. seminar papers. For the Bachelor's and Master's degrees students write theses. At art academies, the thesis may take the form of an artistic production, such as a concert, a play or some other performance, which also includes a written part. Completed studies are entered into the university's electronic register.

The examiner is usually the course lecturer or the teacher responsible for the study unit or module, but the final responsibility for assessment remains with the subject professor. These are assessed by two or more teachers or experts appointed by the university or faculty.

University-specific decrees include provisions on legal protection for students, in addition to which universities usually have more specific regulations concerning examinations, legal protection for students and the assessment of studies. Students must also be given the opportunity to obtain information on general assessment criteria and the way they have been applied to them as well as to request correction and, thereafter, appeal to the relevant faculty's (or corresponding unit's) legal protection board.

Each polytechnic gives regulations and instructions on student assessment in its degree regulations. Students have the right to know how assessment criteria are applied to them

and to see their graded examination papers or other performance records. A student not satisfied with the assessment may request correction. The polytechnics also have autonomy in deciding on the assessment of practical training.

#### MAIN MEASURES/INSTRUMENTS FOSTERING ACCESS TO CVET

Adults, who are gainfully employed, 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 beginning of the study leave once for a maximum of six months, if granting the study leave at that time would not cause considerable disadvantage to the employer's business. In small enterprises, the beginning of the study leave may be postponed more frequently.

An adult education allowance is available to employees and self-employed persons who have a working history of at least 10 years and wish to go on study leave at least for two months. The time period for which allowance is granted is determined by a person's working history: every full month at work extends the subsidy period by 0.8 days. For example a working history of 15 years entitles for a subsidy period of 144 days.

The amount is based on the regular income level prior to the studies. The basic benefit is EUR 500 per month. In addition the student receives, up to a maximum of EUR 2,700; 20 % of his/her earlier earnings, and then 15 % of the earnings exceeding that. In addition, the state can guarantee a bank loan.

Scholarship for Qualified Employee is a lump sum payment of EUR 339 which is payable to persons who have taken a vocational qualification, further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification during the last six months in a competence test. When taking the qualification the person must be aged 30-64 and have been employed by a Finnish employer for at least five years.

TABLE 15: PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL EDUCATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND WORKING STATUS, 2005 [%]												
	ISCED 2				ISCED 3				ISCED 5-6			
	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE
EU 25	1.4	1.3	2.0	1.6	5.2	3.8	7.0	10.3	8.5	7.3	15.1	14.3
FI	2.9	2.6	:	3.2	10.8	9.3	19.4	13.6	12.0	11.8	22.1	10.4

## 5.2 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

### 5.2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

General adult education comprises general upper secondary schools for adults and liberal adult education. General adult education responds to adults' self-development needs, offers learning opportunities catering for mature learners' own interests and preferences, and develops citizenship skills.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for self-motivated education and the labour administration for labour market training geared to enhance the operation of the labour market and to reduce unemployment. The aims of in-service training, which is mainly purchased by companies and public sector organisations, relate to business economics and productivity.

Adult education organisations are run by the government, local authorities, municipal consortia, private associations, foundations and companies. Education and training leading to qualifications is financed by the public administration, except university degree education, which is totally government-financed. Training leading to further and specialist qualifications is mostly publicly funded but may charge moderate fees.

Finland has been developing competence-based qualifications since 1994. In 2007, nearly 64,000 people participated in competence tests. This system is intended to enable working-age adults to gain qualifications without necessarily attending formal training. It is possible to take competence-based vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and special vocational qualifications or only parts of them through the competence test system, within which competence acquired through various ways (i.e. learning at workplace) is recognised and validated.

### 5.2.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-FORMAL CVET

Finnish adult education and training has traditionally been divided into two main areas: general adult education and vocational adult education and training. Educational institutions and other corresponding education providers involved in adult education and training may be divided into the following groups

General and interest-oriented (the total number of institutions is appr. 500):

- General upper secondary schools for adults;
- Folk high schools;
- Adult education centres, study centres, and educational organisations;
- Physical education centres;
- Institutions providing basic art education, like music institutions;
- Summer universities.

The legislation on education also includes the Liberal Adult Education Act (632/1998), according to which institutions of liberal adult education cover adult education centres, folk high schools study centres, physical education centres, and summer universities. The Act determines that the purpose of liberal adult education is to support the development of individuals and the realisation of democracy and equality on the basis of the principle of lifelong learning.

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 courses offered in subjects relating to citizenship skills and society and in different crafts and subjects on a recreational basis.

Although liberal adult education does not lead to a qualification, the studies completed in liberal adult education may be taken into account in preparatory training for competence-based qualification and when making an individual plan for completing competence-based qualifications.

The provision of liberal adult education is extensive and instruction is provided in many forms. Liberal education institutions offer courses in subjects relating to citizenship skills and society and in different crafts and subjects on a recreational basis. The study forms range from evening classes in the students' locality to full-day courses. Some studies are intensive courses taking place on consecutive evenings or on weekends. Moreover, folk high schools offer studies that last several months.

About half of liberal adult education costs are covered by the government while the rest mostly come from student fees and from the maintaining organisations. The purpose of state funding is to guarantee the largest possible provision without burdening the students with high fees.

Legislation provides students the right to accredit studies taken abroad. This right is further developed in Development Plan for Education and University Research for the period 2003/2008 (*Koulutuksen ja tutkimuksen kehittämissuunnitelma 'KESU'*) which states: The procedures for recognising prior learning and experiential knowledge, the relative share of competence-based qualifications and other forms suited for adults and responding to working life needs will be increased in cooperation with training providers.

This provision has enabled older people to have their skills and knowledge gained through experience to be accredited thereby enabling them to compete with younger people who tend to have higher level qualifications.

The principle of accreditation is further supported by the introduction of competence-based qualifications and the modularisation of further vocational qualifications. Qualifications are awarded when all the modules have been 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. Candidates can take their exams during or after formal training or without any training at all. Tests are based on national standardised field-specific qualification requirements.

There are 3 levels of competence-based qualifications: initial vocational qualifications (equal to that taken in the formal IVET system for young people), further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications (primarily intended for adults).

Another form of accrediting prior learning exists in the national language proficiency test system which allows adults to have their language skills tested regardless of how they were acquired. National tests are arranged twice a year in 9 languages (English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Russian, Sami, Spanish and Swedish). In 2008, about 4,900 people was awarded by the National Certificates of Language Proficiency.

TABLE 16 - PARTICIPATION IN NON-FORMAL LEARNING BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND WORKING STATUS, 2005 [%]												
	ISCED 0-2				ISCED 3-4				ISCED 5-6			
	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE	POPULATION	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	INACTIVE
EUROPEAN UNION (25)	6.5	9.0	7.6	2.8	16.4	18.9	14.8	6.7	30.9	33.7	22.7	13.0
FINLAND	23.9	32.8	20.8	9.5	37.0	43.7	22.6	15.1	59.8	64.8	36.5	30.1

Source: Eurostat

The annual number of participants in adult education and training is 1.7 million, which comprises half of the working age population. This is a very high figure in international terms. The aim is to raise the participation rate in adult education and training to 60% by 2012.

The challenges facing adult education in the future will be to respond to the constant ageing of population and to growing multiculturalism, to motivate adults to study, to improve the learning-to-learn skills among the poorly educated and trained, and especially to ensure equity and equality.

### 5.3 MEASURES TO HELP JOB-SEEKERS AND PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Administrative and funding responsibility for the training of the unemployed (and those at risk of unemployment) rests with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Participation of the unemployed in education and training organised by the educational administration is often difficult as full-time students cannot receive unemployment benefits.

Labour market training is part of active labour policy and is divided into 2 main parts: vocational training, and career guidance and preparatory training. The former develops the vocational skills of participants and about half of provision leads to a formal educational qualification. Certificate-oriented studies provided as labour market training include training for initial, further or specialist vocational qualifications and, subject to certain conditions, upper secondary school studies and education leading to polytechnic and university degrees. Labour market training is intended for unemployed persons and those aged over 20 who are threatened by unemployment. The objective of career guidance and preparatory training is to find appropriate employment and educational options for each individual.

Labour market training (adult employment training) may be purchased from a licensed organisation such as a university, a polytechnic, institution providing vocational education and training, vocational adult education centre, institution of liberal adult education or another appropriate education provider. In other words, training is mostly purchased from the same education providers that receive state subsidies granted by the educational administration. Most of the labour market training is vocational adult education and the aim of the training is to receive a qualification or part of it. Training is funded through

procurement, where a representative of the labour administration, most typically a regional Employment and Economic Development Centre purchases training from a provider of educational services.

Labour market training is governed by the Public Employment Services Act which states that each registered job-seeker is to have an individual job-seeking plan within 5 months, which outlines the person's competencies and possible additional training needs. The plans provide as individually tailored service process as possible and refer each client to the type of education or training that is best suited to him or her.

Different groups apply for labour market training based on their own needs and on negotiations with employment officials. Extensive provision makes it possible to offer customised educational services to different target groups. The majority of labour market training is purchased from publicly supervised educational institutions, which are required to evaluate their operations. In addition, the labour administration started to collect electronic feedback from students in 2001, with the intent of assuring quality and improving the development conditions for training.

The Employment Contracts Act imposes an obligation on employers to provide training in situations where termination of employment can be prevented by means of additional training. In-service training is required to be such that it can be considered as being feasible and reasonable from the point of view of both contracting parties.

TABLE 17: PARTICIPATION RATE OF UNEMPLOYED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING, 2007 [%]			
	FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION	FORMAL EDUCATION	NON-FORMAL EDUCATION
FINLAND	34.7	5.7	31.3

*Source of information - Eurostat*

In Finland the participation rate of unemployed persons in education is one of the highest in Europe. In 2007 the unemployment rate was a slightly lower than in 2009, which means that the figures in table 17 are probably even higher at the moment.

## 6. TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

### 6.1 TYPES OF TEACHER AND TRAINER OCCUPATIONS IN VET

#### 6.1.1 TEACHING AND TRAINING OCCUPATIONS IN VET

The qualification requirements for the learning facilitators found within VET, that is, vocational upper secondary schools, vocational adult education centres and polytechnics, are mostly defined by law (Polytechnics Decree 352/2003; Decree on Vocational Teacher Training 357/2003; Decree on the Degrees in Education and Teacher Training 576/1995; Teaching qualifications Act 948/1998; Decree on Competence Requirements of Municipal Education Administration Personnel 1998/986).

Teaching staff whose qualification requirements are regulated include:

- polytechnic VET teachers;
- polytechnic senior lecturers;
- vocational studies teachers;
- core subject teachers;
- teachers providing special needs education;
- guidance counsellors;
- principals, who are also members of the teaching staff.

Learning facilitators whose qualifications and training are not regulated:

- trainers in apprenticeship training;
- workplace instructors in IVET

In Finland there is a clear distinction between teachers and trainers. In addition to the above-described difference in qualification requirements, their working contexts also differ. Thus teachers work in VET institutions while trainers and workplace instructors work in enterprises. Trainers supervise students during their on-the-job learning periods or apprenticeship training in enterprises. They are generally experienced foremen and skilled workers. They frequently have a vocational or professional qualification, but hold no pedagogical qualifications. According to a regional study, 75% of instructors had more than 10 years experience in their own field.

Even if there is a clear distinction in status, today the roles of teachers and trainers show more similarities than earlier. This is partly due to the introduction and importance of the on-the-job learning periods and vocational skills demonstrations into vocational qualifications (see also 4.3). Thus, trainers' activities today also encompass guiding and assessing the students as well as cooperation between the institution and enterprise (Table 18).



TABLE 18: ROLES AND TASKS OF VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS (IN ADDITION TO THE INSTRUCTION OF STUDENTS)		
ROLES AND TASKS	TEACHERS	TRAINERS
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	X	
SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN PREPARING THEIR INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLANS	X	X
EVALUATION OF EDUCATION	X	
STUDENT ASSESSMENT	X	X
COOPERATION BETWEEN VET AND ENTERPRISE	X	X

The VET teacher career is generally considered attractive. It is also reflected in the number of applicants into VET teacher training. The number of applicants always exceeds the intake numbers. In spring 2009 ca. 30 per cent of all applicants were accepted into training. In terms of salaries and conditions of work there are no remarkable differences to those of teacher in general education.

Although there is no official data for the trainers and workplace instructors on the attractiveness of their profession, the general impression is that trainers are generally satisfied with their training tasks. The responsibilities are considered to be a positive thing and time spent with young students away from normal routines is considered to be rewarding. The status of the trainers and workplace instructors is also on the increase with new vocational skills demonstrations that involve instructors assessing students. This assessment is significant in the final qualification of the student.

#### 6.1.2 RESPONSIBLE BODIES

The Ministry of Education and the polytechnics, of which the VET teacher training institutions are part of, conclude three-year performance agreements, in which they agree on targets results and their monitoring as well as on major national development projects. The intake numbers and training programmes are decided on annually.

The teacher education institutions have autonomy in deciding on their curricula and training arrangements. The legislation steers the qualification requirements. The pedagogical training is defined at a very general level in the legislation.. The legislation only defines the scope of the training (60 ECTS) and that it must contain basic studies in pedagogy, studies in vocational education, teaching practice and other studies.

The quality of all teacher education is monitored mainly through the self-evaluation of each university or polytechnic. External evaluations are conducted by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC). External evaluations are not carried out regularly.

#### 6.1.3 RECENT REFORMS TO VET TEACHER/TRAINER TRAINING

The teacher training institutions review and develop their programmes continuously. The continuing training obligation is defined in the collective agreement for salaries negotiated between the Union of Education in Finland and the employer's organisation. A recent recommendation by a working group of the Ministry of Education, however, proposes that the obligation for education providers to organise continuing education for personnel in education is to be made statutory. A further proposal is that a national fixed-term programme (OSAAVA) is organised in 2010-2016 to develop the professional competence of personnel in education. The reform is proposed to take place from the beginning of 2011.

## 6.2 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

### 6.2.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN IVET

As the distinction between IVET and CVET is not made in the Finnish VET system, the table below (Table 2) illustrates the situation for both IVET and CVET. Table 2 summarises the qualification requirements and main working contexts of the different learning facilitators in VET.

TABLE 19: TEACHER GROUPS IN VET, PLACE OF TEACHING, EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND				
	UPPER SECONDARY VET INSTITUTIONS	VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES	POLYTECHNICS	APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING <sup>1</sup> /ENTERPRISES
POLYTECHNIC VET TEACHER			V	
POLYTECHNIC SENIOR LECTURER			V <sup>2</sup>	
TEACHER, VOCATIONAL STUDIES	X	X		
TEACHER, COMMON CORE SUBJECTS	V	V	V	
SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHER	V X	V X <sup>3</sup>		
GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR	V X	V X <sup>3</sup>	V X <sup>4</sup>	
PRINCIPAL	V X	V X	V X	
TRAINER (WORKPLACE INSTRUCTOR)				O

V= Master's degree including pedagogical studies

X= Master's or Bachelor's degree in relevant field and pedagogical studies at voc teacher education college

O = not regulated

(1) The practical training period in apprenticeship training is complemented by theoretical studies, which may be arranged at institutions providing vocational education and training or at vocational adult education centres.

(2) Polytechnic senior lecturers are required to hold a postgraduate licentiate or doctorate.

(3) Adult education centres are not required to provide guidance counselling or special needs education by law, but especially the bigger centres employ special needs teachers and guidance counsellors.

(4) Some polytechnics employ guidance counsellors even if they are not required to by law.

## PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

**Polytechnic lecturers** must hold a Master's degree and **senior lecturers** a postgraduate licentiate or doctorate degree.

**Teachers of vocational studies** in upper secondary and adult VET must have a Master's or polytechnic degree or the highest possible qualification in their occupational field. In addition, they must complete pedagogical studies of 60 ECTS points and have at least 3 years' work experience in the field.

The teacher education institutions are autonomous and can decide on further selection criteria such as degree gained, studies in education, work experience (both teaching and non-teaching) and interest in other activities.

Teacher training provides students with the skills and knowledge to facilitate and guide learning and to develop their own field of teaching, taking developments in occupations and working life into account. Students may complete the education in 1 academic year by studying full-time or flexibly as multiform education in 1-3 years. Vocational teacher education is provided at 5 VET teacher education institutions. Also virtual teacher education programmers are available.

**Teachers of common core subjects**, such as languages and mathematics, have the same education as subject teachers working in general education. Thus they are required a Master's degree of 300 ECTS points, with 60 ECTS points of pedagogical studies is included. Pedagogical studies focus on didactics as well as teaching practice.

The prospective students apply to university following the usual procedure. There are degree programmes that lead to a teaching qualification. In some cases the students apply directly into the teacher education programme. In some universities and faculties those admitted to a degree programme will separately apply for subject teacher education. Admission to subject teacher education is based either on aptitude tests alone or combined with the applicant's study record. The education of subject teachers is the same regardless of the subject taught.

In addition to the concurrent training model described above, a consecutive path is available: people with a Master's degree may complete separate pedagogical studies for teachers with a scope of 60 ECTS within a teacher education unit.

**Teachers providing special needs education** have general or vocational subject qualifications and specialise in special needs. Vocational teacher education colleges offer specific qualifications of 60 ECTS points. The aim is to train experts who, in addition to their own educational work, can supervise the special pedagogical work of other teachers and the institution as a whole. Most special needs teachers work at vocational special institutions. Admission requirements include teacher qualifications and at least 1 year of teaching experience at a vocational institution.

**Guidance counsellors** have the same basic qualification requirements as subject or vocational subject teachers. In addition they are required to gain a pedagogical qualification of 60 ECTS points and organised by vocational teacher education colleges. Students familiarise themselves with the underlying social factors involved in student counselling as well as with various counselling methods used both within their own institutions and in cooperation with other organisations. Admission requirements include teacher qualifications and at least one year of teaching experience at a vocational institution.

**Principals**, who are also members of the teaching staff, have a Master's or Bachelor's degree and pedagogical qualifications. They should also have sufficient teaching experience and a certificate of educational administration accredited by the Finnish National Board of Education (or studies in educational administration at a university, or comparable administrative experience). Principals of polytechnics should have a licentiate or doctorate, sufficient knowledge of the educational field as well as administrative experience.

Trainers/workplace instructors have no formal qualification requirements.

Teachers and trainers are not formally assessed in Finland. The principals are the pedagogical heads of their institutions and thus also responsible for the instruction in their institutions. The vocational institutions assess the quality of the on-the-job learning in enterprises as part of their self-evaluation.

Teaching staff are obliged to participate in in-service training/continuing professional development (INSET/CPD). For teachers in vocational upper secondary schools this is based on collective agreements and is at the most 5 days of training, outside school hours per school year depending on the vocational sector.

Teachers at vocational adult education centres are not formally required to participate in in-service training, but generally it is promoted as they have to compete with other institutions as training providers. Polytechnic teachers are also obliged to participate.

To support VET teachers in their increased activities related to work-based learning and cooperation with the enterprises, the Finnish National Board of Education has drawn up two continuing training programmes for vocational teachers, the specialist in competence-based qualifications (*näyttötutkintomestarikoulutus*) and studies for teachers to increase their competence in the world-of-work (*opettajan työelämäosaamisen opinnot*). Both have a scope of 23 ECTS points.

State-funded INSET is available free in areas which are connected to political priorities, educational reforms or areas of development needs.

A proposal has been made that the obligation for education providers to organise continuing education for personnel in education is to be made statutory. A further proposal is that a national to develop the professional competence of personnel in education is to be set up from the beginning of 2011 (see above 6.1.3).

Most continuing training is free of charge and teachers enjoy full salary benefits during their participation. Funding responsibility rests with teachers' employers, mainly local authorities. Training content is decided by individual employers.

Polytechnic teachers are obliged to participate in training activities to develop their professionalism as well as familiarise themselves with the world of work.

Trainers/workplace instructors who supervise students during on-the-job learning periods in enterprises are generally experienced foremen and skilled workers. Thus they frequently have a vocational qualification, but hold no pedagogical qualifications. For some years, workplace instructors have been able to participate in 3 courses, based on curricula approved by the Finnish National Board of Education.

## 6.3 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

### 6.3.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN CVET

CVET is mainly provided by vocational institutions and particularly adult education centres. In addition, non-certificate-oriented additional training is given in liberal adult education institutions. These centres are publicly funded and they need permission to provide education from the Ministry of Education. Their aims and duration vary considerably.

The types of teachers and trainers in CVET, including the liberal adult education institutions, are identical to those in IVET (see 6.2).

### 6.3.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF CVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

See above 6.3.1.

## 7. MATCHING VET PROVISION WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

### 7.1 SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS (IN SECTORS, OCCUPATIONS, EDUCATION LEVEL)

The Development Plan for Education and University Research, which the Government approves every 4 years defines education policy guidelines. The current development plan for 2007-2012 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 undertaken by the Finnish National Board of Education was used when the plan was prepared. The FNBE uses a calculation model derived from the forecasts of changes and natural wastage in the total labour force. These forecasts are then presented for different fields of study and levels of education in qualification-oriented initial vocational education and in higher (polytechnic and university) education.

Quantitative skills anticipation information is also provided by the Labour Force 2025 project coordinated by the Ministry of Labour. The main aim is to anticipate economic development and the need of the labour force until 2025.

The important governmental bodies for skills anticipation are training committees and the Advisory Board for Educational Cooperation. Their task is, among others, to monitor, evaluate and anticipate the development of vocationally oriented education and training and competence required in working life in their own field. The labour market partners, both employers and employees, are represented in the training committees.

The National Qualitative Anticipation project, co-funded by the ESF, was launched in the summer of 2008. The aim of the project is to develop and establish a permanent operating model to anticipate the skills needs in different sectors of the world of work. The anticipation results will be used in development of curricula, qualifications and qualifications frameworks. The model of anticipation developed within the project will serve different educational structures and meet the anticipation needs of both national language groups (Finnish and Swedish).

The Confederation of Finnish Industries EK conducts a regular Labour force and skill needs survey. It is directed to all enterprises, which employ more than 250 employees, every fourth enterprise which employs 10-149 employees, every fifth enterprise which employs 3-9 employees.

#### EXAMPLES OF SECTORAL STUDIES FOCUSED ON SKILL NEEDS:

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## 7.2 PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION WITH SKILL NEEDS

The national core curricula constitute a legal norm for educational institutions and apply to all upper secondary vocational education providers for competence-based qualifications for young and adult students.

The Finnish National Board of Education approves the qualification-specific core curricula and the requirements of each competence-based qualification. They are drawn up in cooperation with social partners in different fields, other representatives and experts of economic life as well as teachers and students.

The core curricula and the competence-based qualification requirements include the following topics: 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. They also include the following core skills: learning skills, problem-solving skills, interaction and communication skills, cooperation skills and ethical and aesthetic skills.

The core curricula provide the framework for more detailed curricula which are defined in each institution's individual curriculum. Teachers themselves may choose methods to achieve objectives defined in the curriculum.

There are cooperation organs for implementing and developing work-based learning. For planning and implementation of skills demonstrations the training providers must set up one or several local boards for vocational skills demonstrations. These boards should comprise representatives of training providers, teachers, students as well as the sectoral labour market representatives. These boards can also be joint boards of several training providers. These boards approve the plans for the implementation and assessment of skills demonstrations; they supervise the skills demonstration activities and decide on the assessors. The boards also deal with the demands for the rectification of assessment made by students.

National expert bodies are National Education and Training Committee for different sectors and National Coordination Group for Education and Training which have been established in the 2000s. The role of these is to promote interaction between training and world of work in cooperation with the Finnish National Board of Education. The National Coordination Group for Education and Training deals with large-scale cross-sectoral questions. The Group comprises representatives of the chairs of the above-mentioned Training Committees and representatives of employees and employer organisations.

National Education and Training Committees were set up in 2007, following the legislation issued in 2005 and 2006, which defines the composition and tasks of the committees. There are altogether 34 National Education and Training Committees. They are required in vocational upper secondary and adult education as well as higher education. Their task is to follow, evaluate, anticipate and analyse the development of skills needed in the labour market; to make suggestions for the qualitative and quantitative development of training; to survey the core curricula and qualifications requirements and give statements regarding issues in their sector. The Committees comprise representatives of the national education and training administration, teachers, employers and employees. The training provider can also invite members from labour or political organisations. The education provider decides whether the Committee represents one or several sectors or whether it is organised according to a qualification or study programme. The members are expected to have expertise in certain sectors as well as interest in developing training and willingness to familiarise themselves with the regulations and guidelines of vocational education and training.

The Committees are different, varying according to the local conditions. The experiences from the different types of Committees (sector-specific or qualification/programme-specific) so far are: The strength of the qualification-and-study-programme-specific Committees is their specific expertise related to the field in question. There is a challenge, however, for the education provider to coordinate the activities so that different operating models are not created within the different committees and qualifications. Sector-specific committees are suitable in situations where joint sector-specific decisions and policies are necessary. In the sector-specific committees qualification-or-programme-specific expertise must be ensured. Joint committees of several education providers harmonise operating models and facilitate the cooperation with the world of work in cases where the area or region has several education providers offering education and training leading to the same qualification. Such committees are also useful when the sector or qualification is offered only by a few providers. Committees that comprise several sectors facilitate the development of common principles and policies when the education provider offers training in many sectors. One challenge is to ensure that there is enough sector-and-qualification-specific expertise in the committee. In pilot projects this type of expertise has been ensured by different sector-and-qualification-specific sub-sections. The committees' tasks should, however, not be restricted to the endorsement of the decisions made in the sub-section. The work of multi-sectoral committees can be obstructed by a too large membership. Particularly the sector-specific representatives from the enterprises feel that they cannot utilise their specific expertise when the committees have to operate in other sectors.

Since 1 August 2006, all vocational qualifications have included skills demonstrations. With a view to implementing skills demonstrations, training providers will set up organisations made up of members representing training providers, teachers, students, and business and industry. Through skills demonstrations, students show through practical tasks how well they have attained the vocational skills required in working life. Labour market organisations have been actively involved in promoting the adoption of skills demonstrations. In the core curriculum for vocational upper secondary qualifications skills demonstrations are seen as a part of student assessment. The planning, implementation and assessment are regulated by legislation. Skills demonstrations are realised in cooperation between education and the world of work. In skills demonstrations the student demonstrates in a practical and authentic work situation how well he or she has reached the objectives and aims regarding the vocational competence set in the core curriculum. The skills demonstrations are part of the training and are given during the whole studies. The skills demonstrations are given in all vocational study modules.



## 8. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

### 8.1 STRATEGY AND PROVISION

Guidance and counselling is in Finland seen as a means of raising the quality of education and training, improving retention rates and alleviating exclusion. It is considered of particular importance in adult education.

The thinking is today that guidance and counselling should not only be the task of specialist guidance counsellors. Instead, every teacher should be able to guide and support different types of learners.

The policies regarding guidance and counselling, similarly to other educational issues, are influenced and steered by evaluations, research and indicators etc. The anticipation and foresight of educational needs, both quantitative and qualitative, is gaining in importance.

Guidance counselling aims to support, help and guide pupils so that they perform as well as possible in their studies. It also supports the students in making correct and appropriate decisions concerning their education and careers. Guidance counselling provides the abilities necessary for career choices, working life and further education.

In VET, guidance counselling also provides students with support for drawing up their personal study plans. In addition students receive information on the possible 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. Students can also receive special support when they apply for education.

The time allocated to guidance counselling is decided by the government. The objectives and content are determined in the national core curricula approved by the Finnish National Board of Education. Each education provider decides on the practical implementation of guidance counselling and on the resources available. The education and labour administrations are involved in guidance counselling although the main responsibility lies with the educational administration. They are complemented by the career counselling services provided through the labour administration. Guidance counselling is governed by legislation.

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 services. These aim to support the individuals' appropriate educational choices and job placements. Further, the aim is to promote vocational development by disseminating information on educational opportunities, the content of work and occupations. The labour administration organises career counselling primarily for adults and those who have already entered working life through their employment offices. They also organise 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.

There are also private operators in educational guidance including labour market organisations, associations of guidance counsellors and student unions. The Economic Information Office (Taloudellinen tiedotustoimisto), maintained by employers'

organisations, produces guidance material presenting working life and occupations and provides training for guidance counsellors.

## 8.2 TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Both young people and adults are the target groups for guidance services in VET. Section 8.1 describes ways in which people can access career guidance and counselling services.

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

Guidance counselling should 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 and are provided with the opportunity for international contacts, study and work;
- receive support for problems related to their study and lives.

Students should 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. Students are provided with a personal study plan in accordance with their choices. All staff participates in guiding students, but the main responsibility rests with guidance counsellors.

Vocational institutions develop their career and recruitment services in cooperation with local employment offices and also promote students' access to employment and further education.

In addition to the guidance counselling provided for in the VET institutions, there are many on-line resources on educational and career opportunities available. The labour administration maintains occupational and educational databases and local employment offices have information service units that are also used by young people. The Finnish National Board of Education runs the "*Koulutusnetti*" web service and the EDU.fi portal. The "*Koulutusnetti*" is a web-based service for those applying for education and training and for the use of different counselling and guidance organizations. The service contains up-to-date information on educational opportunities at different levels and in various fields of study. The "*Koulutusnetti*" will be integrated with another service, the *Opintoluotsi* which aims at helping people find information on education and training opportunities in Finland.

EDU.fi is an educational portal for non-academic education and training in Finland published by the Finnish National Board of Education. The portal gathers together services categorised according to the different levels, fields and themes of the education and training system. The portal also provides a gateway to services by other actors in Finland or abroad.

The Finnish National Board of Education also publishes annual educational guidebooks for choices at upper secondary and higher education levels.

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy maintains an on-line service specifically for information on vocational education and training. The service contains for example descriptions of professions and professional fields.

### **8.3 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL**

All institutions providing formal education and training have guidance counsellors. Guidance counsellors must have a VET teacher qualification plus at least 1 year of teaching experience before their specialisation.

The vocational teacher education institutions organise guidance counsellor education of 60 ECTS credits. Students familiarise themselves with the underlying social factors involved in guidance counselling as well as with methods of counselling. People fulfilling the qualifications requirements set for guidance counsellors in general education are also qualified to work as guidance counsellors at vocational institutions (see also 6.2).

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

Other important professionals involved in guidance and counselling are vocational psychologists and career advisers, who mainly work at local employment offices. The former are required to have a master's degree in psychology.

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy organises specialist training and other in-service training for vocational psychologists and career advisers. A number of them also participate in academic post graduate training at universities. In addition, they participate, on a voluntary basis, in training in therapy and on-the-job guidance organised by different organisations.

## 9. FINANCING: INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

### 9.1 FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Ministry of Education has the overall responsibility for funding education and training except for labour market training which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

The majority of vocational institutions (usually VET institutions) are maintained by local authorities and joint municipal boards. Of all students in VET 16 per cent study in privately maintained institutions. Funding criteria are uniform irrespective of ownership.

Providers of vocational education and training receive *statutory government transfer* to cover their operating costs on the basis of unit prices determined by the Ministry of Education. The transfer is calculated to cover 42 per cent of the operating costs on the average. The unit prices are scaled per provider, allowing for the cost differences between various fields of education. Factors such as the educational task and provision of special needs education are taken into account separately for each education provider. The state subsidy is payable to the education provider, it is not earmarked for a particular purpose. In addition, some vocational institutions are awarded performance-based funding.

The performance-based funding system was established in 2002 when education providers were granted separate state subsidies based on their performance. In 2006 the performance-based funding system was expanded and integrated into the overall system of funding based on unit prices. The performance-based funding corresponds to approximately 2 per cent of the whole funding of vocational education.

The allocation of performance-based funding distribution is based on the performance-based funding index, which has been combined from the following indicators:

- Effectiveness (transfer to labour market or further studies);
- Processes (drop-out rate, completion rate);
- Staff (formal teaching qualifications and continuing education and training of staff).

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

A system for funding additional vocational 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.

In the apprenticeship system, the state is responsible for fully covering funding: the *statutory government transfer* accounts for 100 per cent of the unit cost confirmed by the Ministry of Education. The funding is confirmed separately for upper secondary and additional vocational training. Each year, the Ministry of Education confirms the quotas for additional training within the frame of apprenticeship training.

The state funding covers costs caused by school-based education period. The state grants training compensation for the employers, which is compensation for the given training at the workplace. The amount of training compensation paid to the employer is agreed upon separately for each apprenticeship contract before the contract is approved.

The apprentice is entitled to a wage during the time spent at work. The apprentice's wage is 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 per cent 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.

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 Employment and the Economy. The regional and local labour administration, under the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, are responsible for purchasing training courses for the unemployed from a variety of training providers. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy 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 Employment Offices (*työvoimatoimisto*) to acquire training locally.

Many municipalities maintain workshops for young people (under the age of 25) and adults. The workshops are not part of the formal education system and can thus not award formal qualifications. The workshops provide practical work-related training as well as guidance and support. They have become an important tool for providing training for people at risk of social exclusion and assist their integration into working life and society.

The costs of upper secondary VET in 2007 were on the average 8,400 Euros per students. Average costs including special needs institutions were 2,900 Euros per student. The increase compared to the previous year was 3.6 per cent. The development in costs 2003–2007, broken down by field of training, can be seen in the table below.

TABLE 1: OPERATING COSTS IN VOCATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY FIELD 2003–2007 (EUROS PER STUDENT)							
FIELD OF VET	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	CHANGE %	
						2003–07	2006–07
HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION	8,492	8,592	8,473	8,736	8,584	1.1	-1.7
CULTURE	9,560	9,546	9,253	9,505	9,875	3.3	3.9
SOCIAL SCIENCES, BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION	5,616	5,920	5,933	6,276	6,617	17.8	5.4
NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT	5,860	6,059	5,988	6,232	6,642	13.3	6.6
TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT	8,718	8,999	8,559	8,987	9,249	6.1	2.9
NATURAL SCIENCES	13,532	13,234	12,781	13,098	13,420	-0.8	2.5
SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND SPORTS	7,043	7,412	7,125	7,439	7,659	8.7	3.0
TOURISM, CATERING AND DOMESTIC SERVICES	8,414	8,683	8,639	8,976	9,425	12.0	5.0
TOTAL	8,211	8,467	8,212	8,569	8,879	8.1	3.6

*Until 2004 investments under 320 000 Euros are included in the data*

*Source: Finnish National Board of Education*

## 9.2 FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

### 9.2.1 FUNDING FOR PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET

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.

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 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 qualification-oriented adult education and training along the same lines as in education for young people.

Continuing vocational education and training is provided mainly by vocational adult education centres and liberal adult education institutions.

Adult education centres are mostly maintained by local authorities, public companies or foundations. The national specialised institutions are maintained by industry or trade. Liberal adult education institutions such as folk high schools are maintained mainly by private organisations and foundations, while adult education centres are mainly maintained by local authorities. Study centres and summer universities are mainly maintained by private organisations and foundations.

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.

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.

Vocational adult education centres and national specialised vocational institutions can also provide education or services, for which they charge fees. These services do not affect the subsidies they receive from the state or the local administration.

### 9.2.2 FUNDING FOR CVT IN ENTERPRISES

Generally speaking enterprises are themselves responsible for how much they invest in in-service training. Some sectors of trade and industry maintain their own institutions, which are called "Institutions for Specialised Training" (*Ammatilliset erikoisoppilaitokset*). These institutions 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.

According to the Eurostat data collection on total costs of CVET in enterprises in 1999 and 2005, the investment of Finnish enterprises was lower in continuing training in 2005 compared to the situation in 1999. As can be seen in the table below, the trend has been similar regardless of the size of the enterprise.

TOTAL COST OF CVT COURSES AS % OF TOTAL LABOUR COST (ALL ENTERPRISES) (2005 VS. 1999)								
			SIZE CLASS (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)					
	TOTAL (%)		10 TO 49 (%)		50 TO 249 (%)		250 OR MORE (%)	
	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999
EU27	1.6	:	1.1	:	1.4	:	1.9	:
EU25	1.6	2.3	1.1	1.5	1.4	2.4	1.9	2.5
FI	1.5	2.4	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.9	1.6	2.8

Source: Eurostat; 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS2 and CVTS 3)

The table also shows that the average development has been similar within the EU, although slightly less drastic.

### 9.3 FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Within the limits of the state budget, the labour administration purchases employment training mainly for unemployed people and for those at risk of unemployment. Training for these groups is provided by adult vocational training centres, IVET institutions, universities and other providers of training. The training can be provided either as vocational or preparatory training. Most of the providers are supervised by the Ministry of Education.

The regional and local labour administrations, under the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, are responsible for purchasing the training courses. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy allocates the budget to the Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres (*Työvoima- ja elinkeinokeskus*). These fund employment training directly and also allocate money to Local Employment Offices (*työvoimatoimisto*) to acquire training locally.

Employers can also contribute to the financing of employment training with the labour administration. There are three types of co-financed training forms. First one RekryKoulutus is meant for employers who need new skilled workers. Second one, TäsmäKoulutus is meant for companies which need to develop or redirect the skills of their existing personnel. Third one MuutosKoulutus is for situations in which the personnel will be dismissed and so called change security model is used. The employer's share of the funding is between 30 and 75 per cent, depending on type of training. Participants receive a salary or financial aid from the labour administration.

### 9.4 GENERAL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND MECHANISMS

Instruction is usually free of charge for the students at all levels of education. Students receive financial aid for full-time post-compulsory studies lasting at least 2 months. It is granted 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. Financial aid comprises a study grant, a housing supplement and a



government-guaranteed student loan. There is also an adult education subsidy available for persons who have been active in working life for at least 5 years. Those adults, who qualify for the adult education subsidy for an uninterrupted period of at least 8 weeks, may further be eligible for a government guarantee for a student loan.

In adult education and training small fees can be charged for a qualification. A working group for the development of adult education has, however, proposed that those who do not have a vocational qualification should be freed from these.

## 10. NATIONAL VET STATISTICS – ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES

### 10.1 CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL VET PROGRAMMES

#### 10.1.1. MAIN CRITERIA USED TO ALLOCATE VET PROGRAMMES

All formal VET is classified conformably. The three years IVET programmes belong nationally to upper secondary education and training as well as competence-based qualifications except the specialist vocational qualifications. Also apprenticeship trainings lead to same qualifications as the mostly school-based programmes and they are classified similarly. The specialist vocational qualifications are nationally in the same category than the other VET programmes but internationally they are classified to ISCED 4. On higher education level there are vocationally oriented programmes leading to Polytechnic Bachelor's degree.

#### 10.1.2. VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

THE LEVELS OF VET IN FINLAND						
LEVEL	LEVEL IN FINLAND	EQUIVALENT IN ISCED	MINIMUM DURATION	MAXIMUM DURATION	AVERAGE DURATION	TYPICAL STARTING AGE OF PUPILS
UPPER SECONDARY	Upper secondary general (gymnasium) and vocational	3A	3 years	3 years	3 years	15-17
POST SECONDARY	Specialist vocational qualifications	4	competence-based			adults
HIGHER EDUCATION	Polytechnic Bachelor's degree	5A	4 years	6 years	4.5 years	18-20

## 10.2 FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

LEVEL	FIELDS OF EDUCATION/STUDY
UPPER SECONDARY  POLYTECHNICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Natural Resources Sector</li><li>• Technology and Transport Sector</li><li>• Business and Administration Sector</li><li>• Catering and Home Economics Sector</li><li>• Health and Social Services Sector</li><li>• Culture Sector</li><li>• Leisure and Physical Education Sector</li></ul>

## 10.3 LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CLASSIFICATIONS

The process of building up a NQF is going on. The NQF working group has to finish its work and to make its proposals to the Ministry of Education in June 2009. After that the formal decisions are made and NQF will be in use in 2010 at the latest.

## 11. AUTHORS, SOURCES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### 11.1 AUTHORS

Aapo Koukku, Finnish National Board of Education (themes 3-5 and 9.2.)

Matti Kyrö, Finnish National Board of Education (themes 1-2, 7 and 10-11)

Kristiina Volmari, Finnish National Board of Education (themes 6, 8-9, except 9.2.)

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Decree on Teaching Qualifications (*Asetus opetustoimen henkilöstön kelpoisuusvaatimuksista, Förordning om behörighetsvillkoren för personal inom undervisningsväsendet*), 986/1998.

Education and Research 2007-2012 Development Plan (Koulutus ja tutkimus 2007-12, Utbildning och forskning 2007-12). Ministry of Education, 2007.

Ammatillisesti suuntautuneen aikuiskoulutuksen kokonaisuudistus. AKKU-johtoryhmän toimenpide-ehdotukset (Reform of vocationally oriented adult education and training. Proposals by steering group) Opetusministeriön työryhmämuistioita ja selvityksiä 2009:11, Ministry of Education 2009.

## WEBSITES

### EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Cedefop: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu>

Cedefop European Training Village: [http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/)

Europass: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>

European Union: <http://www.europa.eu>

Eurostat: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

Eurydice: <http://www.eurydice.org>

OECD: <http://www.oecd.org>

### MINISTRIES AND NATIONAL AGENCIES

Finnish Government: <http://www.vn.fi>

Ministry of Education: <http://www.vn.fi>

Ministry of Finance: <http://www.vm.fi>

Ministry of the Interior: <http://www.intermin.fi> (links to the web-sites of the provinces)

Ministry of Labour: <http://www.mol.fi>

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: <http://www.stm.fi>

Finnish National Board of Education: <http://www.oph.fi>

Centre for International Mobility CIMO: <http://www.cimo.fi/Resource.phx/cimo/start.htm>

Statistics Finland: [http://www.stat.fi/index\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/index_en.html)

### CENTRAL LABOUR MARKET ORGANISATIONS

The Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK): <http://www.ek.fi/www/fi/index.php>

Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK): <http://www.sak.fi/>

The Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees (STTK): <http://www.sttk.fi>

Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ): <http://www.oaj.fi>

#### RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

University of Jyväskylä, Institute for Educational Research: <http://kti.jyu.fi/kti/english>

University of Tampere, Work Research Centre:  
<http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/tyoelama/WRC.html>

University of Turku, Research Unit for the Sociology of Education (RUSE):  
<http://vanha.soc.utu.fi/>

Government Institute for Economic Research (VATT):  
<http://www.vatt.fi/english/index.htm>

Åbo Akademi University: <http://www.abo.fi/public/>

### 11.3 LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

FINHEEC Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (Korkeakoulujen arviointineuvosto, Rådet för utvärdering av högskolorna)

FNBE Finnish National Board of Education (Opetushallitus, Utbildningsstyrelsen)

KESU Development Plan for Education and Research (Koulutuksen ja tutkimuksen kehittämissuunnitelma, Utvecklingsplanen för utbildning och forskning)

OPEKO National Centre for Professional Development in Education (Opetusalan koulutuskeskus, Utbildningscentret för undervisningssektorn)

OSAAVA Programme for professional development of education personnel (Opetustoimen henkilöstön ammatillisen osaamisen kehittämisohjelma, Program för utveckling av undervisningspersonalens yrkeskompetens)